Over 24,000 phrases and expressions

McGraw-Hill's Dictionary *of* American Idioms

The Most Practical Reference to the Idiomatic and Verbal Expressions of Contemporary American English

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McGraw-Hill's Dictionary *of* American Idioms *and* Phrasal Verbs

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About This Dictionary

All languages have phrases that cannot be understood literally and, therefore, cannot be used with confidence. They are opaque or unpredictable because they don't have expected, literal meaning. Even if you know the meaning of all the words in a phrase and understand all the grammar of the phrase completely, the meaning of the phrase may still be confusing. A phrase or sentence of this type is said to be idiomatic. This dictionary is a collection of the idiomatic phrases and sentences that occur frequently in American English. Many of them occur in some fashion in other varieties of English also.

Many overlapping terms have been used to describe the idiomatic phrases included here: verbal collocations, idioms, idiomatic expressions, clichés, proverbs, set phrases, fixed phrases, phrasal verbs, common phrases, prepositional verbs, and phrasal/prepositional verbs. They all offer the same kinds of problems to the speaker and writer of English. They are unclear because the meaning of the phrase is not literal or predictable. Phrasal verbs, also called *two-word verbs*, are idiomatic expressions because the second element of the verb (the adverb or preposition) is not necessarily predictable. For instance, why the word *up* in *call up a friend*? Why not say *call on a friend* or *call in a friend*? Actually, those are three separate, unpredictable combinations, and they each mean something completely different. For example, you can *call up a friend* on the telephone, *call on a friend* to have a visit, and *call in a friend* to come and help you with something.

Although there are some entries that are very casual or informal English, slang and idioms should not be confused. Some slang is also idiomatic, and some idioms are also slang, but generally they refer to different aspects of language. There are a few slang terms in this dictionary, because they are also fairly commonly known idioms.

GOALS OF THE DICTIONARY

A major goal of this dictionary is to make certain that each definition of a phrase illustrates the meaning of the phrase and matches it in syntax. The major exceptions are definitions that begin with "a phrase" or "an expression." Similarly, the examples for each sense must match the definition in meaning and syntax. The best use of the entries is to study the entry head, definition, and example carefully. Look for the meaning that is common to all three. If the diligent user can see the elements of meaning shared by the entry phrase, the definition, and the example(s), the dictionary entry has done its task well.

A second goal is to provide the learner with enough information about the many forms that an idiom might take to allow the user to recognize it in a variety of contexts and to be able to use it in speech and writing.

A third goal is to make the details accessible to the learner. Idiomatic expressions and their variants are complex and unpredictable. There are many synonyms and near synonyms. General cross-referencing in the body of the dictionary will help users find synonymous phrases. The Phrase-Finder Index provides a powerful tool for locating entry forms embedded in other entries and partially remembered phrases. The form of the entry is quite straightforward, consisting of entry, definition, comments (if any), and examples. Senses are numbered and may include variants *in addition to* those found in the entry head. A minimum of abbreviations and symbols are used, and these are explained in the section "Terms and Symbols." The user who understands the meaning of **entry head**, **variable**, and **wild card term** is equipped to understand everything that follows.

WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM THIS DICTIONARY?

The dictionary will prove useful for native speakers who are looking for synonymous idiomatic phrases. Many phrases can be expressed in a variety of ways, and this dictionary, through cross-referencing, can lead the native speaker to equivalent forms with the same or similar meaning. The index provides a means for a writer to find the most appropriate phrase for a given purpose. Native speakers can find most of what they want by looking up words representing key ideas in the index and following the references to phrases in the dictionary itself.

Likewise, near-native speakers who need help with phrasal verbs and common idiomatic phrases will find this reference very useful. Speakers and writers trained in British English will find this dictionary a good reference for checking on the American form and meaning of expressions previously encountered in British English.

The format of the dictionary is designed to provide the information needed by learners who are attempting to read and write conventional American English. It contains far more detail and specificity than is required by people who have heard, spoken, and written standard American English all their lives. For instance, a dictionary designed for native speakers of English might include the subentries **bail out** and **see through**. However, there are major differences in meaning between the idiomatic expressions that can be based on these words.

bail out (of something**)** "jump out"
bail someone **out (of** something**)** "post bond to get a person out of jail"
bail something **out (of** something**)** "remove water from a boat"
bail something **out** "empty a boat (of accumulated water)"

see something **through** "work at something until it is finished"
see through something "see through something that is transparent"
see through something "detect a trick or deception"

These differences may never be revealed if the entry heads are just **bail out** and **see through**, with no object indicated. This dictionary presents the additional details that a native speaker already knows. The information needed for the learner includes whether the verb can take an object and, if so, what kind of object (human, nonhuman, or both) is needed. The learner also needs to know what additional prepositional phrases are required or optional for the correct use of the expressions.

PHRASE ORIGINS

A surprising number of phrases have literary or Biblical origins. The works of Shakespeare, in particular, have provided many memorable phrases that are in constant use around the world. When the source is the Bible or Shakespeare, as well as other authors, that is noted in the dictionary entries. Most of the phrasal or two-word verbs are due to the Germanic origins of English. The choice of which particle (the second part of a two-word verb) is an ancient problem.

There are many instances, recorded in this dictionary, of a figurative phrasal verb being derived from a more literal interpretation of the same phrasal verb. In these instances, the phrasal verbs (or two-word verbs) appear in both figurative and literal senses in the same entry. One sense helps the user understand the other sense. In this case, the figurative sense has its origin in the literal sense. In entries where this occurs, the literal senses are marked *Lit.* and the figurative senses are marked *Fig.*

A high percentage of the entries in this dictionary have their origins in a figurative usage where there is no matching literal sense. That is why they offer special difficulty in understanding. Wherever necessary or possible there is a note in the entry suggesting what a figurative entry is based on or alluding to. Sometimes the relationship is completely obvious and no explanation is offered.

Quite a few of the similes (for example, **as busy as a beaver**) are contrived and appear to be part of an ever-expanding repertory of colorful and quaint comparisons. Similarly, the senses marked *Rur.* (rural) are often contrived and may

appear more often as colorful expressions in writing than they ever did in real life. That these rural-sounding expressions actually had a rural origin can be debated. Nor can all the similes be taken seriously. They are included because they might be encountered by the learner and their listing here might be useful for a writer—if nothing more than as something to be avoided.

There is another kind of "origin" that needs to be mentioned. There are a few idioms that seem to invite very clever but totally baseless tales of origin. Many of these tales are quite popular and widely known. Two examples of such "story" idioms involve **sleep tight** and **a dead ringer**. The first is associated with sleeping on a tightly strung, rope-supported mattress, and the second refers to a corpse ringing a bell. The details depend on the teller of the tale. Such tales of origin are very entertaining to many people. The idioms on which these stories are based are included in this dictionary, but the tale is neither told nor debunked here.

There are many additional phrases that are just the customary patterns used to say things in both casual and more formal situations. Common greetings and responses are included in this category, and these expressions have their origins in the functions they were meant to serve.

WHEN WERE THEY FIRST USED?

Users often have an interest in dating the origins of a phrase. It is possible to put a specific date on the early use of a *word* by consulting a historical dictionary, such as the *Oxford English Dictionary*. That will show the earliest usage recorded in the books and other documents that have been consulted for the creation of the dictionary. Some phrases and idioms may be included in the entries and quotations, but that is not the primary focus of a historical dictionary. As more and more data become available in a searchable, digital format, it is possible to find examples of the early uses of specific phrases more easily. A very careful writer of historical novels or screenplays will be interested in making sure that a certain word or phrase was actually in use during the period in question. The *OED* can be helpful in determining this kind of information. An early date for a phrase (or word) does not necessarily indicate the earliest use of the item nor the period of widespread comprehension in the population, however.

This dictionary offers the user help in seeing semantic relationships and allusions, but it has goals that are quite different from those of a historical dictionary. The major concern here is contemporary usage, and it probably reflects idiomatic English over the last 50 years. The older members of the native-speaking population know more of the entries than the younger people, but the latter will learn more as they age. Probably 75 percent of the entries are widely known, conventional English for 75 percent of the educated, native-speaking adult population.

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How to Use This Dictionary

For most users, most of the time, a single instruction will be enough, and that is to start with the Phrase-Finder Index.

In the index, look up a major word in the idiom, preferably a verb, and go to the most appropriate dictionary entry listed in the right-hand column. If no appropriate entry is listed at the verb, try an adverb, preposition, or other word.

Further hints can be found at the beginning of the Phrase-Finder Index. The organization and philosophy of the dictionary is discussed in much greater detail below.

ALPHABETIZATION

In the dictionary, phrasal verbs (or two-word verbs) and their related prepositional verbs are alphabetized on the verb. All other idiomatic expressions are alphabetized in their complete forms with no inversion of parts. Entries are not listed by "key word" unless the "key word" is the first word. On the other hand, the index lists *all* the key words in a phrase. In that way, the key word is the user's choice and not the compiler's choice. All alphabetizing is word by word, rather than letter by letter. Initial *a*, *an*, and *the* are ignored in the alphabetization. Significant variants are cross-referenced to a main **entry head**. In most instances, an object of a verb or preposition is shown by a **wild card term**, either someone, something, someone or something, or some other expression such as some amount of money. Showing whether an object is human, nonhuman, or of some other semantically limited category is essential to explaining meaning and distinguishing the senses. **Wild card terms** are included in the alphabetization. In the Phrase-Finder Index, you are shown which entry head to look up. Those entry heads will include **wild card terms**. It is much easier to look up these expressions in the dictionary itself if the **wild card terms** are included in the alphabetization.

OVERCOMING OPAQUE AND UNPREDICTABLE PHRASES

There are three general reasons why idiomatic expressions are problems for students, writers, and other adults wishing to expand their skills with conventional American English. The three problems involve (1) difficulties with extracting the core of the idiomatic expression from a sentence or paragraph, (2) the variable nature of idioms, and (3) the basic opaque nature of these phrases. There is little that can be done about opacity other than use a dictionary, but there is some information about the other problems that can help the user. What follows will explain the organization of the dictionary and the way the peculiarities of English phrases have been handled here. It is not necessary to be able to understand the following discussion to use the dictionary.

EXTRACTING THE IDIOMATIC PART OF A SENTENCE

Idiomatic phrases are usually found included within a sentence, and it is difficult to extract the core of the idiom so that it can be looked up in a dictionary. These expressions are often learned in a list, and, unfortunately, the form of the expression presented in the list is probably only one of many variants. In the real world, these expressions are never seen or heard except in a complete sentence. In order to look them up in a dictionary, they have to be extracted from the sentence in which they are found. You cannot look up a

phrase that is found within a sentence unless you know the boundaries of the phrase. Here are some hints for extracting idiomatic phrases.

Simplify the Grammar

Entries in the dictionary and index use the singular form of the noun and the present tense (bare) verb. The index actually lists both regular and irregular forms when there are both. For instance **old wives' tale** is listed in the index under "old," "wife," "wives," and "tale." In order to look something up in either section, the user will save time by using the simplest form. There are more items to choose from at the simplest form.

Look for Nonliteral Meanings

Look for something in the sentence that is not understandable literally. For instance, "Sue is known for thinking ahead of her time." How can Sue think ahead of or in front of time? Only figuratively. Mentally extract the nonliteral phrase, "thinking ahead of her time." Try to match "think ahead of her time" to a phrase in the index by looking at "think" and scanning down to "think ahead" where you find **think ahead of one's time** or the shorter ***ahead of one's time**.

Ignore Immediate Context

The parts of a sentence that refer to specific places, things, measurements, and activities are not likely to be items you can look up in the index. Examine the sentence "It's almost 6:00, and you, Tom, and I have to thrash this contract out before we can meet the President of Acme Widgets for dinner at 8:00." Ignore the specifics that relate only to this time and place: "6:00," "Tom," "you," "I," "President of Acme Widgets," "dinner at 8:00." That leaves "thrash this contract out." Look up "thrash" in the index and find **thrash** something **out**, and it seems to explain the meaning of the sentence perfectly. There are things that can cause confusion, though. "Dinner at 8:00" is a common and well-known phrase. "Acme" is a (once) common name for a company, and "widget" is a common imaginary name for a product. Those words are not in the index, however.

VARIATION IN IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

Idioms are sometimes called *fixed phrases*. In the real world, many idiomatic expressions are found in many variations, and this makes them hard to use and even harder to find in a dictionary. What follows is a discussion of the seven kinds of variation shown in this dictionary. Unfortunately, many idiomatic expressions exhibit more than one kind of variation. Fortunately, use of the Phrase-Finder Index to find a particular idiom will eliminate most of the problems caused by variation. It is important to know how the variants are related to each other so you do not think that three variants of a single phrase might have three different meanings. Knowing what the core of an idiomatic expression is, and how it can vary, makes it possible to recognize it and use its variants in a far greater number of contexts.

Grammatical Variation

In idioms in general, nouns can be plural or singular and verbs can occur in a variety of tenses and aspects. Many phrases can appear equally well in the negative or affirmative and undergo question inversion. Use the index to find the simplest form. This will lead you to the appropriate entry, even if the entry contains nouns or verbs that do not vary, such as **old wives' tale**, which is never singular. Here are some sentence examples of grammatical variation:

> The tape wouldn't adhere to the door.
> Why won't this glue adhere to the doors?
> The adhesive adhered to the door easily.
> That old glue has adhered to the front of the door nicely.
> That old tape has adhered to it nicely.

The thing that all the example sentences have in common is that they all have the verb *adhere* plus a prepositional phrase beginning with *to*. The

object of *to* can be a variety of nouns or pronouns. The elements each example shares are: **adhere to** something, and that is the form of the entry in this dictionary. The general rule is to simply reduce the noun to singular and the verbs to present tense and look up the results in the index.

The Transposable Adverb

Adverbs in certain phrases can swap places with the direct object of a transitive verb. This cannot be done if the object of the verb is a pronoun. Although the result may, in some instances, look like a prepositional phrase, it is not. In the following example containing "down the door," the word *down* is an adverb that stands between the verb and its direct object:

> She broke *down* the door with an axe.
> She broke the door *down* with an axe.
>
> Please hammer the nail *in*.
> Please hammer *in* the nail.

But you cannot say:

> *She broke down it.
> *Please hammer in it.

The entry head **break** something **down**† contains a dagger (†) that indicates that the "down" can be transposed to a position just after the verb. Any word marked with the dagger can be transposed to a position immediately following the verb except when the object of the verb is a pronoun. Only the adverbs followed by † can be swapped in this manner.

Prepositions That Become Adverbs

There is both a noun *hammer* and a verb *hammer*. Similarly, some particles can function as either prepositions or adverbs, depending on how they are used. Prepositions have objects. *Out* is a preposition in "Run out the door." It is an adverb in "Put the cat out." Some prepositional verbs (verb + prepositional phrase) can become phrasal verbs (verb + adverb) by "losing" the object of the preposition. In the phrase **add** something **into** something, *add* has both an object of the verb and a prepositional phrase. Without the object of the preposition, the remaining preposition, in this case *in*, functions as an adverb, as in **add** something **in**. Examine the following sets of sentences. Note the transposable adverb in the second and third examples.

> Add the flour into the eggs.
> Add the flour *in*.
> Add *in* the flour.
>
> Boil the wax out of the cloth.
> Boil the wax *out*.
> Boil *out* the wax.

In this dictionary, these pairs are presented as variants of the same entry. Usually it is necessary to express this variation in two parts. Then, the cross-referencing or the index will lead the user to the longer entry, which is then followed by the shorter one. Note that the adverb is marked transposable in the entry heads below. The relationship between these two varieties of phrasal verb is very common in English around the world. The pairs of entries are listed as follows:

> **add** something **into** something
> and **add** something **in**†
>
> **boil** something **out of** something
> and **boil** something **out**†

Note that the prepositions *into* and *out* do not have daggers, indicating that they cannot be transposed to the position immediately after the verb.

Idioms with a Limited Verb Choice

There are a number of expressions in the dictionary that consist of a phrase that is likely to be preceded by one of a limited list of verbs. These expressions can usually stand alone, at least in casual conversations. The core meaning is the same regardless of the choice of initial verb. The members of the limited set of verbs that can come before the expression are not predictable. This kind

of variation is similar to **wild card terms**. Here are examples of the sets of limited sets of verbs.

be ahead of Tom
get ahead of Tom
keep ahead of Tom
remain ahead of Tom
stay ahead of Tom

keep clear of the doors
remain clear of the doors
stand clear of the doors

If each of these idiomatic expressions were a separate entry, it would be repetitious and difficult for the user to see that they include the same basic phrase. Therefore, the core of the entry is preceded by an asterisk (*****), as with ***ahead of** someone and ***clear of** something. Within the entry, a list of the appropriate verbs is given at the asterisk (*****). The index lists all of the variations, and the most common ones are given cross-references in the dictionary itself. Many of them are found after *be*, *get*, and *have* and are cross-referenced from the index only. There are some expressions that must begin with *be*, *get*, or *have* and these are alphabetized in the dictionary under their initial word.

Optional Elements

Various additional words or phrases can be used optionally within a single idiomatic expression. These words or phrases occur often with the idiom in question, but they are not required. They are included as part of the idiomatic pattern since they are so typical of conventional usage. Often, idiomatic expressions seem difficult simply because they are shortened versions of a longer expression that would be easier to understand in its full form. There are many instances of optional prepositional phrases. The following examples illustrate optional words:

At last, I am able to breathe freely again.
At last, I am able to breathe again.

all joking aside
joking aside

In this dictionary, optional elements are enclosed in parentheses.

The word *freely* is the optional element in the first pair of examples, and *all* is optional in the second set. Their entries are:

able to breathe (freely) again
(all) joking aside

Variable Classes or Wild Card Terms

Idiomatic phrases include both fixed and variable classes of words. The variable classes can be very broad, such as someone, which refers to any person, or something, which refers to any thing, object, or group. Many idiomatic phrases are very particular as to whether they include either someone or something. Others can refer to people or things, someone or something, without distinction. In this dictionary, these groups are called **wild card terms**. They can be thought of as aliases or proxies for the members of the classes of words they describe. Wild card terms appear in a unique type style. In a few instances, the expression always contains the real word *someone* or *something* and in these instances, special type is not used, as with **pick on someone your own size**. The following examples show the kinds of things that wild card terms can stand for:

associate with *new friends* **(**someone**)**
associate with *them* **(**someone**)**
associate with *a bunch of different people* **(**someone**)**
associate with *the Smiths* **(**someone**)**
play *the radio* at full blast **(**something**)**
play *my new record* at full blast **(**something**)**
play *his huge stereo* at full blast **(**something**)**
play *all the audio stuff in the whole dorm* at full blast **(**something**)**

The variable classes are represented in these examples by someone or something as in **associate with** someone or **play** something **at full blast**. The wild card term indicates that any member of the specified class can be used. There are dozens of wild card terms of this kind. All of the wild card

terms are descriptive of the kind of words or phrases they can stand for. Here are some of the most common wild card terms with one example of each:

a direction "east by northeast"
a period of time "about an hour"
doing something "eating bread and butter"
some amount of money "about three bucks"
somehow "without much effort"
someone "Fred"
some place "the kitchen"
something "a toaster"
sometime "at noon"

and someone or something, which can be either someone or something.

Note: Wild card terms are mostly nouns, pronouns, and noun phrases. There is no way that these variables could be listed in an index. Therefore, the user is advised to save time by first looking up a verb, adverb, or preposition rather than a noun or pronoun.

Random and Unpatterned Variation

Some expressions differ by only a word or two and are otherwise essentially synonymous. This is more confusing when not all the senses in an entry share the same synonyms, as in the first example where the full entry is quoted. In this entry, only the first sense has a variant.

give someone **a lift 1.** and **give** someone **a ride** *Fig.* to provide transportation for someone. ☐ *I've got to get into town. Can you give me a lift?* **2.** *Fig.* to raise someone's spirits; to make a person feel better. ☐ *It was a good conversation, and her kind words really gave me a lift.*

Other entries with variants of this type are:

ache for someone or something
and **hurt for** someone or something

amount to the same thing
and **come to the same thing**

Equivalent forms of an idiomatic expression are combined into a single entry where possible. The second and any subsequent expression are joined by *and* to the first. Sometimes a numbered sense has additional variants. These are introduced by *and*.

If the variants apply to all senses, they are listed at the beginning of the entry. If they apply only to some senses, the restricted form appears after the sense number, as with **give** someone **a ride** above.

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Acknowledgments

The compiler has included idiomatic phrases drawn from or suggested by Anne Bertram in the McGraw-Hill publications, *NTC's Dictionary of Proverbs and Clichés*, *NTC's Dictionary of Euphemisms*, and *NTC's Dictionary of Folksy, Regional, and Rural Sayings*, as well as other McGraw-Hill special-purpose dictionaries. In addition, I am very grateful for help from my coworkers for their counseling, writing, and editing skills, as applied to various components and stages of this dictionary. They are Carla (White) Kirschenbaum, Nancy L. Dray, Michelle Davidson, Garret Lemoi, Steven R. Kleinedler, and Frank Abate. I also wish to thank Mark and William Pattis for providing appropriate atmosphere, support, and encouragement for the creation of specialized dictionaries.

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Terms and Symbols

☐ is a box that marks the beginning of an example.

~ is a "swung dash" that is an abbreviation for the **entry head**.

† is a "dagger" that is seen in some **entry heads**. It shows that the adverb that precedes is one that can occur instead just after the verb in the same **entry head**. This means that the *out* in **ace** someone **out†** can also be **ace out** someone.

[....] enclose a partial entry that is followed by an instruction about where to find the whole entry or a comment. These brackets are also used to enclose information needed to understand a definition.

and indicates that an **entry head** has variant forms that are the same or very similar in meaning as the **entry head**. One or more variant forms are preceded by *and*.

Cliché refers to an overused expression that is trite and tiresome.

Entry head is the first phrase or word, in boldface type, of an entry. It is the phrase or word that the definition explains.

Euph. means "euphemistic," making something sound or seem "nicer" than some other word might.

Fig. means "figurative." When the meaning of an **entry head** is not literal, it is marked *Fig.* Some are more figurative than others. Some entries contain both literal and figurative senses.

Go to means to search for and read the entry indicated. **Go to previous** means to read the entry immediately above. **Go to next** means to read the entry that follows.

Inf. means "informal." This is used for expressions that are casual but not as intrusive as those marked *Sl.*, "slang."

Jocular refers to an expression that is said in a joking or humorous way.

Lit. means "literal," the normal or expected interpretation of a word or phrase. Some entries contain both literal and figurative senses.

Prov. means "proverbial," in the manner or nature of a proverb.

Rur. means "rural" and refers to country or folksy expressions.

See also means to consult the entry indicated for additional information or to find expressions similar in form or meaning to the entry containing the **See also** instruction.

Simile refers to expressions containing as or like, such as **dry as dust**.

Sl. means "slang," very informal, colorful, playful, or intrusive alternates for more common words.

Variable is an element that stands for a class of items, usually nouns or pronouns. Many expressions must include a noun that is a person, a noun that is a thing, or both. These classes are indicated in the **entry head** as someone, something, or someone or something. There are many other variables, such as some place or sometime, whose meaning is obvious.

Wild card term is a term that represents a **variable**, such as someone, something, or someone or something.

Aa

***an* A for effort** *Fig.* acknowledgement for having tried to do something, even if it was not successful. (*Typically: **get ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *The plan didn't work, but I'll give you an A for effort for trying.*

A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do. Go to **You got to do what you got to do.**

Abandon hope, all ye who enter here. *Prov.* If you come in, be prepared for the worst. (Describes a hopeless situation or one somehow similar to hell. Often used jocularly. This is the English translation of the words on the gate of Hell in Dante's *Inferno*.) ☐ *This is our cafeteria. Abandon hope, all ye who enter here!*

abandon oneself **to** something to yield to the comforts or delights of something. ☐ *The children abandoned themselves to the delights of the warm summer day.*

abandon ship 1. *Lit.* to leave a sinking ship. ☐ *The captain ordered the crew and passengers to abandon ship.* **2.** *Fig.* to leave a failing enterprise. ☐ *A lot of the younger people are abandoning ship because they can get jobs elsewhere easily.*

abandon someone or something **to** someone or something to leave a person, living creature, or thing to the care of someone or something; to give up someone or something to someone or something. (Usually with the thought that the abandoned person or thing will not receive the best of care.) ☐ *They had to abandon the dogs to the storm.*

abbreviate something **to** something **1.** and **abbreviate** something **as** something to make specific initials or an acronym out of a word or phrase. ☐ *The phrase was abbreviated to* ABC. **2.** to make something into a shorter version of itself. ☐ *The act has been abbreviated to just a few minutes.*

the **ABCs of** something *Fig.* the basic facts or principles of something. ☐ *I have never mastered the ABCs of car maintenance.*

abduct someone **from** someone or something to take away or kidnap a person from someone or from a particular place, usually in secret. ☐ *The thugs abducted the child from her mother.*

abet someone **in** something to help someone in some deed; to help someone do something illegal. ☐ *Surely you do not expect me to abet you in this crime!*

abide by something to follow the rules of something; to obey someone's orders. ☐ *John felt that he had to abide by his father's wishes.*

abide with someone to remain with someone; to stay with someone. (Old and stilted. Primarily heard in the church hymn *Eventide*.) ☐ *You are welcome to abide with me for a while, young man.*

able to breathe (easily) again and **able to breathe (freely) again 1.** *Lit.* able to breathe clean, fresh air with no restriction or obstruction. ☐ *After I got out of the dank basement, I was able to breathe easily again.* **2.** *Fig.* able to relax and recover from a busy or stressful time; able to catch one's breath. (*Able to* can be replaced with *can*.) ☐ *Final exams are over, so I can breathe easily again.*

able to breathe (freely) again Go to previous.

able to cut something *Fig.* to be able to manage or execute something. (Often negative. *Able to* can be replaced with *can*.) ☐ *We thought he could handle the new account, but he is simply not able to cut it.*

able to do something to have the strength or skill to do something. (*Able to* can be replaced with *can*.) ☐ *Are you able to carry those bags by yourself?*

able to do something **blindfolded** and **able to** do something **standing on** one's **head** *Fig.* able to do something very easily, possibly without even looking. (*Able to* can be replaced with *can*.) ☐ *Bill boasted that he could pass his driver's test blindfolded.*

able to do something **standing on** one's **head** Go to previous.

able to do something **with** one's **eyes closed** *Fig.* able to do something very easily, even without having to think about it or look at it. (Always affirmative. *Able to* can be replaced with *can*.) ☐ *It's easy. I can do it with my eyes closed.*

able to fog a mirror *Fig. Inf.* alive, even if just barely. (Usually jocular. Alludes to the use of a small mirror placed under the nose to tell if a person is breathing or not. (*Able to* can be replaced with *can*.) ☐ *Look, I don't need an athlete to do this job! Anybody able to fog a mirror will do fine!*

able to make an event able to attend an event. (*Able to* can be replaced with *can*.) ☐ *I don't think I'll be able to make your party, but thanks for asking me.*

able to take a joke to be able to accept ridicule goodnaturedly; to be able to be the object or butt of a joke willingly. (*Able to* can be replaced with *can*.) ☐ *Better not tease Ann. She can't take a joke.*

able to take just so much and **able to take only so much** able to endure only a limited amount of discomfort or unpleasantness. (*Able to* can be replaced with *can*.) ☐ *Please stop hurting my feelings. I'm able to take just so much.*

able to take only so much Go to previous.

abound in something to be rich and abundant in something; to have plenty of something. (A bit formal.) ☐ *The entire area abounds in game and fish.*

abound with someone or something to be plentiful with particular persons, other living beings, or objects. ☐ *The world abounds with talented people who are too shy to develop their talents.*

A

about as exciting as watching (the) paint dry Go to exciting as watching (the) paint dry.

***about** one's **business** busy doing something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; go ~**.) ☐ *Why are you still in the house? It's time to be about your business.* ☐ *Why are you just standing there? You'd better get busy doing something!*

***about to** do something in the process of doing something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I'd better be about my yard work.*

*an **about-face (on** someone or something**)** *Fig.* a reversal of attitude or action. (*Typically: **do ~; have ~**.) ☐ *She did an about-face on her rule about not eating in the living room. Now we can do it if we want.*

***above and beyond (**something**)** more than is required; greater than the required amount. (*Typically: **be ~; go ~**.) ☐ *The English teacher helped students after school every day, even though it was beyond the call of duty.*

above average higher or better than the average. ☐ *Max's grades are always above average.*

above (doing) something [of someone] too mature or honorable to do something. ☐ *I thought you were above doing something so thoughtless.*

above one's **bend** and **above** one's **huckleberry** *Rur.* beyond one's ability. ☐ *Fixing those new cars with computers in them is above my bend.* ☐ *Joe's a good cook, but fancy desserts are above his huckleberry.*

above one's **huckleberry** Go to previous.

above par better than average or normal. ☐ *His work is above par, so he should get paid better.*

above reproach not deserving of blame or criticism. ☐ *Some politicians behave as though they are above reproach.*

above someone at a higher rank than someone else; serving as someone's supervisor. ☐ *Ron is above Ginney, but he treats her like an equal.*

above someone or something to be in a position that is higher than someone or something. ☐ *The plane is now directly above us.*

***above suspicion** [for one] to be honest enough that no one would suspect one; in a position where one could not be suspected. (This is a translation of words attributed to Julius Caesar, who divorced his wife, Pompeia, on the grounds of her possible involvement in a public scandal; Caesar stated, "Caesar's wife must be above suspicion.") (*Typically: **be ~; keep** oneself **~; remain ~**.) ☐ *The general is a fine old man, completely above suspicion.*

above the law not subject to the law; immune to the law. ☐ *None of us is above the law. We have to obey all of them.*

aboveboard in the open; visible to the public; honest. ☐ *Don't keep it a secret. Let's make certain that everything is aboveboard.*

***abreast of** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* keeping even with someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; keep ~; stay ~**.) ☐ *I had to run hard to stay abreast of Sally.* **2.** *Fig.* knowing the news about someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; keep ~; stay ~**.) ☐ *The press corps has to keep abreast of the president.*

abscond with someone or something to steal or run away with someone or something; to make off with someone or something in secret. ☐ *The boys absconded with all the dessert.*

Absence makes the heart grow fonder. *Prov.* You will like someone or something better if that person or thing is far away. ☐ *Ever since Carla's boyfriend moved away, she can't stop thinking about him. Absence makes the heart grow fonder.*

absent oneself **from** someone or something to remain away from or avoid someone or some place. ☐ *Fred absented himself from the meeting, which he was certain would be boring.*

***absent without leave** absent from a military unit without permission; absent from anything without permission. (*AWOL* is an abbreviation. This is a serious offense in the military. *Typically: **be ~; go ~**.) ☐ *The soldier was taken away by the military police because he was absent without leave.*

an **absent-minded professor** a bumbling professor who overlooks everyday things. ☐ *Fred is such an absent-minded professor. He'd forget his head if it wasn't screwed on.*

Absolute power corrupts absolutely. *Prov.* One who has total authority is very likely to abuse his position. (This phrase was used by the British historian Lord Acton: "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.") ☐ *We thought that Johnson would be a responsible mayor, but within a year of taking office, he was as bad as all the rest. Absolute power corrupts absolutely.*

Absolutely not! a strong denial or refusal. (Compare this with Definitely not!) ☐ *Bob: Can I please have the car again tonight? Father: Absolutely not! You can't have the car every night!*

absolve someone **from** something and **absolve** someone **of** something to prove that an accused person is innocent of something; to demonstrate that someone is not responsible for something. ☐ *Bob attempted to absolve himself of the crime.*

absorb oneself **in** someone or something *Fig.* [for someone] to become very interested or preoccupied with something or someone else's interests. ☐ *Tom would often absorb himself in his children's activities on weekends.*

absorb someone **in(to)** something [of a person or a group of people] to include someone in all the activities of the group; to integrate someone into something. ☐ *The club absorbed the new members into the organization.*

absorb something **in(to)** something [of matter or substance] to draw something into itself. ☐ *The sponge absorbed all the moisture into its fibers.*

absorb something **with** something to soak up a fluid with something. ☐ *Henry absorbed the spilled milk with a sponge.*

abstain from something to avoid some activity or the use of some substance, such as alcohol, drugs, sex, or food. ☐ *They abstained from hard liquor and any other kind of intoxicants.*

abstain from voting to choose not to vote either for or against a proposition or nominee. ☐ *I will have to abstain from voting since I cannot make up my mind.*

A

abstract something **from** someone or something to steal something from someone or something. (Formal.) □ *The officer was found guilty of abstracting a rather large amount of money from the company.*

abstract something **from** something to take the important information from a longer document; to extract the essentials or the gist from a piece of complicated writing. □ *Can you abstract a shorter article from this material?*

abut on something [particularly of the edge of an area of land] to meet or touch something along one boundary or at one point. □ *Our land abuts on the shopping center's parking lot.*

abut (up) against something to rest firmly against something solid. □ *The end of the board abutted against the foundation.*

accede to something **1.** to agree to the terms or demands that someone has stated. □ *We cannot accede to your demands.* **2.** to assume a position of power or authority; to begin serving in one's official capacity. □ *She acceded to the office of mayor in January.*

accept someone **as** something to consent to receive or consider someone as a particular type of person or a person who can serve a particular role. □ *Sally finally accepted herself as the only possible peacemaker in the dispute.*

accept something **as** something **1.** to agree that something will serve in payment of a debt or in return for something. □ *This receipt shows that we have accepted your money as payment on your debt.* □ *This money has been accepted as reimbursement for the expenditure.* **2.** to resign [oneself] to something that cannot be changed. □ *I must accept what you say as the final decision.*

accept the blame for something Go to the **blame for** something.

acceptable damage and **acceptable losses** *Euph.* casualties or destruction inflicted by an enemy that is considered minor or tolerable. □ *At present, the enemy's first-strike capability would produce acceptable damage.* □ *The general indicated that the fifty thousand casualties were within the range of acceptable losses.*

acceptable losses Go to previous.

***access to** someone or something permission to approach someone or something; the right to use someone or something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) □ *Can you get access to a computer?*

accidentally-on-purpose *Inf.* deliberate, but meant to look like an accident. □ *Then, I accidentally-on-purpose spilled water on him.*

Accidents will happen. *Prov.* It is impossible to completely prevent things from going wrong. (Often used to console someone who has made a mistake or caused an accident.) □ *Child: Mommy, I spilled grape juice all over the carpet! Mother: Don't cry, honey. Accidents will happen.* □ *Jill: I'm so embarrassed. I was just tapping on your window to wake you up. I didn't mean to break it. Jane: Accidents will happen.*

acclimate someone or an animal **to** something and **acclimatize** someone or an animal **to** something to cause a person or other living thing to become used to a different climate or environment. □ *We will help acclimate Henry to the new building.* □ *We need to acclimatize the fish to the new aquarium.*

acclimatize someone or an animal **to** something Go to previous.

accommodate oneself **to** something to adapt oneself to something, such as someone else's needs or a new environment. □ *Please try to accommodate yourself to our routine.*

accommodate someone **with** something to provide something special for someone; to do something that provides for someone's needs or desires. □ *We will try to accommodate you with an earlier flight.*

accompanied by something with something extra to go along with something else; with something to complement something else. □ *Dessert was accompanied by a fine white wine.*

accompany someone **on** a journey **1.** [for someone] to go with someone on a trip, journey, adventure, etc. □ *Would you please accompany me on my next trip?* **2.** [for something] to be brought with someone on a trip, journey, etc. □ *My cameras always accompany me on my travels.*

accompany someone **on** a musical instrument to provide complementary instrumental music for someone's musical performance. □ *Sally accompanied the singer on the piano.*

accompany someone **with** something to use a particular musical instrument to play music that goes along with someone else's musical performance. □ *She accompanied Mary with her flute.*

accord with something to agree with or match up with something; to **jibe with** something. □ *Does this accord with what you heard?*

according to all accounts and **by all accounts** from all the reports [that are available]; according to what everyone is saying. □ *According to all accounts, the police were on the scene immediately.* □ *By all accounts, it was a very poor performance.*

according to Hoyle according to the rules; in keeping with the way something is normally done. (Alludes to the rules for playing games. Edmond Hoyle wrote a widely used book with rules for card games. This expression is usually used for something other than games.) □ *That's wrong. According to Hoyle, this is the way to do it.*

according to one's **own lights** according to the way one believes; according to the way one's conscience or inclinations lead one. □ *John may have been wrong, but he did what he did according to his own lights.*

according to someone or something as said or indicated by someone or something. □ *According to the weather forecast, this should be a beautiful day.*

according to something in proportion to something. □ *You will get paid according to the number of hours that you work.*

account for someone or something to know the state of or whereabouts of someone or something. (Usually in reference to some person or thing placed in one's charge.) □ *They cannot account for three of the passengers.*

account for something to explain something. □ *Your explanation accounts for everything that has happened.*

A

accredit something **to** someone to assign or attribute a deed to someone; to assign or attribute praise to someone. (Often passive.) ☐ *We can accredit this great success to Fred and his committee.*

accrue to someone or something [used of interest paid on money] to be credited to an account or to a person's account. ☐ *Interest will accrue to your account as long as the account is active.*

accuse someone **of** something to charge someone with a crime, a violation of rules or instructions, or doing something wrong. ☐ *Please don't accuse me of forgetting to lock the door.*

accustom someone **to** someone or something to get someone used to someone or something. ☐ *I think we can accustom Fred to the new rules without difficulty.*

***accustomed to** someone or something and ***accustomed to** doing something used to someone or something; used to or in the habit of doing something. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~; grow ~**.) ☐ *The children are accustomed to eating late in the evening.*

ace in the hole and someone's **ace in the hole** *Fig.* something important held in reserve. ☐ *The twenty-dollar bill I keep in my shoe is my ace in the hole.*

ace in(to something**)** to be lucky in getting admitted to something. ☐ *I aced into the history class at the last minute.*

ace out to be fortunate or lucky. ☐ *Freddy aced out at the dentist's office with only one cavity.*

ace out (of something**)** to get out of something through luck; to evade or avoid something narrowly. ☐ *I just aced out of having to take the math test!*

ace someone **out**† to maneuver someone out; to win out over someone. ☐ *Martha aced out Rebecca to win the first place trophy.*

ache for someone or something and **hurt for** someone or something *Fig.* to desire someone or something very much. (So much that it "hurts.") ☐ *Jim ached for the sight of Mary, whom he loved deeply.*

Achilles' heel *Fig.* a weak point or fault in someone or something otherwise perfect or excellent. (From the legend of Greek hero Achilles, who had only one vulnerable part of his body, his heel; as an infant his mother had held him by one heel to dip him in the River Styx to make him invulnerable.) ☐ *He was very brave, but fear of spiders was his Achilles' heel.*

aching heart *Fig.* the feeling of pain because of love that is lost or has faded away. (Described as being in the heart, where love is said to reside.) ☐ *I try to tell my aching heart that I don't love him.*

the **acid test** *Fig.* a test whose findings are beyond doubt or dispute. ☐ *The senator doesn't look too popular just now, but the acid test will be if he gets reelected.*

acknowledge someone **as** something to agree or announce publicly that a person holds a particular office or station, or that a person has particular qualities. ☐ *She found it difficult to acknowledge herself as a failure.*

acknowledge someone **to be right** to admit or state that someone is correct about something. ☐ *Bill said that the car was useless, and the mechanic acknowledged him to be right.*

acknowledge something **as** something to agree or announce publicly that something is as previously stated. ☐ *The president acknowledged the statement as the truth.*

acknowledge (the) receipt of something to report receiving something, such as a package, letter, or notice. ☐ *The company acknowledged receipt of the merchandise I returned.*

acquaint someone **with** something to introduce someone to an unfamiliar thing; to become familiar with something; to get to know something; to tell someone the facts [about someone or something]. (See also **acquainted with** someone; **acquainted with** something.) ☐ *It took a month for the new attorney to acquaint herself with the facts in the case.*

***acquainted with** someone [of a person] known to someone; [of a person] having been introduced to someone. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~; get ~**.) ☐ *We are only acquainted with each other. We are certainly not what you would call close friends.*

***acquainted with** something familiar with something; able to understand or recognize something. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Tom is fully acquainted with the way we do things.*

acquiesce to someone or something to give in to someone or someone's wishes; to agree, perhaps reluctantly, to someone's ideas or requests. ☐ *We are willing to acquiesce to your demands.*

acquire a taste for something Go to a **taste for** something.

acquit someone **of** something to establish someone's innocence of a criminal charge or the blame for some wrongdoing. ☐ *The investigator acquitted Wally of the charges.*

across the board *Fig.* [distributed] equally for everyone or everything. ☐ *The school board raised the pay of all the teachers across the board.*

act as one Go to **as one**.

act as someone to perform in the capacity of someone, temporarily or permanently; to serve in some special capacity, possibly temporarily. ☐ *This is Mr. Smith. He'll act as manager from now on.*

act for someone **1.** to represent someone in an official capacity; to represent the interests of someone. ☐ *Don't worry. I am acting for the owner. I am his real estate agent.* **2.** to take action when the proper person fails to take action. ☐ *I had to act for her since she was out of town.*

act full of oneself Go to **full of** oneself.

act high-and-mighty Go to **high-and-mighty**.

act in earnest Go to **in earnest**.

act like a cold fish Go to a **cold fish**.

act like oneself **again** Go to oneself **again**.

an **act of faith** an act or deed demonstrating religious faith; an act or deed showing trust in someone or something. ☐ *For him to trust you with his safety was a real act of faith.*

an **act of God** an occurrence or an event for which no human is responsible; an act of nature such as a storm, an earthquake, or a wildfire. ☐ *Will your insurance com-*

pany pay for damage caused by earthquakes and other acts of God?

an **act of war 1.** *Lit.* an international act of warlike violence for which war is considered a suitable response. ☐ *To bomb a ship is an act of war.* **2.** *Fig.* any hostile act between two people. ☐ *"You just broke my stereo!" yelled John. "That's an act of war!"*

act out to behave badly. (Usually used to describe young people.) ☐ *Your son has been acting out in the classroom, and his teacher feels that professional intervention is desirable.*

act something **out**† **1.** to perform in real life a role that one has imagined in a fantasy. ☐ *When I was onstage, I was really acting an old fantasy out.* ☐ *I acted out an old fantasy onstage.* **2.** to convert one's bad feelings into action rather than words. ☐ *Don't act your aggressions out on me!* ☐ *She acted out her aggression.* **3.** to demonstrate or communicate something through gestures or action rather than words. ☐ *Act your request out, if you can't say it.* ☐ *She had a sore throat and had to act out her request.*

act tough on someone Go to **tough on** someone.

act up [for a thing or a person] to behave badly. ☐ *This car is acting up again.*

act (up)on something **1.** to take action on a particular problem. (*Upon* is more formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *I will act on this immediately.* **2.** to take action because of some special information. ☐ *The police refused to act upon his complaint because he was an ex-convict.* **3.** to perform on something, usually the stage (in a theater). ☐ *Ken has never acted on the stage or in front of a camera.*

act within one's **rights** Go to **within** one's **rights.**

act young at heart Go to **young at heart.**

Act your age! Behave more maturely! (A rebuke for someone who is acting childish. Often said to a child who is acting like an even younger child.) ☐ *Child: Aw, come on! Let me see your book! Mary: Be quiet and act your age. Don't be such a baby!*

Actions speak louder than words. *Prov. Cliché* What you do is more significant than what you say. ☐ *You keep saying that you'll do your fair share of the housework. Remember that actions speak louder than words.*

adapt someone or something **to** something to cause someone or something to change, adjust to, or get used to something else. ☐ *Can't you adapt yourself to my way of doing things?*

adapt something **for** something to change or alter something for use with something else. ☐ *Has this furnace been adapted for natural gas?*

adapt something **from** something to derive something from something else; to create by modifying something else. ☐ *I adapted my new musical from a novel.*

adapt something **to** something to convert something to fit or work with something else. ☐ *We converted our furnace to natural gas.*

adapt to something to adapt or get used to someone or something. ☐ *Please try to adapt to our routine.*

add fuel to the fire and **add fuel to the flame** *Fig.* to make a problem worse; to say or do something that makes a bad situation worse; to make an angry person get even angrier. (Alludes to causing a flame to grow larger when fuel is added.) ☐ *Shouting at a crying child just adds fuel to the fire.*

add fuel to the flame Go to previous.

add insult to injury *Fig. Cliché* to make a bad situation worse; to hurt the feelings of a person who has already been hurt. ☐ *First, the basement flooded, and then, to add insult to injury, a pipe burst in the kitchen.* ☐ *My car barely started this morning, and to add insult to injury, I got a flat tire in the driveway.*

add something **into** something and **add** something **in**† to introduce something into something else. ☐ *Now, add the eggs into the mixture.* ☐ *Add in some more eggs.*

add (something**) on(to)** something and **add (**something**) on**† to extend something by providing more (of something). (This use of *on* with *add* is colloquial.) ☐ *You added nearly one thousand dollars onto the total.* ☐ *You added on a thousand dollars to the total!* ☐ *You added too much on.*

add (something**) to** something to increase the intensity or amount of something by giving more (of something) to it. ☐ *You added too much sugar to my coffee.*

add something **together** to sum or total two or more things. ☐ *Add these two together and tell me what you get.*

add something **up**† to sum or total a set of figures. (See also **add up (to** something**)**.) ☐ *Please add these figures up again.* ☐ *I didn't add up these figures!*

add up (to something**) 1.** *Lit.* [for a set of figures] to equal a total. ☐ *These figures don't add up to the right total!* **2.** *Fig.* [for facts or explanations] to make sense. (Considering facts as if they were figures.) ☐ *Your explanation just doesn't add up!*

add up to the same thing Go to **amount to the same thing.**

addict someone **to** something to cause someone to become habituated to something, usually alcohol or some another drug. ☐ *The hospital personnel were thought to have addicted John to morphine.* ☐ *She ended up addicting herself to the substance.*

address comments or remarks **to** someone to say something directly to a specific person or group of persons. (See also **address** oneself **to** someone; **address** oneself **to** something.) ☐ *George addressed his remarks to everyone.*

address oneself **to** someone to speak directly to a particular person, rather than someone else. ☐ *I did not address myself to you!*

address oneself **to** something to turn one's complete attention to something, such as a problem or an issue. (See also **address** something **to** someone.) ☐ *Please address yourself to these current, pressing problems.*

address someone **as** a specific title or attribute **1.** to talk to or write to a person, using a particular title. ☐ *They addressed Abraham Lincoln as "Mr. President."* **2.** to treat a person you are talking with in a particular manner. ☐ *You should address him as your equal.*

address something **to** someone to write someone's name and address on an envelope, package, letter, etc. ☐ *Gilbert addressed the envelope to Walter.*

A

adhere to something **1.** *Lit.* to stick to something. ☐ *The stamp won't adhere to the envelope.* **2.** *Fig.* to follow or "stick to" a particular course of action, plan, or set of beliefs. ☐ *If you don't adhere to the proper routine, you will confuse the other workers.*

adjourn for a time to bring a meeting to a temporary close so the participants can take part in some other activity. ☐ *We must adjourn for the day.*

adjourn to some place to bring a meeting to a temporary close so the participants can move to another place (where the meeting will be started again). ☐ *We adjourned to the sitting room.*

adjust (oneself**) to** someone or something to make changes in one's opinion or attitude toward someone or something, such as a change in one's life or environment. ☐ *Can't you adjust yourself to your new office?*

adjust something **to** something to make something fit something else; to alter something to make it suitable for something else. ☐ *The builder adjusted the plans for the new house to the requirements of the fire marshal.*

administer something **to** someone or an animal to present or apply something to a person or an animal. ☐ *The vet administered the drug to the cow.*

admire someone **for** something to have a positive feeling toward someone because of something. ☐ *I really admire you for your courage.*

admire to do something *Rur.* to want to do something, to be happy to do something. ☐ *He asked her to the dance. She said she would admire to go with him.*

admit someone **(in)to** some place to allow someone to enter some place. ☐ *They refused to admit us into the theater.*

admit something **into** something to allow something to be introduced into something else. ☐ *You cannot admit this document into the body of evidence!*

admit something **to** someone to confess something to someone. ☐ *Harry admitted his error to his uncle.*

admit to something to acknowledge or confess something; to acknowledge or confess to having done something. ☐ *Max would not admit to anything.*

admonish someone **for** something to warn or scold someone mildly for doing something. ☐ *The nurse admonished the patient for not eating her dinner.*

adopt someone **as** something to choose someone as something. ☐ *The committee will adopt Jane as its candidate.*

adopt something **as** something to take on something, such as a policy or principle, as one's own. ☐ *I will adopt this policy as my own.*

adore someone **for** doing something to be in awe of someone for doing something well. ☐ *Everyone adores Sally for her wonderful sense of humor.*

adore someone **for** having something to be in awe of someone because of a particular trait or feature. ☐ *Robert adores Mary for her smiling eyes.*

adorn someone or something **with** something to decorate or ornament someone or something with something. ☐ *They adorned the room with garlands of flowers.*

adulterate something **with** something to dilute or taint something with some other substance. ☐ *They adulterated the wine with some sort of drug.*

advance something **to** someone or something **(against** something**)** to make an early payment of a sum of money promised or owed to a person or organization. ☐ *We advanced the money to Tom against his next month's salary.*

advance to(ward) someone or something to move forward in the direction of someone or something. ☐ *The line of people slowly advanced to the door of the theater.*

advance (up)on someone or something to move toward someone or something. (Typically in military maneuvers or in team sports, such as American football. *Upon* is more formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *They advanced upon the town, firing their rifles and shouting.*

advanced in years Go to up in years.

***the advantage of** someone and ***the advantage over** someone; *an **advantage over** someone; *the **advantage over** someone; ***the edge on** someone; ***the edge over** someone a position superior to that of someone else; a status wherein one controls or has superiority or authority over someone else. (*Typically: **get ~; give** someone **~; have ~**.) ☐ *She'd gotten an advantage over me at the start of the competition.* ☐ *I got an edge on Sally, too, and she came in second.*

advertise for someone or something to advertise one's intention to purchase something or hire a particular type of person. ☐ *Did you advertise for a new receptionist?*

advertise something **for** a price to make known by public notice that something is to be sold at a particular price. ☐ *Is this the one that was advertised for a dollar?*

advertise something **for** something to make known by public notice, such as broadcast or print notice, that something is available for purchase or rent. ☐ *Was this apartment advertised for rent?*

advise against something to suggest that something not be done. ☐ *Lisa always advises against hasty actions.*

advise someone **about** someone or something to inform someone about someone or something; to counsel someone about someone or something. ☐ *Bill needs to advise the committee about Karen's request.*

advise someone **against** doing something to encourage or counsel someone not to do something. ☐ *I advised Bill against quitting his job.*

advise someone **of** something to inform someone of specific facts or some other information. ☐ *I hope you will advise Larry of the details of the proposal.*

advise someone **on** someone or something to provide someone with specific advice about someone or something. ☐ *Would you please advise me on what kind of computer to buy?*

affiliate (someone or something**) to** someone or something and **affiliate (**someone or something**) with** someone or something to cause a person or thing to be associated with some other person or thing. ☐ *He did not want to affiliate his club to the other clubs.* ☐ *We tried to affiliate John with other people who shared his interests.*

affiliate (someone or something**) with** someone or something Go to **affiliate (**someone or something**) to** someone or something.

affinity for someone or something a strong preference for something; a strong liking for something. ☐ *Mary's affinity for classical music accounts for her large collection of recordings.*

affix one's **signature to** something to sign one's name on something. ☐ *I affixed my signature to each of the documents.*

affix something **to** someone or something to fasten or attach something to someone or something. ☐ *Please affix these tags to your luggage.*

afflict someone **with** someone to burden someone with an annoying person. ☐ *I was foolish enough to afflict myself with my young cousin for the weekend.*

afflict someone **with** something **1.** *Lit.* to cause someone to suffer from a disease or disability. ☐ *The virus has afflicted everyone in the valley.* **2.** *Fig.* to burden someone with trouble. ☐ *We were afflicted with all the worry that comes with raising a teenager.*

afraid of one's **own shadow** *Fig.* easily frightened; always frightened, timid, or suspicious. (An exaggeration.) ☐ *After Tom was robbed, he was even afraid of his own shadow.*

after a fashion in a manner that is just barely adequate; poorly. ☐ *He thanked me—after a fashion—for my help.* ☐ *Oh, yes, I can swim, after a fashion.*

After a storm comes a calm. and **After the storm comes a calm.;** The **calm after a storm.** *Prov.* Things are often calm after an upheaval. ☐ *Jill: I can't believe how peaceful the office is today, when yesterday everyone was either being fired or threatening to quit. Jane: After a storm comes a calm.*

after all 1. anyway; in spite of what had been decided. (Often refers to a change in plans or a reversal of plans.) ☐ *It looks like Tom will go to law school after all.* **2.** recalling or considering the fact that. ☐ *Don't punish Tommy! After all, he's only three years old!*

after all is said and done *Cliché* when everything is settled or concluded; finally. ☐ *After all is said and done, it will turn out just as I said.*

after hours after the regular closing time; after any normal or regular time, such as one's bedtime. ☐ *John got a job sweeping floors in the library after hours.*

***after** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* following someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; come ~**.) ☐ *Tom comes after Mary in the line.* **2.** *Fig.* in pursuit of someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; chase ~; run ~**.) ☐ *The dog is after a rabbit.*

after the fact after something has happened; after something, such as a crime, has taken place. (Originally a legal phrase.) ☐ *John is always making excuses after the fact.*

after the fashion of someone or something and **after the style of** someone or something in the manner or style of someone or something. ☐ *She walks down the street after the fashion of a grand lady.* ☐ *The parish church was built after the style of a French cathedral.*

after the style of someone or something Go to **after the fashion of** someone or something.

After while(, crocodile). *Inf.* Good-bye till later.; **See you later.** (The word *crocodile* is used only for the sake of the rhyme. It is the response to **See you later, alligator.**) ☐ *Mary: See you later, alligator. Bill: After while, crocodile.*

After you. Please go ahead of me.; Please pass through ahead of me. ☐ *Bob stepped back and made a motion with his hand indicating that Mary should go first. "After you," smiled Bob.*

again and again repeatedly; again and even more [times]. ☐ *He knocked on the door again and again until I finally answered.*

Again(, please). Say it one more time, please. ☐ *Tom: I need some money. I'll pay you back. Bill (pretending not to hear): Again, please. Tom: I said I need some money. How many times do I have to say it?*

against all odds despite very low probability; in a most unlikely way. ☐ *Against all odds, she managed to win the trophy.*

***against** someone or something **1.** in opposition to someone or something; in competition with someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; run ~; stand ~**.) ☐ *I am against everything you stand for.* ☐ *She ran against me in the election.* **2.** to the disadvantage of someone or something; in opposition to someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; go ~; run ~; turn ~**.) ☐ *When did the trial go against us?*

against someone's **will** without a person's consent or agreement. ☐ *You cannot force me to come with you against my will!*

against the clock *Fig.* in a race with time; in a great hurry to get something done before a particular time. ☐ *In a race against the clock, they rushed the accident victim to the hospital.*

***against the grain 1.** *Lit.* across the alignment of the fibers of a piece of wood. (*Typically: **be ~; cut ~; go ~; run ~; saw ~**.) ☐ *You sawed it wrong. You sawed against the grain when you should have cut with grain.* ☐ *You went against the grain and made a mess of your sanding.* **2.** *Fig.* running counter to one's feelings or ideas. (*Typically: **be ~; go ~**.) ☐ *The idea of my actually taking something that is not mine goes against the grain.*

Age before beauty. a jocular and slightly rude way of encouraging someone to go ahead of oneself; a comical, teasing, and slightly grudging way of indicating that someone else should or can go first. ☐ *"No, no. Please, you take the next available seat," smiled Tom. "Age before beauty, you know."*

The **age of miracles is past.** *Prov.* Miracles do not happen nowadays. ☐ *I'm afraid this old vacuum cleaner can't be fixed. The age of miracles is past.*

age out (of something**)** [for an adult] to grow [mentally or in years] out of certain behavior or out of a group or classification that is based on age. (Jargon.) ☐ *Most of them tend to age out at about 35.*

agitate against someone or something to stir up active dissatisfaction about someone or something. ☐ *The students were agitating against the closing of the old cafeteria.*

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agitate for something to stir up active support for something. ☐ *The committee agitated for a change, but nothing was done.*

agonize (oneself**) over** someone or something to fret or anguish about someone or something. ☐ *Now, now, don't agonize yourself over the situation. Time cures all.*

agree to disagree *Cliché* [for two or more parties] to calmly agree not to come to an agreement in a dispute. ☐ *We have accomplished nothing except that we agree to disagree.*

agree to something to consent to something; to allow something to be done; to approve something. ☐ *If you don't agree to my leaving early, I'll just do it anyway.*

agree (up)on someone or something to agree to the choice of someone or something. ☐ *Let's try to agree upon a date.*

agree with someone **1.** *Lit.* to hold the same opinion or judgment as someone else. ☐ *I simply do not agree with you!* **2.** *Fig.* [for something] to be acceptable to someone as food. (Usually negative, referring to the disagreeable consequences of eating bad food.) ☐ *Onions do not agree with me.*

agree (with someone**) (about** someone or something**)** and **agree (with** someone**) ((up)on** someone or something**)** [for two or more parties] to agree with one another about the facts concerning someone or something. ☐ *I agree with you about Judy; she is brilliant.* ☐ *He agreed with Sam upon a time for the meeting.*

agree with something **1.** *Fig.* [for something] to look good or go well with something else. ☐ *This dress does not agree with these shoes, does it?* **2.** *Fig.* [for something] to be in accord with something else. ☐ *Your analysis agrees with mine.*

agree (with something**) (in** something**)** [for grammatical features] to match or go together with other grammatical features. ☐ *The subject and the verb agree in number.*

(Ah) shucks! and **(Ah) shoot!** *Rur.* Darn! (A mild oath.) ☐ *Ah, shucks! I forgot to call Grandma.* ☐ *Tom: We can't get chocolate ice cream. The store's all out. Jane: Shucks.* ☐ *Ah, shoot! I missed my favorite TV show.*

***ahead of** one's **time** *Fig.* having ideas or attitudes that are too advanced to be acceptable in the present. (*Typically: **be ~; think ~**.) ☐ *Sue's grandmother was ahead of her time in wanting to study medicine.*

***ahead of schedule** *Fig.* having done something before the time given on a schedule or before the expected time. (*Typically: **be ~; finish ~**.) ☐ *I want to be able to finish the job ahead of schedule.*

***ahead (of** someone or something**)** farther forward than someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; keep ~; remain ~; stay ~**.) ☐ *I managed to get ahead of everyone else in line and get tickets for everyone.* ☐ *Try to stay ahead of that big truck we just passed.*

***ahead of** something ahead or on target with one's work schedule or responsibilities. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; keep ~; remain ~; stay ~**.) ☐ *By the end of the week, I usually can get ahead of my duties, but not by much.* ☐ *Jerry can't seem to get ahead of his work.*

***ahead of the game** being early; having an advantage in a competitive situation; having done more than necessary. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; keep ~; remain ~; stay ~**.) ☐ *Without the full cooperation of my office staff, I find it hard to stay ahead of the game.* ☐ *If being ahead of the game is important to you and to your business, lease a mobile phone from us.*

***ahead of time** beforehand; before the announced time. (*Typically: **arrive ~; get there ~; leave ~; show up ~**.) ☐ *If you show up ahead of time, you will have to wait.* ☐ *Be there ahead of time if you want to get a good seat.*

***(a)hold of** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* [get/have] a grasp of someone or something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; take ~**.) ☐ *I got hold of him and dragged him back from the edge just in time.* ☐ *I took ahold of his hand and held on tight.* **2.** *Fig.* [get/have] contact with someone or something; [get/have] the location of someone or something. (*Typically: **get ~**.) ☐ *I got hold of a replacement part in Peoria. They are shipping it to us today.* ☐ *Try to get ahold of a plumber, would you?* **3.** *Fig.* [get/have] contact with someone or a group on the telephone. (*Typically: **get ~**.) ☐ *I got hold of her just as she was going out the door.* ☐ *I was able to get ahold of the factory and cancel the order.*

aid and abet someone *Cliché* to help someone; to incite someone to do something, possibly something that is wrong. (Originally a legal phrase.) ☐ *He was scolded for aiding and abetting the boys who were fighting.*

aid someone **in** doing something to help someone do something. ☐ *He aided her in fixing up the back bedroom.*

aid someone **in** something to help someone in some kind of trouble. ☐ *Will you aid me in this difficulty?*

aim for something and **aim at** something to strive toward a particular goal; to direct oneself or one's energies toward something. ☐ *You should aim for success.* ☐ *Aim at getting this done on time.*

aim for the sky Go to reach for the sky.

Aim for the stars! and **Reach for the stars!** Aspire to something!; Set one's goals high! ☐ *Aim for the stars, son! Don't settle for second best.* ☐ *Set your sights high. Reach for the stars!*

aim something **at** someone or something to point or direct something at someone or something. ☐ *Wally aimed the hose at Sarah and tried to soak her.*

aim to do something *Rur.* to intend to do something. ☐ *I didn't aim to hurt your feelings, sugar, you know I didn't.*

ain't fittin' to roll with a pig *Rur.* is or are filthy or uncouth. ☐ *After a day's work in the hot sun, Clyde ain't fittin' to roll with a pig.*

ain't got a grain of sense and **ain't got a lick of sense** *Rur.* is or are foolish. ☐ *Mary spends money like there's no tomorrow. She sure ain't got a grain of sense.* ☐ *I wouldn't trust Jim to take care of my kids. He ain't got a lick of sense.*

ain't got a lick of sense Go to previous.

ain't got the brains God gave a squirrel and **ain't got the sense God gave geese** *Rur.* is or are very foolish. ☐ *There goes John, running around barefooted in the snow. He ain't got the brains God gave a squirrel.* ☐ *No use trying to explain anything to Jane. She ain't got the sense God gave geese.*

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ain't got the sense God gave geese Go to previous.

Ain't it the truth? *Rur. or Jocular* That is true.; Isn't that true? (Used to agree with a statement someone has made.) ☐ *Jane: I swear, life can be a trial sometimes. Bill: Yes, Lordy. Ain't it the truth?*

ain't particular 1. *Rur.* doesn't or don't care. ☐ *Tom: Would you rather have ice cream or cheese on your apple pie? Mary: Whatever you're having. I ain't particular.* **2.** *Rur.* doesn't or don't have a preference. ☐ *Jane ain't particular. She'll use any old brand of soap.*

*the **air** *Fig.* a dismissal. (*Typically: **get ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Whenever I get around Tom, I end up getting the air.*

air one's **belly** *Fig. Sl.* to empty one's stomach; to vomit. ☐ *I had a bad case of food poisoning and was airing my belly for most of the night.*

air one's **dirty linen in public** and **wash** one's **dirty linen in public** *Fig.* to discuss private or embarrassing matters in public, especially when quarreling. (This *linen* refers to sheets and tablecloths or other soiled cloth.) ☐ *They are arguing again. Why must they always air their dirty linen in public?* ☐ *She will talk to anyone about her problems. Why does she wash her dirty linen in public?*

air one's **grievances** *Fig.* to complain; to make a public complaint. ☐ *I know how you feel, John, but it isn't necessary to air your grievances over and over.*

air one's **lungs 1.** *Rur.* to swear. ☐ *Don't pay those old cowboys no mind. They're just airin' the lungs.* ☐ *I could tell John was working on his old car 'cause I could hear him out in the garage, airin' his lungs.* **2.** *Rur.* to talk, gossip, or brag. ☐ *The ladies just love to air their lungs whenever they get together.*

air one's **paunch** *Sl.* to vomit. ☐ *He got so nauseous that he spent much of the night airing his paunch.*

air one's **pores** *Sl.* to undress oneself; to become naked. ☐ *Me and Wilbur, that's my brother, both fell in the creek and had to air our pores a while so our pants could dry out.*

air out [for something] to remain in the fresh air and become fresher. ☐ *The pillows are airing out on the balcony.*

air something **out**† to freshen something up by placing it in the open air; to freshen a room by letting outside air move through it. ☐ *I'll have to air out the car. Someone has been smoking in it.*

alert someone **to** something to make someone aware of trouble or potential trouble. ☐ *The auditors alerted us to some problems with the accounts.*

alienate someone **from** someone or something to cause someone to feel negative about someone or something. ☐ *The teacher alienated the entire class from the subject of calculus.*

alight from something to get off something; to get down off something. ☐ *Almost three hundred people alighted from the plane.*

alight (up)on someone or something to land on something; [for a bird or other flying animal] to come to rest on something. (*Upon* is more formal than *on*.) ☐ *A small bird alighted on the branch directly over my head.* ☐ *It alighted upon the branch and began to sing.*

align oneself **with** someone or something *Fig.* to bring oneself into agreement with someone or someone's ideas; to associate oneself with someone or someone's cause. ☐ *She sought to align herself with the older members.*

align something **with** something to adjust, straighten, or arrange something in reference to something else. ☐ *Try to align this piece with the one next to it.*

***alike as (two) peas in a pod** very similar. (Compare this with **like (two) peas in a pod**. *Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *These two books are as alike as peas in a pod.*

alive and kicking and **alive and well** *Fig.* well and healthy. ☐ *Jane: How is Bill since his illness last month? Mary: Oh; he's alive and kicking.* ☐ *The last time I saw Tom, he was alive and well.*

alive and well Go to previous.

alive with people or things *Fig.* covered with, filled with, or active with people or creatures. ☐ *Look! Ants everywhere. The floor is alive with ants!*

all agog surprised and amazed. ☐ *He sat there, all agog, as the master of ceremonies read his name as the winner of first prize.*

all and sundry *Cliché* everyone; one and all. ☐ *Cold drinks were served to all and sundry.*

all around Robin Hood's barn going somewhere by an indirect route; going way out of the way [to get somewhere]; by a long and circuitous route. ☐ *We had to go all around Robin Hood's barn to get to the little town.*

all at once 1. *Lit.* all at the same time. ☐ *The entire group spoke all at once.* **2.** *Fig.* suddenly. ☐ *All at once the little girl fell out of her chair.*

(all) at sea (about something**)** *Fig.* to be confused; to be lost and bewildered. (Alludes to being lost at sea.) ☐ *When it comes to higher math, John is totally at sea.*

***(all) balled up** troubled; confused; in a mess. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *John is all balled up because his car was stolen.*

(all) beer and skittles all fun and pleasure; easy and pleasant. (Skittles is the game of ninepins, a game similar to bowling. Fixed phrase.) ☐ *For Sam, college was beer and skittles. He wasted a lot of time and money.*

all better (now) improved or cured. (Juvenile.) ☐ *I fell off my tricycle and bumped my knee. Mommy kissed it, and it's all better now.*

all by one's **lonesome** *Rur.* all alone; by oneself. ☐ *Mary's folks went out and left her all by her lonesome.*

All cats are gray in the dark. *Prov.* When in the dark, appearances are meaningless, since everything is hard to see or unseen. ☐ *I don't care if my date is ugly. All cats are gray in the dark.*

all day long throughout the day; during the entire day. ☐ *We waited for you at the station all day long.*

***(all) dolled up** *Fig.* dressed up and well-groomed. (Usually used of females. *Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I have to get all dolled up for the dance tonight.*

***(all) dressed up** dressed in one's best clothes; dressed formally. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; get** someone **~**.) ☐ *I really hate to get all dressed up just to go somewhere to eat.*

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all dressed up and nowhere to go and **all dressed up with nowhere to go** completely ready for something that has been postponed or has failed to materialize. (May be literal or figurative.) ☐ *Tom: I just heard that your company is closed today. Fred: Gee, I'm all dressed up and nowhere to go.* ☐ *The space shot was cancelled, so all the astronauts are all dressed up with nowhere to go.*

all ears *Fig.* listening eagerly and carefully. ☐ *Well, hurry up and tell me. I'm all ears.*

all eyes and ears *Fig.* listening and watching eagerly and carefully. ☐ *Be careful what you say. The children are all eyes and ears.* ☐ *Tell us quick. We are all eyes and ears!*

(all) for someone or something *Fig.* (completely) in favor of someone or something; supporting someone or something. ☐ *I'm all for your candidacy.* ☐ *I'm for the incumbent in the upcoming election.*

(all) for the best good in spite of the way it seems; better than you think or than it appears to be. (Often said when someone dies after a painful illness.) ☐ *I'm very sorry to hear of the death of your aunt. Perhaps it's for the best.* ☐ *I didn't get into the college I wanted, but I couldn't afford it anyway. It's probably all for the best.*

all gone used up; finished; over with. ☐ *Oh, the strawberry jelly is all gone.* ☐ *We used to have wonderful parties, but those days are all gone.*

All good things must (come to an) end. *Prov.* All experiences, even pleasant ones, eventually end. ☐ *It's time to leave the party, honey. All good things must end.* ☐ *We've had a lovely visit, but all good things must come to an end.*

all hell broke loose all sorts of wild or terrible things happened. ☐ *When the boss left early for the weekend, all hell broke loose.*

***(all) het up** *Rur.* very angry or upset. (All "heated" up. *Typically: **get ~; be ~**.) ☐ *The boss got all het up when I said my project would be late.* ☐ *Jane gets real het up when folks tease her about her freckles.*

***all hours (of the day and night)** *Fig.* very late in the night or very early in the morning. (*Typically: **until ~; till ~; at ~**.) ☐ *Why do you always stay out until all hours of the day and night?* ☐ *I like to stay out till all hours.*

all in completely tired. ☐ *I'm all in. I need some rest.* ☐ *After their 10-mile hike the campers were all in and very hungry.*

all in a day's work part of what is expected; typical or normal. ☐ *I don't particularly like to cook, but it's all in a day's work.* ☐ *Cleaning up after other people is all in a day's work for a busboy.*

all in all considering everything that has happened; in summary and in spite of any unpleasantness. ☐ *All in all, it was a very good party.* ☐ *All in all, I'm glad that I visited New York City.*

all in good time at some future time; in the near future; in good time; soon. (This phrase is used to encourage people to be patient and wait quietly.) ☐ *When will the baby be born? All in good time.* ☐ *Mary: I'm starved! When will Bill get here with the pizza? Tom: All in good time, Mary, all in good time.*

(all) in one breath *Fig.* spoken very rapidly, usually while one is very excited. ☐ *Ann said all in one breath, "Hurry, quick! The parade is coming!"* ☐ *Jane was in a play, and she was so excited that she said her whole speech in one breath.*

all in one piece *Fig.* safely; without damage. ☐ *Her son came home from school all in one piece, even though he had been in a fight.* ☐ *The package was handled carelessly, but the vase inside arrived all in one piece.*

(all) in the family restricted to one's own family, as with private or embarrassing information. ☐ *Don't tell anyone else. Please keep it all in the family.* ☐ *He only told his brother because he wanted it to remain in the family.*

(all) joking aside and **(all) kidding aside** being serious for a moment; in all seriousness. ☐ *I know I laugh at him but, joking aside, he's a very clever scientist.* ☐ *I know I threatened to leave and go round the world, but, joking aside, I do need a vacation.*

(all) kidding aside Go to previous.

***all kinds of** someone or something *Fig.* a great number of people or things; a great amount of something, especially money. (*Typically: **be ~; have ~**.) ☐ *There were all kinds of people there, probably thousands.* ☐ *The Smith family has all kinds of money.*

all manner of someone or something *Fig.* all types of people or things. ☐ *We saw all manner of people there. They came from every country in the world.* ☐ *They were selling all manner of things in the country store.*

all my eye (and Betty Martin) nonsense; not true. ☐ *Jane is always talking about her wonderful childhood, but it's all my eye.* ☐ *He pretends to have great plans, but they're all my eye and Betty Martin.*

all night long throughout the whole night. ☐ *I couldn't sleep all night long.* ☐ *John was sick all night long.*

all oak and iron bound and ***sound as a barrel** *Rur.* in good health; feeling good. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Tom: How are you today? Bill: All oak and iron bound, thank you.* ☐ *Jane made a wonderful recovery from her surgery, and now she's as sound as a barrel.*

all of a size *Rur.* all of the same size. ☐ *I tried to pick out the biggest tomato, but they were pretty much all of a size.* ☐ *The houses in that neighborhood are all of a size.*

all of a sudden suddenly. ☐ *All of a sudden lightning struck the tree we were sitting under.* ☐ *I felt a sharp pain in my side all of a sudden.*

all or nothing 1. *Lit.* everything or nothing at all. ☐ *Sally would not accept only part of the money. She wanted all or nothing.* ☐ *I can't bargain over trifles. I will have to have all or nothing.* **2.** *Fig.* [the best] time to choose to do something or not to do it. ☐ *It was all or nothing. Tim had to jump off the truck or risk drowning when the truck went into the water.* ☐ *Jane stood at the door of the airplane and checked her parachute. It was all or nothing now. She had to jump or be looked upon as a coward.*

all over 1. and **(all) over with** finished. ☐ *Dinner is all over. I'm sorry you didn't get any.* ☐ *It's all over. He's dead now.* **2.** everywhere. ☐ *Oh, I just itch all over.* ☐ *She's spreading the rumor all over.*

(all) over again starting over completely again; going through something completely yet another time. ☐ *Do I have to go through this all over again?* ☐ *Please start over again for those who came in late.*

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all over creation and **all over hell and half of Georgia; all over hell and gone; to hell and gone** *Rur.* everywhere. ☐ *Little Billy had his toys spread out all over creation. It took forever to clean up after him.* ☐ *They're looking all over creation, trying to find the missing man.* ☐ *Tom has traveled all over hell and half of Georgia trying to find the man who done him wrong.*

all over hell and gone Go to previous.

all over hell and half of Georgia Go to all over creation.

***all over (some place)** found in every place; available in all locations. (*Typically: **be ~; spread ~**.) ☐ *The window shattered and shards of glass were all over the place.* ☐ *There are ants all over the cake!*

all over the earth and **all over the world** *Fig.* everywhere. ☐ *Gravity acts the same all over the earth.* ☐ *Human nature is the same all over the world.*

all over the world Go to previous.

all over town 1. *Lit.* in many places in town. ☐ *Our dog got loose and ran all over town.* ☐ *Jane looked all over town for a dress to wear to the party.* **2.** *Fig.* known to many; widely known. ☐ *Now keep this a secret. I don't want it all over town.* ☐ *In a short time the secret was known all over town.*

all right 1. an indication of agreement or acquiescence. (Often pronounced *aright* in familiar conversation.) ☐ *Father: Do it now, before you forget. Bill: All right.* ☐ *Tom: Please remember to bring me back a pizza. Sally: All right, but I get some of it.* **2.** *Inf.* a shout of agreement or encouragement. (Usually **All right!**) ☐ *Alice: Come on, let's give Sally some encouragement. Fred: All right, Sally! Keep it up! You can do it!* ☐ *"That's the way to go! All right!" shouted various members of the audience.* **3.** well, good, or okay, but not excellent. (This phrase has all the uses that *okay* has.) ☐ *I was a little sick, but now I'm all right.* ☐ *His work is all right, but nothing to brag about.* ☐ *All right, it's time to go.* **4.** beyond a doubt; as the evidence shows. ☐ *The dog's dead all right. It hasn't moved at all.* ☐ *The train's late all right. There must be a problem up the line.*

All right for you! That's the end of being friendly with you!; That's the last chance for you! (Usually said by a child who is angry with a playmate.) ☐ *All right for you, John. See if I ever play with you again.* ☐ *All right for you! I'm telling your mother what you did.*

all right with someone agreeable to someone. ☐ *If you want to ruin your life and marry Tom, it's all right with me.* ☐ *I'll see if using the car is all right with my father.*

All righty. *Inf.* All right.; OK. ☐ *Tom: Let's go to the state fair. Bill: All righty, let's do that.* ☐ *Everybody ready? All righty, then, let's get started.*

All right(y) already! *Inf.* an impatient way of indicating agreement or acquiescence. ☐ *Alice: All right already! Stop pushing me! Mary: I didn't do anything!* ☐ *Bill: Come on! Get over here! Bob: All righty already! Don't rush me!*

All roads lead to Rome. *Prov.* There are many different routes to the same goal. ☐ *Mary was criticizing the way that Jane was planting the flowers. John said, "Never mind, Mary, all roads lead to Rome."* ☐ *Some people learn by doing. Others have to be taught. In the long run, all roads lead to Rome.*

All's fair in love and war. *Prov. Cliché* In some situations, such as when you are in love or waging war, you are allowed to be deceitful in order to get what you want. (Often said as an excuse for deception.) ☐ *I cheated on the entrance exam, but I really want to get into that school, and all's fair in love and war.* ☐ *To get Judy to go out with him, Bob lied and told her that her boyfriend was seeing another woman. All's fair in love and war.*

All's well that ends well. *Prov. Cliché* An event that has a good ending is good even if some things went wrong along the way. (This is the name of a play by Shakespeare.) ☐ *I'm glad you finally got here, even though your car had a flat tire on the way. Oh, well. All's well that ends well.* ☐ *The groom was late for the wedding, but everything worked out all right. All's well that ends well.*

***(all) set (to do something)** prepared or ready to do something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Are you set to cook the steaks?* ☐ *Yes, the fire is ready, and I'm all set to start.*

***all shook up** *Sl.* excited; disturbed and upset. (See also shook up. *Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *She stole my heart, and I'm all shook up.* ☐ *They were all shook up after the accident.*

all show and no go *Sl.* equipped with good looks but lacking action or energy. (Used to describe someone or something that looks good but does not perform as promised.) ☐ *That shiny car of Jim's is all show and no go.* ☐ *He's mighty handsome, but I hear he's all show and no go.*

(all) skin and bones Go to nothing but skin and bones.

***all spruced up** freshened up; tidied up; cleaned up. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; get someone or something ~**.) ☐ *Let's get the yard all spruced up for spring.*

all sweetness and light *Cliché* very kind, innocent, and helpful. ☐ *She was mad at first, but after a while, she was all sweetness and light.* ☐ *At the reception, the whole family was all sweetness and light, but they argued and fought after the guests left.*

All systems (are) go. *Cliché* Everything is ready. (Originally said when preparing to launch a rocket.) ☐ *The rocket is ready to blast off—all systems are go.* ☐ *Tom: Are you guys ready to start playing? Bill: Sure, Tom, all systems go.*

all talk (and no action) talking often about doing something, but never actually doing it. ☐ *The car needs washing, but Bill is all talk and no action on this matter.* ☐ *Bill keeps saying he'll get a job soon, but he's all talk and no action.* ☐ *Bill won't do it. He's just all talk.*

All that glistens is not gold. Go to next.

All that glitters is not gold. and **All that glistens is not gold.** *Prov.* Just because something looks attractive does not mean it is genuine or valuable. (Often said as a warning.) ☐ *Hollywood may look like an exciting place to live, but I don't think you should move there. All that glitters is not gold.* ☐ *I know Susie is popular and pretty, but don't be fooled by that. All that glitters is not gold.*

All the best to someone. Go to Give my best to someone.

all the livelong day all day long. ☐ *Well, of course you get to feeling stiff, sitting in front of a computer all the livelong day.* ☐ *I'd go crazy if I had to stay at home all the livelong day.*

A

***all the marbles** *Fig.* all the winnings, spoils, or rewards. (*Typically: **end up with ~; get ~; win ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Somehow Fred always seems to end up with all the marbles. I don't think he plays fair.*

all the more reason for doing something and **all the more reason to** do something with even better reason or cause for doing something. (Can be included in a number of grammatical constructions.) ☐ *Bill: I don't do well in calculus because I don't like the stuff. Father: All the more reason for working harder at it.* ☐ *Bob: I'm tired of painting this fence. It's so old it's rotting! Sally: All the more reason to paint it.*

all the rage *Fig.* in current fashion; being a current fad. ☐ *A new dance called the "floppy disc" is all the rage.* ☐ *Wearing a rope instead of a belt was all the rage in those days.*

all the same and **just the same** nevertheless; anyhow. ☐ *They were told not to bring presents, but they brought them all the same.* ☐ *His parents told him to stay home, but John went out just the same.*

all the same (to someone**)** and **just the same (to** someone**)** of no consequence to someone—one way or the other; [of a choice] immaterial to someone. ☐ *It's all the same to me whether we win or lose.* ☐ *If it's just the same to you, I'd rather walk than ride.* ☐ *If it's all the same, I'd rather you didn't smoke.*

all the time 1. *Lit.* throughout a specific period of time. ☐ *Bill was stealing money for the last two years, and Tom knew it all the time.* ☐ *All the time through December and January, Jane held down two jobs.* **2.** *Fig.* at all times; continuously. ☐ *Your blood keeps flowing all the time.* ☐ *That electric motor runs all the time.* **3.** *Fig.* repeatedly; habitually. ☐ *She keeps a handkerchief in her hand all the time.* ☐ *He whistles all the time. It drives me crazy.*

all the way 1. *Lit.* from the beginning to the end; the entire distance, from start to finish. ☐ *The ladder reaches all the way to the top of the house.* ☐ *I walked all the way home.* **2.** *Fig.* with everything on it, as with a hamburger with pickles, onion, catsup, mustard, lettuce, etc. ☐ *I'd like one double cheeseburger—all the way.* ☐ *Make mine all the way.* **3.** *Sl.* [progressing] up to and including sexual intercourse. ☐ *They went all the way on their date last night.*

all the way live *Sl.* very exciting; excellent. ☐ *Man, this place is all the way live.* ☐ *Oh, Tiffany is just, like, all the way live!*

all there *Fig.* alert, aware, and mentally sound. (Usually negative.) ☐ *After talking with Larry today, I get the feeling that he's not quite all there.* ☐ *You do such foolish things sometimes! I wonder if you're all there.*

all things being equal Go to other things being equal.

All things must pass. and **All things will pass.** *Fig.* Everything comes to an end eventually. ☐ *You'll get over this setback. All things must pass.*

all things to all men and **all things to all people** *Fig.* [for someone or something] liked or used by all people; [for someone or something] everything that is wanted by all people. ☐ *You simply can't be all things to all people.* ☐ *The candidate set out to be all things to all men and came off looking very wishy-washy.*

all things to all people Go to previous.

All things will pass. Go to All things must pass.

all thumbs *Fig.* very awkward and clumsy, especially with one's hands. ☐ *Poor Bob can't play the piano at all. He's all thumbs.* ☐ *Mary is all thumbs when it comes to gardening.*

all to the good for the best; to one's benefit. ☐ *He missed the train, but it was all to the good because the train had a wreck.* ☐ *It was all to the good that he died without suffering.*

all told *Fig.* totaled up; including all parts. ☐ *All told, he earned about $700 last week.* ☐ *All told, he has many fine characteristics.*

***all tore up (about** something**)** *Inf.* very upset and sorry about something. (The correct *torn* can also be used. *Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *When Jim's dog was lost, he was all tore up about it.* ☐ *I'm all tore up about denting your car like that. I'd be more than happy to pay for fixing it.*

***(all) tuckered out** *Rur.* tired out; worn out. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Poor John worked so hard that he's all tuckered out.* ☐ *Look at that little baby sleeping. She's really tuckered out.*

all vine and no taters *Rur.* to be all display with no real value. ☐ *She's a good-looking woman, but really she's all vine and no taters.* ☐ *Don't be fooled by Jim's flowery promises. They're all vine and no taters.*

all walks of life *Fig.* all social, economic, and ethnic groups. ☐ *We saw people at the airport from all walks of life.* ☐ *The people who came to the street fair represented all walks of life.*

(all) well and good good; desirable. ☐ *It's well and good that you're here on time. I was afraid you'd be late again.* ☐ *It's all well and good that you're passing English, but what about math and science?*

all wet 1. *Lit.* completely wet. ☐ *I fell in and got all wet.* **2.** *Fig.* mistaken; wrongheaded; on the wrong track. ☐ *That's not the correct answer, John. You're all wet.* ☐ *If you think that prices will come down, you're all wet.*

all wool and a yard wide *Fig.* trustworthy and genuinely good. (A description of good quality wool cloth.) ☐ *Mary's a fine human being—all wool and a yard wide.* ☐ *I won't hear a word against Bill. He's all wool and a yard wide.*

all wool and no shoddy *Rur.* one hundred percent good quality. ☐ *Everything Mary sells is the best there is, all wool and no shoddy.* ☐ *John's a good man through and through—all wool and no shoddy.*

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. *Prov.* It is not healthy for someone to work all the time and never play. (Often used to exhort someone to stop working, or to justify why you have stopped working. You can substitute the name of the person you are addressing for *Jack*.) ☐ *Don't come to the office this weekend. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.* ☐ *I'd like to take a week's vacation next month. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.*

all year round *Fig.* throughout all the seasons of the year; during the entire year. ☐ *The public swimming pool is enclosed so that it can be used all year round.* ☐ *In the South they can grow flowers all year round.*

allocate something **to** someone or something and **allocate** something **between** someone or something; **allocate** something **among** someone or something to give or assign something to someone or something. (*Between* with two, *among* with three or more.) ☐ *The committee allocated the surplus cheese to the elderly people in the community.* ☐ *David allocated the money among all the members.* ☐ *He allocated the work between Fred and George.* ☐ *We had to allocate the money between the philanthropy and social committees.*

allot something **to** someone or something to give or assign something to someone or something. ☐ *We will allot a share of the proceeds to charity.* ☐ *I allotted a small portion of the work to Fred.*

***an all-out effort** a very good and thorough effort. (*Typically: **begin ~; have ~; make ~; start ~**.) ☐ *We need to make an all-out effort to get this job done on time.* ☐ *The government began an all-out effort to reduce the federal budget.*

all-out war total war, as opposed to limited military actions or threats of war. ☐ *We are now concerned about all-out war in the Middle East.* ☐ *Threats of all-out war caused many tourists to leave the country immediately.*

allow for someone or something **1.** to plan on having enough of something (such as food, space, etc.) for someone. ☐ *Mary is bringing Bill on the picnic, so be sure to allow for him when buying the food.* ☐ *Allow for an extra person when setting the table tonight.* **2.** to plan on the possibility of something. ☐ *Allow for a few rainy days on your vacation.* ☐ *Be sure to allow for future growth when you plant the rosebushes.*

Allow me. and **Permit me.** Please let me help you. (Typically said by someone politely assisting another person, as by opening a door or providing some personal service. In Allow me, the stress is usually on *me*. In Permit me, the stress is usually on *-mit*.) ☐ *Tom and Jane approached the door. "Allow me," said Tom, grabbing the doorknob.* ☐ *"Permit me," said Fred, pulling out a gold-plated lighter and lighting Jane's cigarette.*

allow some elbow room Go to some elbow room.

allow someone or something **in**† Go to next.

allow someone or something **into** a place and **allow** someone or something **in**† to permit someone or something to enter some place. ☐ *Will they allow you in the restaurant without a tie?* ☐ *They won't allow in too many visitors.*

allow someone **up (from** something**)** to permit someone to arise or get up. (Fixed phrase.) ☐ *He knocked Peter down and would not allow him up from the ground.* ☐ *The doctor won't allow you up!*

allow something **for** something **1.** to allocate a share or a suitable amount of something, such as time, money, space, etc., for some activity or goal. ☐ *I allowed only an hour for lunch.* ☐ *They did not allow enough money for their expenditures this month.* **2.** to give consideration to circumstances or contingencies. ☐ *We allowed room for expansion when we designed the building.* ☐ *Allowing for his youth and lack of experience, I forgave him completely for his oversight.*

alloy something **with** something **1.** *Lit.* to combine one molten metal into another molten metal. ☐ *Is it possible to alloy copper with nickel?* ☐ *The copper has been alloyed with nickel.* **2.** *Fig.* to combine one quality or attribute with another. ☐ *She alloyed her courage with a helping of wisdom.* ☐ *Her courage has been alloyed with wisdom.*

allude to someone or something to refer to someone or something; to make an implication about someone or something. ☐ *I did not mean to allude to someone you disliked so much.* ☐ *I alluded to the accident only once.*

ally oneself **to** someone or something to unite or affiliate oneself with someone or something. ☐ *She sought to ally herself to the older members.* ☐ *Jane allied herself to the teacher almost immediately.*

ally (oneself**) (with** someone**) (against** someone or something**)** to unite with someone in opposition to someone or something. ☐ *Sally allied herself with John against the committee.* ☐ *We allied with the older ones against the younger ones.* ☐ *They allied themselves against the attackers.*

the almighty dollar *Fig.* the U.S. dollar, or the acquisition of money, when viewed as more important than anything else. ☐ *Bill was a slave to the almighty dollar.* ☐ *It's the almighty dollar that drives Wall Street thinking.*

(almost) jump out of one's **skin** and **nearly jump out of** one's **skin** *Fig.* to react strongly to shock or surprise. ☐ *Oh! You really scared me. I nearly jumped out of my skin.* ☐ *Bill was so startled he almost jumped out of his skin.*

almost lost it *Fig.* to nearly lose one's temper, composure, or control, as out of anger. ☐ *I was so mad, I almost lost it.* ☐ *When he saw the dent in his fender, he almost lost it.*

(a)long about a certain time near a particular time. ☐ *We arrived in town long about midnight and went right to the hotel.* ☐ *Along about his thirteenth birthday, Tom decided he was old enough to leave home.*

along in years Go to up in years.

along similar lines Go to along those lines.

along these lines Go to next.

along those lines and **along these lines; along similar lines** similarly; in nearly the same way. ☐ *We will deal with the other students along similar lines.*

along with someone or something in addition to someone or something; together with someone or something. ☐ *Jane went to the mall along with David.* ☐ *I ate some chocolates along with some fruit.*

alongside (of) someone or something as compared with a person or a thing. (The things being compared need not be beside one another. *Of* is normally used before pronouns.) ☐ *Our car looks quite small alongside of theirs.* ☐ *My power of concentration is quite limited alongside of yours.*

***aloof from** someone or something being remote or distant from someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; keep ~; remain ~; stay ~**.) ☐ *She tends to keep aloof from the rest of us.* ☐ *Ken stays aloof from other committee members between meetings.*

alpha and omega both the beginning and the end; the essentials, from the beginning to the end; everything, from the beginning to the end. ☐ *He was forced to learn the alpha and omega of corporate law in order to even talk to the lawyers.* ☐ *He loved her deeply. She was his alpha and omega.*

A

alphabet soup initialisms and acronyms, especially when used excessively. ☐ *The names of these government agencies are just alphabet soup.* ☐ *Just look at the telephone book! You can't find anything because it's filled with alphabet soup.*

also-ran someone of no significance. (From horse racing, used of a horse that finishes a race but that does not finish among the money winners.) ☐ *Oh, he's just another also-ran.* ☐ *Ignore the also-rans.*

alternate between someone **and** someone else and **alternate between** something **and** something else to choose or change between two persons or things alternately. ☐ *The job will alternate between Gil and Ed.* ☐ *The maid will alternate between the first floor and the second floor.*

alternate with something **1.** [for someone] to serve as a substitute for someone. ☐ *I alternated with Fred as the lead in the school play.* ☐ *They asked Harry to alternate with Ron on the team.* **2.** [for something] to appear repetitively and regularly in a sequence with something else. (For instance, A alternates with B in the sequence ABABAB.) ☐ *In this design the straight lines alternate with the circles.* ☐ *The red dots alternate with the blue ones.*

always chasing rainbows tending to look for something (more) exciting and (more) rewarding but without realistic expectations. ☐ *He can't seem to settle down and enjoy life. He's always chasing rainbows.*

Am I glad to see you! I am very glad to see you! (Not a question. There is a stress on *I* and another on *you*.) ☐ *Bill: Well, I finally got here! John: Wow! Am I glad to see you!* ☐ *Tom (as Bill opens the door): Here I am, Bill. What's wrong? Bill: Boy, am I glad to see you! I need your help right now.*

Am I my brother's keeper? Go to I am not my brother's keeper.

Am I right? *Inf.* Isn't that so? Right? (A way of demanding a response and stimulating further conversation.) ☐ *John: Now, this is the kind of thing we should be doing. Am I right? Sue: Well, sure. I guess.* ☐ *Fred: You don't want to do this for the rest of your life. Am I right? Bob: Yeah. Fred: You want to make something of yourself. Am I right? Bob: I suppose.*

amalgamate something **with** something to unite something with something else; to merge two things. ☐ *We will amalgamate this company with another firm.* ☐ *How long has our local been amalgamated with the national union?*

amalgamate with something to join with something; to merge with something. ☐ *Our group decided to amalgamate with another group.* ☐ *The groups did not amalgamate after all.*

amble along (something**)** to walk along slowly and casually somewhere. ☐ *They ambled along the path.* ☐ *I was just ambling along, minding my own business, when I tripped.*

ambulance chaser a lawyer who hurries to the scene of an accident to try to get business from injured persons. ☐ *The insurance companies are cracking down on ambulance chasers.*

***American as apple pie** *Cliché* quintessentially American. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *A small house with a white picket fence is supposed to be as American as apple pie.*

amount to much to be as good as something; to be any good. ☐ *His fine plans don't amount to much, since he won't work for them. (Usually negative.)* ☐ *She's a nice girl, but she'll never amount to much.*

amount to something **1.** *Lit.* [for someone or something] to become worthwhile or successful. ☐ *I hope Charles amounts to something some day.* ☐ *I doubt that this business will ever amount to anything really profitable.* **2.** *Fig.* [for something] to be the equivalent of something. ☐ *Why, doing this amounts to cheating!* ☐ *Your comments amount to treason.* **3.** and **amount (up) to** something [for a sum of money] to increase [to a large amount]. ☐ *Is that everything you want to buy? That amounts to twenty dollars.* ☐ *These charges amount up to a lot.*

amount to the same thing and **come to the same thing; add up to the same thing** *Fig.* to be the same [as something]. ☐ *Borrowing can be the same as stealing. If the owner does not know what you have borrowed, it amounts to the same thing.* ☐ *With cars—whether they're red or blue—it comes to the same thing.*

amount (up) to something Go to amount to something.

amuse someone **with** something to entertain or interest someone with something. ☐ *Try to amuse the child with this little toy.* ☐ *She was able to amuse herself with the puzzle for a while.*

ancient history *Fig.* someone or something from so long ago as to be completely forgotten or no longer important, as a former relationship. ☐ *Bob? I never think about Bob anymore. He's ancient history.* ☐ *His interest in joining the army is now ancient history.*

and all that jazz and all that stuff; and all that nonsense. ☐ *I need some glue, paper, string, and all that jazz to make a kite.* ☐ *She told me I was selfish, hateful, rude, ugly, and all that jazz.*

and change plus a few cents; plus a few hundredths. (Used in citing a price or other decimal figure to indicate an additional fraction of a full unit.) ☐ *This one only costs ten bucks and change.* ☐ *The New York Stock Exchange was up seven points and change for the third broken record this week.*

And how! *Inf.* I agree! ☐ *I am really excited you are here. And how!* ☐ *Bill: I am pleased you are here. Bob: Me, too! And how!*

and so forth and **and so on** with additional related or similar things mentioned (but not specified). ☐ *She told me everything about her kids and so forth.* ☐ *I heard about problems at work and so forth.* ☐ *He told me about all his health problems, including his arthritis and so on.* ☐ *I need some help getting ready for dinner, setting the table, and so on.*

and so on Go to and so forth.

and something **to spare** and **with** something **to spare** *Fig.* with extra left over; with more than is needed. ☐ *I had as much flour as I needed with some to spare.* ☐ *Fred said he should have enough cash to last the week—with money to spare.*

and that's a fact *Fig.* and that is true. (Used to emphasize a statement.) ☐ *John ain't no friend of mine, and that's a fact.* ☐ *I'll be glad when this day is over, and that's a fact.*

And that's that. That is final and nothing more needs to be said. ☐ *I refuse to go with you and that's that!*

A

and the like and other similar things. ☐ *Whenever we go on a picnic, we take potato chips, hot dogs, soda pop, and the like.* ☐ *I'm very tired of being yelled at, pushed around, and the like.*

and them Go to **and those**.

and then some and even more; and more than has been mentioned. ☐ *John is going to have to run like a deer and then some to win this race.* ☐ *The cook put the amount of salt called for into the soup and then some.*

and this and that and more; and other miscellaneous things. ☐ *Mom sent me some pillowcases, some sheets, a couple of blankets, and this and that.* ☐ *The repairman tightened some screws, fiddled with some bolts, and this and that.*

and those and **and them** *Rur.* and some other people; and other friends or family members. ☐ *But if we invite Jill, Mary and them will want to come.* ☐ *Jim and those was sayin' nasty things about me.*

and what have you and more things; and other various things. ☐ *Their garage is full of bikes, sleds, old boots, and what have you.* ☐ *The merchant sells writing paper, pens, string, and what have you.*

And you? and **Yourself?** a way of redirecting a previously asked question to the asker or someone else. ☐ *Bill: Do you want some more cake? Mary: Yes, thanks. Yourself? Bill: I've had enough.* ☐ *Jane: Are you enjoying yourself? Bill: Oh, yes, and you?*

angle for something **1.** *Lit.* to fish for something, as with a fishhook and line. ☐ *Fred was angling for a big bass.* ☐ *I am angling for whatever I can catch.* **2.** *Fig.* to scheme or plan to get something; to "fish" for something. ☐ *She is just angling for a larger settlement from her former employer.* ☐ *Are you angling for a raise in pay?*

angle off (to(ward) something**)** to turn or move toward something at an angle. ☐ *The road angles off to the right.* ☐ *The sailboat angled off toward the direction the wind was blowing.*

angry enough to chew nails Go to **mad enough to chew nails (and spit rivets)**.

annex something **to** something [for a governmental body of a town or city] to attach a parcel of land onto an existing parcel of land through legal proceedings. ☐ *The village annexed some adjacent land to itself.* ☐ *The adjoining lot was annexed to the site to allow for a bigger building.*

annex to something [for the owner of a parcel of land] to have land attached to an adjacent town or city. ☐ *Our community doesn't want to annex to Adamsville.* ☐ *The town voted to annex to the neighboring city of Smithton.*

announce (one's **support) for** someone or something to declare one's political support for someone or something. ☐ *The senator announced for the Supreme Court nominee.* ☐ *Our club announced for the incumbent candidate.*

announce something **to** someone to tell something publicly to someone. ☐ *The president announced his nominee for attorney general to the media.* ☐ *When was the news announced to the public?*

anoint someone **with** something to pour or rub oil on a person's head as an honor or blessing; to put a liquid onto oneself. (Mostly in biblical references.) ☐ *They anointed the king with oil and praised him greatly.* ☐ *He anointed himself with a menthol rub that was meant to help his cold symptoms.*

another country heard from *Fig.* yet another person adds to the conversation. Used when someone joins a discussion other people are having, especially unexpectedly. (Used sarcastically, implying that the new speaker is not welcome in the discussion.) ☐ *Alan: You ought to take a vacation tomorrow. You really look tired. Fred: I am not tired and I don't need a vacation. Jane: But you do seem awfully short-tempered. Fred: Well, well, another country heard from!* ☐ *Brother: Let's go to the movies. Father: I'm too busy to drive you to the movies. Sister: I want to go to the movies, too. Let's go to the movies! Father: Oh, splendid. Another country heard from.*

(another) nail in someone's or something's **coffin** *Fig.* something that will harm or destroy someone or something. (Alludes to the sealing of a coffin with nails.) ☐ *Every word of criticism that Bob said about the boss was another nail in his coffin.* ☐ *Losing their biggest customer was the final nail in the company's coffin.*

another pair of eyes and a **fresh pair of eyes** *Fig.* another person to examine something closely in addition to anyone previously. ☐ *As soon as we can get a fresh pair of eyes on this mansuscipt, we will find the last of the typos.*

answer back (to someone**)** and **answer** someone **back** to talk back (to someone); to argue (with someone). (Fixed phrase.) ☐ *I wish you wouldn't answer back to me that way.* ☐ *Please don't answer me back like that!* ☐ *Don't answer back or I'll ground you for a week!*

answer for someone **1.** *Lit.* to speak for another person. ☐ *I can't answer for Chuck, but I do have my own opinion.* ☐ *I will answer for my friend in his absence.* **2.** *Fig.* to vouch for someone; to tell of the goodness of someone's character. ☐ *Mr. Jones, who had known the girl all her life, answered for her. He knew she was innocent.* ☐ *I will answer for Ted. He could not hurt a flea.*

answer for someone or something *Fig.* to explain or justify the actions of someone or some act; to take responsibility or blame for someone or something. ☐ *You will have to answer for your children's bad behavior.* ☐ *I will answer only for my own misdeeds.*

answer someone **back** Go to **answer back (to** someone**)**.

answer someone's **purpose** and **serve** someone's **purpose** to fit or suit someone's aim or goal. ☐ *This piece of wood will answer my purpose quite nicely.* ☐ *The new car serves our purpose perfectly.*

answer the call 1. *Euph.* to die. ☐ *Our dear brother answered the call and has gone to his eternal rest.* **2.** and **answer the call (of nature)** *Euph.* to find and use the toilet. ☐ *We stopped the car long enoug for Jed to answer the call of nature.* ☐ *You had better answer the call of nature when you feel it coming.*

answer the call (of nature) Go to previous.

answer the door *Fig.* [after hearing the doorbell or a knock] to go to the door to see who is there. ☐ *Would you please answer the door. I am busy.* ☐ *I wish someone would answer the door. I can't stand to hear the knocking.*

answer to someone **1.** *Fig.* to explain or justify one's actions to someone. (Usually with *have to.*) ☐ *If John can-*

not behave properly, he'll have to answer to me. ☐ The car thief will have to answer to the judge. **2.** *Fig.* [in the hierarchy of the workplace] to be under the supervision of someone; to report to someone. (See also **report to (**someone or something**)**.) ☐ *You will answer directly to Mr. Wright.* ☐ *I answer only to the boss.*

answer to the description of someone *Fig.* to match a particular set of physical or facial characteristics. ☐ *Chuck answers to the description his sister gave us.* ☐ *The man in police custody answers to the description of the burglar.*

answer to the name (of) something to respond to a particular name. ☐ *I answer to the name Walter.* ☐ *She answers to the name of Claire.*

***ants in** one's **pants** *Fig.* nervousness and agitation. (on the image of someone suffering great discomfort as if having actual ants in the pants. *Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** one **~**.) ☐ *I always get ants in my pants before a test.* ☐ *I wonder if all actors get ants in their pants before they go onstage.*

any fool thing any ridiculous thing; anything that should be viewed as unimportant. ☐ *He'll buy his wife any fool thing she wants.* ☐ *Bill can get distracted by any fool thing.*

Any friend of someone**('s) (is a friend of mine).** *Cliché.* I am always pleased to meet a friend of someone I know. (A pleasant response when meeting or being introduced to a friend of a friend.) ☐ *Fred: Well, nice to meet you, Tom. Any friend of my brother is a friend of mine. Tom: Thanks, Fred. Nice to meet you too.* ☐ *John: Thank you so much for helping me find Sue's address. Sally: You're welcome. Any friend of Sue's.*

any number of someone or something *Fig.* a large number; a sufficiently large number. (Used when the exact number is not important.) ☐ *Any number of people can vouch for my honesty.* ☐ *I can give you any number of reasons why I should join the army.* ☐ *I ate at that diner any number of times and never became ill.*

any old thing *Fig.* just anything, not necessarily old. ☐ *Just give me one. I don't care which. Just give me any old thing.*

any port in a storm *Fig.* when one is having serious trouble, one must accept any solution, whether one likes the solution or not. ☐ *I don't want to live with my parents, but it's a case of any port in a storm. I can't find an apartment I can afford.* ☐ *He hates his job, but he can't get another. Any port in a storm, you know.*

any Tom, Dick, and Harry Go to (every) Tom, Dick, and Harry.

Anyone I know? and **Anybody I know?** a coy way of asking *who?* ☐ *Sally: Where were you last night? Jane: I had a date. Sally: Anyone I know?* ☐ *Bill: I've got a date for the formal next month. Henry: Anybody I know?*

Anything new down your way? *Rur.* Has any interesting event happened where you live? ☐ *Bill: Anything new down your way? Bob: Nothing worth talking about.* ☐ *Mary: Hi, Sally. Anything new down your way? Sally: No, what's new with you? Mary: Nothing much.*

Anything you say. *Fig.* Yes.; I agree. ☐ *Mary: Will you please take these blouses over to the cleaners? Bill: Sure, anything you say.* ☐ *Mother: You're going to finish your homework before you watch TV, right? Child: Anything you say, Mom.*

Anytime you are ready. and **Anytime you're ready.** a phrase indicating that the speaker is waiting for the person spoken to to make the appropriate move or action. ☐ *Mary: I think it's about time to go. Bill: Anytime you're ready.* ☐ *Surgeon: Shall we begin the operation? Nurse: Anytime you're ready, Doctor.*

apologize (to someone**) (for** someone**)** to make an apology to someone for someone else's actions. ☐ *Would you please apologize to Wally for Tom?* ☐ *I apologized for Frank to the hostess.* ☐ *I had to apologize for Frank.* ☐ *I had to apologize to the hostess.* ☐ *He was never able to apologize to himself for his past errors.*

appeal against something to ask a court of appeals to change a ruling made by a lower court. ☐ *My lawyer appealed against the judgment.* ☐ *We will file an appeal against the court ruling.*

appeal (to a court**) (for** something**)** to plead to a court of appeals for a favorable ruling. ☐ *She appealed to the court for a retrial.* ☐ *She appealed for an injunction to the circuit court.* ☐ *She appealed for a retrial.*

appeal to someone to please or attract someone. ☐ *Fast food doesn't appeal to me.* ☐ *The idea of a vacation to Florida this winter appeals to me a lot.*

appear as something **1.** to act a certain part in a play, opera, etc. ☐ *Madame Smith-Franklin appeared as Carmen at the City Opera last season.* ☐ *The actor refused to appear as a villain in the play.* **2.** [for something] to be seen or occur in a particular form or with particular characteristics. ☐ *The tumors appear as shadows on the X-ray.* ☐ *The first signs of the disease appear as a fever and a rash.*

appear at some place to perform at a particular place. ☐ *She is appearing at the Bijou all month.* ☐ *I will appear at Carnegie Hall soon.*

appear at some time to arrive at a particular time. ☐ *I am due to appear at the council at noon.* ☐ *I will appear at the meeting whenever my plane gets in.*

appear before someone **1.** to show up in the presence of someone, suddenly. ☐ *The deer appeared before us with no sound or other warning.* ☐ *A frightful specter appeared before me.* **2.** to have a trial or hearing with a particular judge or court. ☐ *You have to appear before Judge Cahill tomorrow.* ☐ *Have you ever appeared before the Supreme Court?*

appear before something to arrive in advance of the appointed time or before some event. ☐ *Please appear at least ten minutes before you are due.* ☐ *It is best to appear shortly before the time of your interview.*

appear for someone to represent or substitute for a person who is absent. ☐ *I will appear for you in the council.* ☐ *Who is going to appear for my lawyer, who is ill?*

appear in court to go to a court of law as a participant. ☐ *She has to appear in court tomorrow.* ☐ *I have to appear in court for my traffic violation.*

appear in something **1.** to be seen in some performance. ☐ *The singer will appear in the opera with the rest of the chorus.* ☐ *I will appear in* Aida. **2.** to be seen wearing something. ☐ *I wouldn't appear in that in public!* ☐ *Would you want to appear in a wrinkled suit?*

appear out of nowhere Go to **out of nowhere**.

appear to be rooted to the spot Go to **rooted to the spot**.

appear to someone [for something] to make an appearance before someone. ☐ *My late grandmother appeared to me in a dream.*

appear to someone **that...** *Fig.* to seem to someone that... ☐ *It appears to me that you are always late.*

appear to the naked eye Go to the **naked eye**.

appear under the name of some name [for an actor] to perform under a special name. ☐ *She is appearing under the name of Fifi.* ☐ *I appeared under the stage name Rex Righteous.*

appear (up)on something to arrive and be seen on something. (*Upon* is more formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *A fly appeared on the sterile bandages.* ☐ *A small bird appeared on our mailbox.*

Appearances can be deceiving. *Prov.* Things can look different from the way they really are. ☐ *Edward seems like a very nice boy, but appearances can be deceiving.* ☐ *Jane may look like she doesn't understand you, but she's really extremely bright. Appearances can be deceiving.*

append something **(on)to** something to attach something to something; to hang something onto something. ☐ *Please append these tassels onto the hem of your coat.* ☐ *Append this sentence to the last paragraph.*

appertain to something [of a responsibility or privilege] to belong to something as a right. ☐ *Do these rights appertain to a third cousin of the deceased?* ☐ *The statement doesn't make sense. It appertains to no one as it is stated.*

An **apple a day keeps the doctor away.** *Prov.* Apples are so nutritious that if you eat an apple every day, you will not ever need to go to a doctor. ☐ *Remember to take an apple in your lunch today. An apple a day keeps the doctor away.* ☐ *Grandma always fed us lots of apples when we visited her. She believed that an apple a day keeps the doctor away.*

the **apple of** someone's **eye** *Fig.* someone's favorite person or thing; a boyfriend or a girlfriend. ☐ *Tom is the apple of Mary's eye. She thinks he's the greatest.* ☐ *John's new car is the apple of his eye.*

apple-polisher *Fig.* a flatterer. ☐ *Doesn't that wimpy apple-polisher know how stupid he looks?* ☐ *Everybody at my office seems to be an apple-polisher but me.*

apples and oranges *Fig.* two entities that are not similar. (Used especially in reference to comparisons of unlike things.) ☐ *You can't talk about Fred and Ted in the same breath! They're like apples and oranges.* ☐ *Talking about her current book and her previous bestseller is like comparing apples and oranges.*

apply oneself **to** something to work hard and diligently at something. ☐ *You should apply yourself to your studies.* ☐ *She applied herself to her work and the time passed very rapidly.*

apply something **to** something **1.** *Lit.* to put something onto the surface of something. ☐ *Apply the decal to the surface of the glass.* ☐ *Apply the paint evenly to each surface.* **2.** *Fig.* to use something, such as force, effort, etc., on something or in the performance of some task. ☐ *Apply more effort in your school work.* ☐ *An even greater effort has been applied to make sure we finish on time.*

apply to someone or something [for rules, laws, etc.] to affect someone or something; to be relevant to someone or something. ☐ *Does this rule apply to me?* ☐ *These policies apply only to very large companies.*

apply (to someone or something**) (for** something**)** to ask for something from someone or an organization. ☐ *You must apply to the proper office for permission.* ☐ *I applied to seven colleges for admission.*

apply within to ask about something [inside some place]. (Usually part of a sign or announcement posted outside a place.) ☐ *The sign outside the office read, "Apply within."* ☐ *If you are interested in working here, please apply within.*

appoint someone **to** something to select or assign someone to serve in a particular role. (Usually focusing on the role of the person or on a group of persons with similar roles.) ☐ *I am going to appoint you to the position of treasurer.* ☐ *Fred tried to appoint himself to the board of directors, but it violated the by-laws.*

apportion something **out**† **(among** some people**)** to divide something and distribute it among people. ☐ *He apportioned the cake out among the guests.* ☐ *He apportioned out the applications among all those in the waiting room.*

appraise something **at** something to study something and place a monetary value on it. ☐ *They appraised the house at twice what it is worth.* ☐ *The diamond ring was appraised at a very high price.*

apprentice someone **to** someone to assign someone to work at a certain trade and learn it from someone experienced. ☐ *She apprenticed her son to a local diesel mechanic.* ☐ *I apprenticed myself to a printer and learned what it means to get really dirty.*

apprise someone **of** something to inform someone of something. ☐ *I hope you will apprise me of any change.* ☐ *Have you been apprised of the new rule?*

approach someone **about** someone or something to ask someone about someone or something, usually with tact and caution. ☐ *Wally has been acting strangely. I will approach Judy about him.* ☐ *She approached Tom about the broken window.*

appropriate something **for** something **1.** to allot a certain amount of money for a particular purpose. ☐ *They will appropriate $10,000 for the exhibit at the fair.* ☐ *A large sum was appropriated for the expenses.* **2.** *Euph.* to take something [from someone else] and use it as something else or for a purpose different from what was intended. ☐ *Walter appropriated a truck for an ambulance.* ☐ *It was necessary to appropriate your laptop for connecting to the Internet.*

approve of someone or something to take a favorable view of someone or something. ☐ *I approve of the way you have remodeled the kitchen.* ☐ *I don't approve of your foul language.*

April showers bring May flowers. *Prov.* Although rain in April is annoying, it starts the flowers growing. ☐ *Child: I hate all this rain. Why does it have to rain? Mother: April showers bring May flowers.* ☐ *Although it was a dreary, rainy day, we felt cheerful, since April showers bring May flowers.*

A

arbitrate between someone **and** someone else to mediate between two disagreeing parties; to help two disagreeing parties to resolve their differences. ☐ *Jane was called upon to arbitrate between the workers and the manager.* ☐ *I arbitrated between Fred and his ex-wife.*

arbitrate in a dispute to mediate or negotiate a settlement in a dispute. ☐ *She refuses to arbitrate in this dispute.* ☐ *I will arbitrate in this little disagreement.*

arch (oneself**) over** to bend or curve over. (*Oneself* includes *itself*.) ☐ *The tree arched over in the wind.* ☐ *Arch yourself over gracefully and then straighten up.* ☐ *The tree arched itself over in the windstorm.*

arch over someone or something to bend or curve over someone or something; to stand or remain bent or curved over someone or something. ☐ *The trees arched gracefully over the walkway.* ☐ *A lovely bower of roses arched over the bride.*

arch something **over** someone or something to place something above someone or something to form an arch or archway. ☐ *The cadets arched their swords over the bridal couple.* ☐ *The willow arched its long drooping branches over the tiny cabin.*

(Are) things getting you down? Are everyday issues bothering you? ☐ *Jane: Gee, Mary, you look sad. Are things getting you down?* ☐ *Tom: What's the matter, Bob? Things getting you down? Bob: No, I'm just a little tired.*

(Are you) doing okay? and **You doing okay? 1.** How are you? ☐ *Mary: Doing okay? Bill: You bet! How are you?* ☐ *Bill: Hey, man! Are you doing okay? Tom: Sure thing! And you?* **2.** How are you surviving this situation or ordeal? ☐ *Mary: You doing okay? Bill: Sure. What about you? Mary: I'm doing fine.* ☐ *Tom: Wow, that was some turbulence we just hit! Are you doing okay? Mary: I'm still a little frightened, but I'll make it.*

(Are you) feeling okay? Do you feel well? ☐ *Tom: Are you feeling okay? Bill: Oh, fair to middling.* ☐ *Susan: Are you feeling okay? Mary: I'm still a little dizzy, but it will pass.*

(Are you) going my way? If you are traveling in the direction of my destination, could I please go with you or can I have a ride in your car? ☐ *Mary: Are you going my way? Sally: Sure. Get in.* ☐ *"Going my way?" said Tom as he saw Mary turn toward him.*

(Are you) leaving so soon? and **You leaving so soon?** a polite inquiry made to a guest who has announced a departure. (Appropriate only for the first few guests to leave. It would seem sarcastic to say this to the last guest to leave or one who is leaving very late at night.) ☐ *Sue: We really must go. Sally: Leaving so soon? Sue: Fred has to catch a plane at five in the morning.* ☐ *John (seeing Tom at the door): You leaving so soon? Tom: Yes, thanks for inviting me. I really have to go. John: Well, good night, then.*

(Are you) ready for this? a way of presenting a piece of news or information that is expected to excite or surprise the person spoken to. ☐ *Tom: Boy, do I have something to tell you! Are you ready for this? Mary: Sure. Let me have it!* ☐ *Tom: Now, here's a great joke! Are you ready for this? It is so funny! Alice: I can hardly wait.*

(Are you) ready to order? Would you please tell me what you want as your meal? (A standard phrase used in eating establishments to find out what a customer wants to eat.) ☐ *The waitress came over and asked, "Are you ready to order?"* ☐ *Tom: I know what I want. What about you, Sally? Are you ready to order? Sally: Don't rush me!*

(Are you) sorry you asked? Now that you have heard (the unpleasant answer), do you regret having asked the question? (Compare this with **You'll be sorry you asked.**) ☐ *Father: How are you doing in school? Bill: I'm flunking out. Sorry you asked?* ☐ *Mother: You've been looking a little down lately. Is there anything wrong? Bill: I probably have the flu. Are you sorry you asked?*

argue against someone or something **1.** *Lit.* [for someone] to make a case against someone or something; to oppose the choice of someone or something in an argument. ☐ *I am preparing myself to argue against the case.* ☐ *Liz argued against Tom as the new president, but we chose him anyway.* **2.** *Fig.* [for something, such as facts] to support a case against someone or something in an argument; [for something, such as facts] to support a case against the choice of someone or something in an argument. ☐ *I have uncovered something that argues against continuing this friendship.* ☐ *His own remarks argue against his qualifications for the office, but he probably will be elected anyway.*

argue back to argue with or oppose someone; to **answer back (to** someone**)**; to **talk back (to** someone**)**. (Usually said of persons who are supposed to listen and obey without comment.) ☐ *Please don't argue back all the time.* ☐ *I wish you children did not argue back so much.*

argue for someone or something to make a case in favor of someone or something; to speak on behalf of someone or something in an argument. ☐ *Are you prepared to argue strongly for this proposal?* ☐ *We will argue for our candidate in the debate.*

argue one's **way out of** something and **argue** one's **way out** to talk and get oneself free of a problem. ☐ *You can't argue your way out of this!* ☐ *It's a problem, and there is no way that you can argue your way out.*

argue someone **down**† to defeat someone in a debate. ☐ *Sally could always argue him down if she had to.* ☐ *She tries to argue down everyone she meets.*

argue someone **into** doing something to convince or persuade someone to do something. ☐ *She was unable to argue the manager into attending.* ☐ *She was unable to argue herself into doing something so unpleasant.*

argue something **down**† **1.** *Lit.* to reduce something, such as a bill or a price, by arguing. ☐ *I tried to argue the price down, but it did no good.* ☐ *Tom could not argue down the bill.* **2.** *Fig.* to urge the defeat of a proposal or a motion in a meeting through discussion. ☐ *I am prepared to argue the proposal down in court.* ☐ *She will argue down the proposal in the council meeting.*

argue something **out**† to settle something by discussing all the important points. ☐ *We are going to have to argue this out some other time.* ☐ *Must we argue out every single detail of this contract?*

argue (with someone**) (over** someone or something**)** and **argue (with** someone**) (about** someone or something**)** to dispute or quarrel over someone or something with someone. ☐ *Are you going to argue with her over something so simple?* ☐ *I wish you wouldn't argue over money with me.*

☐ *We always argue about who should drive.* ☐ *Don't argue with me!*

argue with something to challenge or dispute something; to dispute someone's statement of fact. ☐ *I won't argue with your conclusions.* ☐ *It is not a good idea to argue with the facts.*

arguing for the sake of arguing and **arguing for the sake of argument** arguing simply to be difficult or contrary. ☐ *You are just arguing for the sake of arguing. You don't even know what the issue is.* ☐ *He is annoying, because he is always arguing for the sake of argument.*

arguing for the sake of argument Go to previous.

arise from something and **arise out of** something **1.** *Lit.* to get up from something. ☐ *What time did you arise from bed?* ☐ *I arose out of my slumbers at dawn.* **2.** *Lit.* [for something] to drift upward from something. ☐ *The smoke arose from the burning oil wells.* ☐ *The smoke arose out of the exhaust pipe.* **3.** *Fig.* to be due to something; to be caused by something. ☐ *This whole problem arose from your stubbornness.* ☐ *The labor problem arose out of mismanagement.* **4.** *Fig.* [for someone] to come from poor or unfortunate circumstances. ☐ *She arose from poverty to attain great wealth.* ☐ *She arose out of squalor through her own hard work.*

***arm in arm** *Fig.* [of persons] linked or hooked together by the arms. (*Typically: **go ~; stroll ~; walk ~**.) ☐ *The two lovers walked arm in arm down the street.* ☐ *They skated arm in arm around the rink.*

arm (someone **against** someone or something**) (with** something**)** to equip someone with whatever is needed to fight against someone or something. ☐ *They armed themselves against the enemy with guns and ammunition.* ☐ *The government armed the soldiers with the new guns.*

***armed and dangerous** *Cliché* [of someone who is suspected of a crime] having a gun or other lethal weapon and not being reluctant to use it. (This is part of a warning to police officers who might try to capture an armed suspect. *Typically: **be ~; be regarded as ~; be presumed to be ~**.) ☐ *The murderer is at large, presumed to be armed and dangerous.* ☐ *The suspect has killed once and is armed and dangerous.*

armed to the teeth *Fig.* heavily armed with deadly weapons. ☐ *The bank robber was armed to the teeth when he was caught.* ☐ *There are too many guns around. The entire country is armed to the teeth.*

An **army marches on its stomach.** *Prov.* An army needs a regular supply of food in order to keep on fighting. ☐ *The invading army will soon have to pull back. An army marches on its stomach, and they're out of food.*

***around** someone or something **1.** enclosing someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; go ~; circle ~**.) ☐ *The white picket fence is around the house and the yard.* ☐ *Jimmy was crying loudly. A ring of children circled around him, singing "Happy Birthday."* **2.** near someone or something in this vicinity. (*Typically: **be ~; hang ~; live ~**.) ☐ *How long have you been around here?* ☐ *I don't like people like that hanging around me.*

***(a)round the bend 1.** *Fig.* crazy; having lost sanity. (*Typically: **be ~; go ~**.) ☐ *I think this job is sending me around the bend.* ☐ *She sounds like she's round the bend already.* **2.** intoxicated from alcohol or drugs. (*Typically: **be ~; go ~**.) ☐ *One more of those, and you'll be around the bend.* ☐ *From the glassy look in her eyes, I'd say she is completely round the bend now.*

(a)round the clock *Fig.* continuously for twenty-four hours at a time. ☐ *The priceless jewels were guarded around the clock.* ☐ *Grandfather was so sick that he had to have nurses round the clock.*

arouse someone **from** something to activate a person out of a state of rest, sleep, or inaction. ☐ *I could not arouse her from her sleep.* ☐ *She aroused herself from a deep sleep.*

arrange for someone **to** do something to make plans for someone to do something. ☐ *I will arrange for Charles to fix what he broke.* ☐ *I arranged for the plumber to install a new water heater.*

arrange for something to prepare or plan for something. ☐ *We will arrange for a celebration.* ☐ *John arranged for it.*

arrange some music **for** something to prepare or adapt music for particular instruments or for a particular musical key. ☐ *Paul arranged the piece for piano.* ☐ *This piece was arranged for the guitar by Frank's brother.*

arrange something **for** some time to plan something for a particular time. ☐ *We will arrange a picnic for the afternoon.* ☐ *I will arrange an appointment for the noon hour.*

arrange something **for** someone or something to prepare or plan something for someone or something. ☐ *They arranged a reception for Frank.* ☐ *We arranged a dance for the holiday.*

arrange something **with** someone or something to prepare or plan something that will include someone or something. ☐ *We arranged entertainment with clowns and a musician.* ☐ *I will arrange a fancy dinner with wine and cloth napkins.* ☐ *Paul arranged a meeting with the opposition.*

arrive ahead of time Go to ahead of time.

arrive at a decision and **reach a decision** to make a decision; decide. ☐ *Have you arrived at a decision yet?* ☐ *We will reach a decision tomorrow.*

arrive back (some place**)** Go to back (some place).

arrive in force Go to in force.

arrive in the (very) nick of time Go to in the (very) nick of time.

arrive on a wing and a prayer Go to on a wing and a prayer.

arrive on the scene Go to come on the scene.

arrive (some place**) at** some time to reach some place at a particular time. ☐ *We will arrive at the border at noon.* ☐ *They arrived at seven o'clock in the evening.*

arrive (some place**) from** some other place to reach or come to a place from another place. (If the first *some place* is missing, the place is either *here* or must be inferred.) ☐ *They arrived here from New York yesterday.* ☐ *They arrived from Charleston last week.*

arrive (some place**) in** something to reach or come to a place in a particular kind of vehicle. ☐ *They arrived here in their car.* ☐ *We arrived at the museum in a bus.*

arrive some place **in a body** Go to in a body.

A

arrive (somewhere**) at the stroke of** some time Go to **arrive (**somewhere**) (up)on the stroke of** some time.

arrive (somewhere**) (up)on the stroke of** some time and **arrive (**somewhere**) at the stroke of** some time to reach a place at a particular instant of time. (*Upon* is more formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *She arrived home on the stroke of midnight.* ☐ *We all arrived at the stroke of two.*

arrive (up)on the scene (of something**)** and **arrive at the scene (of** something**)** to reach the location of an event in progress. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on* and *at*.) ☐ *The police arrived on the scene of the crime.* ☐ *They arrived upon the scene of a frightening accident.* ☐ *What did they do when they arrived at the scene?*

Art is long and life is short. *Prov.* Works of art last much longer than human lives.; Life is too short to learn everything you need to know about a particular discipline. ☐ *Alan: You ought to do something besides paint pictures in your spare time. Come out with us, have some fun. Bob: Having fun will not win me immortality. Only my paintings can do that. Art is long and life is short.* ☐ *I always feel a sense of awe when I look at the Babylonian statues in the art museum. They were made thousands of years ago. Art is long and life is short.*

as a duck takes to water *Cliché* easily and naturally. ☐ *She took to singing just as a duck takes to water.* ☐ *The baby adapted to the bottle as a duck takes to water.*

as a (general) rule usually; almost always. ☐ *He can be found in his office as a general rule.* ☐ *As a general rule, Jane plays golf on Wednesdays.* ☐ *As a rule, things tend to get less busy after supper time.*

as a last resort as the last choice; if everything else fails. ☐ *Call me at home only as a last resort.* ☐ *As a last resort, the doctor will perform surgery.*

As a man sows, so shall he reap. Go to As you sow, so shall you reap.

as a matter of course normally; as a normal procedure. ☐ *The nurse takes your temperature as a matter of course.* ☐ *You are expected to make your own bed as a matter of course.*

as a matter of fact actually; in addition to what has been said; in reference to what has been said. ☐ *As a matter of fact, John came into the room while you were talking about him.* ☐ *I'm not a poor worker. As a matter of fact, I'm very efficient.*

as a result (of something**)** because of something that has happened. ☐ *As a result of the accident, Tom couldn't walk for six months.* ☐ *We couldn't afford to borrow money for a house as a result of the rise in interest rates.*

as a rule in general; usually. ☐ *As a rule, men should wear tuxedos at formal dinners.* ☐ *As a rule, the bus picks me up at 7:30 every morning.*

as a token (of something**)** symbolic of something, especially of gratitude; as a memento of something. ☐ *He gave me a rose as a token of his esteem.* ☐ *Here, take this gift as a token of my appreciation.*

as all get out *Rur.* very much; as much as can be. ☐ *I'm tired as all get out.*

as an aside [said] as a comment that is not supposed to be heard by everyone. ☐ *At the wedding, Tom said as an aside, "The bride doesn't look well."* ☐ *At the ballet, Billy said as an aside to his mother, "I hope the dancers fall off the stage!"*

as bad as all that as bad as reported; as bad as it seems. (Usually expressed in the negative.) ☐ *Come on! Nothing could be as bad as all that.* ☐ *Stop crying. It can't be as bad as all that.*

as far as anyone **knows** and **so far as** anyone **knows; to the best of** one's **knowledge** to the limits of anyone's knowledge. (The *anyone* can be replaced with a more specific noun or pronoun.) ☐ *As far as anyone knows, this is the last of the great herds of buffalo.* ☐ *Far as I know, this is the best spot to sit.* ☐ *Q: Are the trains on time? A: To the best of my knowledge, all the trains are on time today.*

as far as it goes as much as something does, covers, or accomplishes. (Usually said of something that is inadequate.) ☐ *Your plan is fine as far as it goes. It doesn't seem to take care of everything, though.* ☐ *As far as it goes, this law is a good one. It should set stiffer penalties, however.*

as far as possible and **so far as possible** as much as possible; to whatever degree is possible. ☐ *We must try, as far as possible, to get people to stop smoking in buses.* ☐ *As far as possible, the police will issue tickets to all speeding drivers.* ☐ *I'll follow your instructions so far as possible.*

as far as someone **is concerned** and **so far as** someone **is concerned** from the point of view of someone. ☐ *Bob: Isn't this cake good? Alice: Yes, indeed. This is the best cake I have ever eaten as far as I'm concerned.* ☐ *As far as we are concerned, anything at all would be fine for dinner.*

as far as something **is concerned** and **so far as** something **is concerned** having to do with something; pertaining to something; as for something. ☐ *This bill? As far as that's concerned, the committee will have to take care of it.* ☐ *As far as the roof's concerned, it will just have to last another year.*

as for someone or something and **as to** someone or something regarding someone or something. ☐ *As for the mayor, he can pay for his own dinner.* ☐ *As for this chair, there is nothing to do but throw it away.*

as good as one's **word** obedient to one's promise; dependable in keeping one's promises. ☐ *He was as good as his word. He lent me the books as he said he would.* ☐ *She said she would babysit and she was as good as her word.*

As I live and breathe! *Fig.* How amazing! (Said on seeing or experiencing something surprising.) ☐ *As I live and breathe, here we are again!* ☐ *Well, as I live and breathe, it's Harry Smith!*

as I see it and **in my opinion; in my view** *Fig.* the way I think about it. ☐ *Tom: This matter is not as bad as some would make it out to be. Alice: Yes. This whole affair has been overblown, as I see it.* ☐ *Bob: You're as wrong as can be. John: In my view, you are wrong.*

as I was saying and **like I was saying** to repeat what I've been saying; to continue with what I was saying. (The first form is appropriate in any conversation. The second form is colloquial, informal, and familiar. In addition, this use of *like* for *as,* in the second form, is objected to by many people.) ☐ *Bill: Now, Mary, this is one of the round*

ones that attaches to the wire here. Bob (passing through the room): Hello, you two! I'll talk to you later. Bill: Yeah, see you around. Now, as I was saying, Mary, this goes here on this wire. ☐ *Tom: I hate to interrupt, but someone's car is being broken into down on the street. Fred: As I was saying, these illegal practices must stop.*

as it is the way things are; the way it is now. ☐ *"I wish I could get a better job," remarked Tom. "I'm just getting by as it is."* ☐ *Mary: Can we afford a new refrigerator? Fred: As it is, it would have to be a very small one.*

as it were as one might say; as could be said. (Sometimes used to qualify an assertion that may not sound reasonable.) ☐ *He carefully constructed, as it were, a huge submarine sandwich.* ☐ *The Franklins live in a small and, as it were, exquisite house.*

as long as 1. and **so long as** since; because. ☐ *As long as you're going to the bakery, please buy some fresh bread.* ☐ *So long as you're here, please stay for dinner.* **2.** and **so long as** if; only if. ☐ *You may have dessert so long as you eat all your vegetables.* ☐ *You can go out this evening as long as you promise to be home by midnight.* **3.** for a specified length of time. ☐ *You may stay out as long as you like.* ☐ *I didn't go to school as long as Bill did.*

as luck would have it by good or bad luck; as it turned out; by chance. ☐ *As luck would have it, we had a flat tire.* ☐ *As luck would have it, the check came in the mail today.*

***as one** as if acting or moving as a single person. (*Typically: **act ~; move ~; speak ~**.) ☐ *All the dancers moved as one.* ☐ *The chorus spoke as one.*

as soon as at the moment that; at the time that; when. ☐ *I fell asleep as soon as I lay down.* ☐ *John ate dinner as soon as he came home.*

as such in the way something is; as someone or something is. ☐ *I cannot accept your manuscript as such. It needs revisions.* ☐ *You are new to this job, and as such, I will have to train you.*

As the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined. *Prov.* A grown person will act the way he or she was taught to act as a child. ☐ *Alice's parents thought it was cute when she threw tantrums, and you'll notice that she still throws tantrums now that she's grown up. As the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined.* ☐ *Don't encourage your son to be so greedy. As the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined.*

as usual as is the normal or typical situation. ☐ *John ordered eggs for breakfast, as usual.* ☐ *He stood quietly as usual, waiting for the bus to come.*

as we speak and **even as we speak** *Cliché* just now; at this very moment. ☐ *"I'm sorry, sir," consoled the agent at the gate, "the plane is taking off as we speak."* ☐ *Tom: Waiter, where is my steak? It's taking a long time. Waiter: It is being grilled even as we speak, sir—just as you requested.*

as well also; in addition. ☐ *Could I have a second helping of potatoes as well?* ☐ *I'm feeling tired, and dizzy as well.*

as well as someone or something **1.** in addition to someone or something. ☐ *Mary and Jane are coming to the party, as well as Tom.* ☐ *I'm studying biology and chemistry, as well as history.* **2.** to the same high degree as someone or something; as much as someone or something else. ☐ *Mary's parents treated me as well as they treat her.* ☐ *I did as well as you on the test.*

As you make your bed, so you must lie (up)on it. and **As you make your bed, so you must lie in it.; As you make your bed, so must you lie in it.** *Prov.* You have to suffer the consequences of what you do. (Often used as a rebuke.) ☐ *Tom insisted on taking a trip to Florida in August, after we all told him how hot it was then. Now that he's there, all he does is complain about the heat. As you make your bed, so you must lie upon it.* ☐ *You were the one who chose these house painters because they were cheap. I told you they'd do a terrible job. As you make your bed, so must you lie in it.*

As you sow, so shall you reap. and **As a man sows, so shall he reap.** *Prov.* Things will happen to you good or bad, according to how you behave. (Biblical.) ☐ *You should stop being so cruel to other people. As you sow, so shall you reap.* ☐ *Fred built an immense fortune by swindling others, but lost it all when someone swindled him. As a man sows, so shall he reap.*

ascertain something **from** someone or something to find out or learn with certainty information from someone or something. ☐ *I need to ascertain some facts from you.* ☐ *A few facts have been ascertained from the interview.*

ascribe something **to** someone or something to attribute something to someone or something; to assert that something has been caused by someone or something. ☐ *Please do not ascribe that attitude to my friends.* ☐ *We ascribed the offensive action to Jill and only Jill.*

aside from someone or something not including someone or something. ☐ *Aside from a small bank account, I have no money at all.* ☐ *Aside from Mary, Nancy, Craig, and Phil, I have no friends on campus.*

ask about someone or something Go to **ask around (about** someone or something**)**.

ask after someone to inquire about the health and well-being of someone. ☐ *Hermione asked after you when I saw her today.* ☐ *I asked after Molly and her family.*

ask around (about someone or something**)** and **ask about** someone or something to request information (about someone or something) from a number of different sources. ☐ *I don't know the answer. I'll ask around about it.* ☐ *Ask about, will you? Find out what people are thinking.* ☐ *Please ask around about her.*

ask for a knuckle sandwich Go to a **knuckle sandwich**.

ask for someone or something to request someone or something; to ask that someone come forth. ☐ *The police are at the door asking for Henry.* ☐ *The child asked for a glass of water.*

ask for something bad or dire to act badly, such that one will bring on bad consequences. ☐ *If you keep misbehaving, you'll be asking for punishment.* ☐ *You're really asking for it!*

ask for the moon *Fig.* to make outlandish requests or demands for something, such as a lot of money or special privileges. ☐ *She's asking for the moon, and she's not going to get it.* ☐ *Don't ask for the moon. Be reasonable!*

ask for trouble and **look for trouble** *Fig.* to seem to be trying to get into trouble; to do something that would

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cause trouble; to do or say something that will cause trouble. ☐ *Stop talking to me that way, John. You're just asking for trouble.* ☐ *The guard asked me to leave unless I was looking for trouble.*

Ask me no questions, I'll tell you no lies. Go to next.

Ask no questions and hear no lies. and **Ask me no questions, I'll tell you no lies.** If you ask me that, my answer might not be the truth. (Implies that you will likely tell a lie, because you do not want to tell the truth.) ☐ *What am I going to give you for your birthday? Ask no questions and hear no lies.* ☐ *Maybe I like Greg, and maybe I don't. Ask me no questions, I'll tell you no lies.*

ask someone **back 1.** [for a host or hostess] to invite someone to come again (at a later time or to another similar event). ☐ *After the way you behaved, they'll never ask us back.* ☐ *They had been asked back a number of times, but they never came.* **2.** [for someone who has been a guest] to invite a previous host or hostess to come to an event. ☐ *We've had the Smiths to dinner five times. I think it's time they asked us back.* ☐ *I don't care if they ask us back or not.*

ask someone **down†** to invite someone to come to one's home [for a visit]. (Usually said when someone must go to a lower level, travel south, down a hill, or into the country for the visit.) ☐ *Sam asked us down for Friday evening. Shall we go?* ☐ *We asked down some old friends for the evening.*

ask someone **for** something **1.** to request something from someone. ☐ *The diners asked the waiter for a type of wine the restaurant didn't have.* ☐ *A special wine was asked for by a number of patrons.* **2.** and **ask** someone **to** something to invite someone to something. ☐ *Janet asked us to a party Friday evening.* ☐ *Janet asked us for dinner.*

ask someone **in** Go to next.

ask someone **in(to)** some place and **ask** someone **in** to invite someone inside some place. ☐ *We asked them into the house.* ☐ *We stopped our friends in the hallway and asked them in.*

ask someone **out† (for** something**)** Go to next.

ask someone **out (to** something**) 1.** and **ask** someone **out† (for** something**)** to invite someone to go out (to something or some place) [on a date]. ☐ *He asked her out to dinner, but she had other plans.* ☐ *She couldn't go, so he asked out someone else.* ☐ *Liz asked Carl out for dinner.* **2.** to invite someone for a visit to a place in the country or some other location remote from the center of things. ☐ *Tom must be tired of the city. Let's ask him out to our place.* ☐ *I don't want to ask out everyone in the whole family again.* ☐ *Oh, let's ask him out anyway.*

ask someone **over** to invite someone who lives close by to come to one's home [for a visit]. (Either to a house or apartment.) ☐ *Can we ask Tom over?* ☐ *He has been asked over a number of times.*

ask someone **to** something Go to **ask** someone **for** something.

ask someone **up†** to ask someone to come to one's home for a visit. (Usually said when someone must travel north, up a hill, or to an apartment on a higher floor for the visit.) ☐ *Let's ask Judy up for the weekend.* ☐ *We asked up a few old friends.*

ask something **of** someone or something to request or demand something from someone, something, or a group. ☐ *I want to ask something of you.* ☐ *We will ask that of the board of directors.* ☐ *You should ask that of your database.*

asking price the price that someone puts on an item being offered for sale. ☐ *I think your asking price is a little high.*

***asleep at the switch** *Fig.* not attending to one's job; failing to do one's duty at the proper time. (Alludes to a technician or engineer on a train sleeping instead of turning whatever switches are required. *Typically: **be ~; fall ~**.) ☐ *The security guard fell asleep at the switch and a robber broke in.* ☐ *If I hadn't been asleep at the switch, I'd have noticed the car being stolen.*

aspire to something to seek or aim for something better. ☐ *She aspires to a job more challenging than her current position.* ☐ *I aspire to far greater things.*

assail someone **with** something **1.** *Lit.* to attack someone with something, such as a weapon. ☐ *The crook assailed the officer with the officer's own club.* ☐ *The riot police were assailed with stones and bottles.* **2.** *Fig.* to pester or annoy someone with questions, requests, demands, etc. ☐ *Don't assail me with all your complaints.* ☐ *She assailed herself with constant guilty rebukes.*

assault and battery a violent attack [upon someone] followed by a beating. (A technical legal charge.) ☐ *Richard was charged with two counts of assault and battery.* ☐ *Dave does not go out at night because he does not want to be a victim of assault and battery.*

assault the ear *Fig.* [for sound or speech] to be very loud or persistent. ☐ *That loud music assaults the ears!* ☐ *I can't hear you with all that traffic noise assaulting my ears.*

assent to something to agree to something. ☐ *I assent to what you suggest.* ☐ *She will not assent to our request.*

assess something **at** something to estimate or value something at some figure. ☐ *They assess the value of our house at half what it would sell for.* ☐ *The house was assessed at far more than its true worth.*

assign someone or something **to** someone or something to designate someone or something as belonging to someone or something else. ☐ *They assigned the new car to Roger.* ☐ *They assigned the new worker to the mail room.*

assign something **to** someone to attribute something to someone; to blame something on someone. ☐ *We were forced to assign the blame to Robert.* ☐ *They assigned the responsibility for the accident to the driver of the car.*

assimilate someone or something **into** something to cause someone or something to be absorbed into something. (As when a person or thing joins a group.) ☐ *We sought to assimilate Arnold into the community.* ☐ *The manager had to assimilate the new policies into the list of current ones.* ☐ *They assimilated themselves into the general population.*

assimilate with some people to join or mix in with people and become accepted by them. ☐ *It's easy for Karen to assimilate with new people.* ☐ *I want to assimilate rapidly with the other people in my class.*

assist in something to help with something. ☐ *May I assist in this?* ☐ *Please assist in this task.*

assist (someone**) at** something to serve as a helper or assistant in some procedure. (This usually refers to a surgical procedure.) ☐ *Will you assist at surgery this morning?* ☐ *I would be happy to assist you at the procedure.*

assist someone **in** something to help a particular person working on a task. □ *Please assist Greg in the committee's assignment.* □ *We assisted him in the whole procedure.*

assist someone **with** someone or something to help someone manage someone or something, especially with lifting or physical management. □ *Assist me with Jane, won't you?* □ *Will you assist me with this heavy box?* □ *Sally assisted herself with the math problem. She did it on her own.*

associate oneself **with** someone or something to join someone or something as a partner or friend. □ *I wanted to associate myself with a prestigious law firm.* □ *She associated herself with people of low repute.*

associate someone or something **with** someone or something to link someone or something [in one's mind] to someone or something else. (*Something* and *someone* can occur in all possible combinations.) □ *I always associate Walter with pizza for some reason.* □ *I associate pizza with stringy cheese.*

associate with someone to be friendly with someone; to be acquainted with someone socially in a work setting. □ *We seek to associate with persons like ourselves.* □ *I like to associate with interesting people.*

assume a low profile Go to a low profile.

assume liability for something to accept the responsibility for paying a cost. □ *Mr. Smith assumed liability for his son's student loans.* □ *The store assumed liability for the injured customer's hospital bills.*

assure someone **of** something to guarantee something to someone; to promise someone that something will happen or that a particular state exists. □ *I want to assure you of our good intentions.* □ *Frequently, she had to assure herself of her basic worth.*

astound someone **with** something to shock or amaze someone with something. □ *She astounded us with her skill.* □ *He astounded himself with his sudden burst of strength.*

at a dead end *Fig.* having reached an impasse; able to go no further forward. □ *I can't go on. I'm at a dead end.* □ *We are at a dead end; the project is hopelessly stalled.*

***at a fast clip** Go to next.

***at a good clip** and ***at a fast clip** rapidly. (*Typically: **go ~; move ~; run ~; travel ~**.) □ *We were moving along at a good clip when a state trooper stopped us.*

at a loss (for words) *Fig.* unable to speak; speechless or befuddled. □ *I was so surprised that I was at a loss for words.* □ *Tom was terribly confused—really at a loss.*

at a moment's notice and **on a moment's notice** with very little advance notice; with just a little bit of warning. □ *They are always asking us to produce reports at a moment's notice.*

at a premium at a high price; priced high because of something special. □ *Sally bought the shoes at a premium because they were of very high quality.* □ *This new sports car sells at a premium because so many people want to buy it.*

at a set time at a particular time; at an assigned time. □ *Each person has to show up at a set time.* □ *Do I have to be there at a set time, or can I come whenever I want?*

at a sitting at one time; during one period. (Usually refers to an activity that takes place while a person is seated.) □ *The restaurant could feed only sixty people at a sitting.* □ *I can read about three hundred pages at a sitting.*

at a snail's gallop Go to next.

at a snail's pace and **at a snail's gallop** very slowly. □ *Things are moving along at a snail's pace here, but we'll finish on time—have no fear.* □ *Poor old Wally is creeping at a snail's gallop because his car has a flat tire.*

at a stretch continuously; without stopping. □ *We all had to do eight hours of duty at a stretch.* □ *The baby doesn't sleep for more than three hours at a stretch.*

at all without qualification. (See the examples for word order variations.) □ *It really wasn't very cold at all.* □ *It really wasn't at all cold.* □ *Tom will eat anything at all.*

at all costs and **at any cost** *Fig.* regardless of the difficulty or cost; no matter what. □ *I intend to have that car at all costs.* □ *Mary was going to get that job at any cost.*

at all hours (of the day and night) Go to all hours (of the day and night).

at all times constantly; continuously. □ *You must keep your passport handy at all times when you are traveling in a foreign country.* □ *When you're in a crowd, you must watch your child at all times.*

at an early date soon; some day soon. □ *The note said, "Please call me at an early date."* □ *You are expected to return the form to the office at an early date.*

at an end having come to a stop; having reached the end. □ *Things are now at an end.* □ *It's over between us. It's at an end. Good-bye.*

at any cost Go to at all costs.

at any rate in any case; anyway. □ *At any rate, what were we talking about?* □ *At any rate, I don't think you should quit your job.*

***at bay** *Fig.* at a distance. (*Typically: **be ~; keep** someone or something **~; remain ~**.) □ *I have to keep the bill collectors at bay until I get my paycheck.* □ *The mosquitoes will not remain at bay for very long.*

at best and **at most** in the most favorable view; in the most positive judgment; as the best one can say. □ *At best we found their visit pleasantly short.* □ *The dinner was not at all pleasant. At best the food was not burned.* □ *At most there were three people in line ahead of me.*

at close range very near; in close proximity. (Usually used in regard to shooting.) □ *The hunter fired at the deer at close range.* □ *The powder burns tell us that the gun was fired at close range.*

at cross-purposes with opposing viewpoints; with goals that interfere with each other. □ *We are arguing at cross-purposes. We aren't even discussing the same thing.* □ *Bill and Tom are working at cross-purposes. They'll never get the job done right.*

at death's door very near the end of one's life. (Often an exaggeration.) □ *I was so ill that I was at death's door for three days.* □ *The family dog was at death's door for three days, and then it finally died.*

at ease without worry or anxiety. ☐ *The performer is at ease on the stage.* ☐ *After she had met a few people, Mary felt at ease with the group.*

at every turn everywhere; everywhere one looks. ☐ *There is a new problem at every turn.* ☐ *Life holds exciting adventures at every turn.*

at face value from outward appearance; from what something first appears to be. (From the value printed on the "face" of a coin or bank note.) ☐ *Don't just accept her offer at face value. Think of the implications.* ☐ *Joan tends to take people at face value and so she is always getting hurt.*

at fault to blame [for something]; serving as the cause of something bad. ☐ *I was not at fault in the accident. You cannot blame me.*

at first initially; at the very beginning. ☐ *He was shy at first. Then he became more friendly.* ☐ *At first we chose the red one. Later we switched to the blue one.*

at first blush Go to next.

at first glance and **at first blush** when first examined; at an early stage. ☐ *At first glance, the problem appeared quite simple. Later we learned just how complex it really was.* ☐ *He appeared quite healthy at first glance.* ☐ *At first blush, she appeared to be quite old.*

at first light at dawn; when the first light of dawn appears. ☐ *We will be ready to leave at first light.*

***at full blast** using full power; as loudly as possible. (*Typically: **be on ~; play ~; play** something **~; run ~; run** something **~**.) ☐ *The neighbors had their televisions on at full blast.* ☐ *The car radio was on at full blast. We couldn't hear what the driver was saying.*

at full speed and **at full tilt; at full throttle** as fast as possible. ☐ *The motor was running at full speed.* ☐ *John finished his running at full tilt.* ☐ *When the horse reached the back stretch he was at full throttle.*

at full strength at the strongest amount, dilution, power, loudness, etc. ☐ *You should use this medicine at full strength, even if it tastes bad.*

at full throttle Go to at full speed.

at full tilt Go to at full speed.

***at great length** for a long period of time. (*Typically: **explain ~; question** someone **~; speak ~**.) ☐ *The lawyer questioned the witness at great length.*

at half-mast and **at half-staff** [of a flag] halfway up or down its flagpole. ☐ *The flag was flying at half-mast because the general had died.* ☐ *Americans fly flags at half-staff on Memorial Day.*

at half-staff Go to previous.

at hand close by in time or space. ☐ *I don't happen to have your application at hand at the moment.* ☐ *With the holiday season at hand, everyone is very excited.*

at hazard in danger; at risk. ☐ *He is not willing to have much of his money at hazard in the stock market.* ☐ *Your life is at hazard unless you wear a helmet when you ride your motorcycle.*

at home at or in one's dwelling. ☐ *Is Mary at home, or is she still at work?* ☐ *What time will she be at home?*

at home with someone or something **1.** *Lit.* in one's home with someone or something. ☐ *She's at home with her mother.* ☐ *Bob's not alone. He's at home with the cats.* **2.** *Fig.* comfortable with someone or something; comfortable doing something. ☐ *Tom is very much at home with my parents.* ☐ *Mary seems to be at home with her job.*

at it again doing something again. ☐ *I asked Tom to stop playing his trumpet, but he's at it again.* ☐ *They are at it again. Why are they always fighting?*

at its best Go to at one's best.

at large 1. free; uncaptured. (Usually said of criminals not in custody.) ☐ *At noon, the day after the robbery, the thieves were still at large.* ☐ *There is a murderer at large in the city!* **2.** in general; according to a general sample. ☐ *Truck drivers at large don't like the new speed restriction on the highway.* ☐ *Students at large felt that discipline was too strict.* **3.** representing the whole group rather than its subsections. (Always refers to a special kind of elective office.) ☐ *He ran for representative at large.* ☐ *She represented shareholders at large on the governing board.*

at last finally; after a long wait. ☐ *The train has come at last.* ☐ *At last, we have gotten something to eat.*

at least anyway; in spite of difficulties. ☐ *At least we had a good evening, even though the afternoon was rainy.* ☐ *At least we came away with some of our money left.*

at least so many no less than; no fewer than. ☐ *There were at least four people there that I knew.* ☐ *I want to spend at least three weeks in Mexico.*

at leisure and **at** one's **leisure** at one's convenience. ☐ *Choose one or the other at your leisure.* ☐ *Please drop by at your leisure.*

at length 1. after some time; finally. ☐ *At length, the roses bloomed, and the tomatoes ripened.* ☐ *And at length, the wizard spoke.* **2.** and **at some length** for quite a long time. ☐ *He spoke to us about the problem at some length.* ☐ *He described the history of his village at length.*

at liberty free; unrestrained. ☐ *The criminal was set at liberty by the judge.* ☐ *You're at liberty to go anywhere you wish.* ☐ *I'm not at liberty to discuss the matter.*

at loggerheads (with someone**)** and **at loggerheads over** something *Fig.* in conflict with someone; having reached an impasse (about something). ☐ *Tom is at loggerheads with Bill.* ☐ *We are at loggerheads with each other.* ☐ *The twins were at loggerheads over who should take the larger room.*

at (long) last after a long wait; finally. ☐ *At last the hostages were released.* ☐ *Sally earned her diploma at long last after six years in college.*

***at loose ends** restless and unsettled; unemployed. (*Typically: **be ~; leave** someone **~**.) ☐ *Just before school starts, all the children are at loose ends.* ☐ *Jane has been at loose ends ever since she lost her job.*

at most Go to at best.

at night during the night. ☐ *Most people sleep at night.* ☐ *Mary studies at night.*

at odds (with someone**)** and **at odds over** something in opposition to someone; at loggerheads (with someone). ☐ *Mary is always at odds with her father about how late she can stay out.* ☐ *John and his father are always at odds over what to watch on TV.*

at once immediately; right now. ☐ *We must leave at once!* ☐ *You must come here at once; it is an emergency.*

at one fell swoop and **in one fell swoop** *Fig.* in a single incident; as a single event. (This phrase preserves the old word *fell,* meaning "terrible" or "deadly.") ☐ *The party guests ate up all the snacks at one fell swoop.* ☐ *When the stock market crashed, many large fortunes were wiped out in one fell swoop.*

at one's **best 1.** and **at its best** to the utmost; to the highest degree possible. ☐ *This restaurant serves gourmet food at its best.* ☐ *The singer was at her best when she performed ballads.* **2.** in the best of health; displaying the most civilized behavior. (Often in the negative.) ☐ *He's at his best after a good nap.* ☐ *I'm not at my best when I'm angry.*

at one's **leisure** Go to at leisure.

at one's **wit's end** *Fig.* at the limits of one's mental resources. ☐ *I'm at my wit's end with this problem. I cannot figure it out.* ☐ *Tom could do no more. He was at his wit's end.*

at peace 1. relaxed and happy. ☐ *I am always at peace when I sit in my rocking chair.* ☐ *When the warm breeze is blowing, I am at peace.* **2.** *Euph.* dead. ☐ *It was a long illness, but she is at peace now.* ☐ *At last, Uncle George is at peace.*

at play [at this moment] involved in playing. (See also at work.) ☐ *The children are at play, and I am doing household chores.* ☐ *Whether I am at work or at play, I try to be pleasant to people.*

at present now; at this point in time. ☐ *We are not able to do any more at present.* ☐ *We may be able to lend you money next week, but not at present.*

at random by chance; haphazard. ☐ *The lottery numbers are chosen at random.* ☐ *As a prank, the children dialed phone numbers at random.*

at regular intervals [of things in a series] at points that are equally distant from each other. ☐ *You will find service stations at regular intervals along the highway.* ☐ *There are street lights at regular intervals on the main street of town.*

at rest 1. not moving; not active. ☐ *After the hectic day, the office was finally at rest at 8:00 P.M.* ☐ *When the car is at rest, you can get into the backseat.* **2.** *Euph.* dead. ☐ *After a long, weary life, Emily is at rest.* ☐ *There he is, at rest in his coffin.*

***at risk** in a situation where there is risk or hazard; in danger. (*Typically: **be ~; put** someone or something **~**.) ☐ *I refuse to put my family's welfare at risk by quitting my job.* ☐ *Your whole future is at risk if you don't stop smoking.*

at sea 1. *Lit.* on the sea; away on a voyage on the ocean. ☐ *The ship is at sea now, and you can't disembark.* ☐ *I spent many happy days at sea on my cruise.* **2.** *Fig.* confused; at a loss. ☐ *Bill was at sea over the calculus problem.* ☐ *Reading economic theory leaves me feeling at sea.*

at sea level at the level of the surface of the ocean. ☐ *It is easier to breathe at sea level than in the mountains.* ☐ *Boats on the ocean are at sea level, but those on rivers are not.*

at sixes and sevens lost in bewilderment; at loose ends. ☐ *Mrs. Smith is at sixes and sevens since the death of her husband.* ☐ *Bill is always at sixes and sevens when he's home by himself.*

at some length Go to at length.

at some time **sharp** exactly at the time named. ☐ *You must be here at noon sharp.* ☐ *The plane is expected to arrive at seven forty-five sharp.*

at someone being argumentative or contentious with someone. ☐ *She is always at him about something.* ☐ *I wish you weren't at me all the time over finances.*

at someone's **beck and call** ready to obey someone. ☐ *What makes you think I wait around here at your beck and call? I have to leave for work, you know!* ☐ *It was a fine hotel. There were dozens of maids and waiters at our beck and call.*

at someone's **doorstep** and **on** someone's **doorstep** *Fig.* in someone's care; as someone's responsibility. ☐ *Why do you always have to lay your problems at my doorstep?* ☐ *I shall put this issue on someone else's doorstep.* ☐ *I don't want that problem on my doorstep.*

at someone's **earliest convenience** as soon as it is possible for someone to do something. (This is also a polite way of saying *immediately.*) ☐ *Please stop by my office at your earliest convenience.* ☐ *Bill, please have the oil changed at your earliest convenience.*

at someone's **mercy** Go to at the mercy of someone.

at someone's **request** due to someone's request; on being asked by someone. ☐ *At his mother's request, Tom stopped playing the saxophone.* ☐ *At the request of the police officer, Bill pulled his car over to the side of the road.*

at someone's **service** *Fig.* ready to help someone in any way. ☐ *The count greeted me warmly and said, "Welcome to my home. Just let me know what you need. I'm at your service."* ☐ *The desk clerk said, "Good morning, madam. I'm at your service."*

at stake *Fig.* ready to be won or lost; at risk; hanging in the balance. ☐ *That's a very risky investment. How much money is at stake?* ☐ *I have everything at stake on this wager.*

at that rate in that manner; at that speed. ☐ *If things keep progressing at that rate, we'll be rich by next year.* ☐ *At that rate we'll never get the money that is owed us.*

at the appointed time at the expected or assigned time. ☐ *The cab pulled up in the driveway at the appointed time.* ☐ *We all met at the hotel at the appointed time.*

at the bottom of the hour *Fig.* on the half hour; the opposite of at the top of the hour. (Alludes to the big hand of a clock pointing to the 6. Typically heard on television or the radio.) ☐ *Hear the news headlines at the bottom of the hour.* ☐ *We will have an interview with Harry Kravitz at the bottom of the hour.*

at the bottom of the ladder and **on the bottom rung (of the ladder)** *Fig.* at the lowest level of pay and status. (Alludes to the lowness of the bottom rung of a ladder.) ☐ *Most people start work at the bottom of the ladder.* ☐ *After Ann got fired, she had to start all over again on the bottom rung.*

at the break of dawn Go to next.

at the crack of dawn and **at the break of dawn** *Fig.* at the earliest light of the day. ☐ *Jane was always awake at*

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the crack of dawn. ☐ *The birds start singing at the break of dawn.*

at the drop of a hat *Fig.* immediately; instantly; on the slightest signal or urging. (Alludes to the dropping of a hat as a signal.) ☐ *John was always ready to go fishing at the drop of a hat.* ☐ *If you need help, just call on me. I can come at the drop of a hat.*

at the eleventh hour *Fig.* at the last possible moment. (Just before the last clock hour, 12) ☐ *She always turned her term papers in at the eleventh hour.* ☐ *We don't worry about death until the eleventh hour.*

at the end of nowhere *Fig.* at a remote place; at some distance from civilization. (An exaggeration.) ☐ *They live way out in the country at the end of nowhere.* ☐ *The police will never find us here, at the end of nowhere.*

at the end of one's **rope** and **at the end of** one's **tether** *Fig.* at the limits of one's endurance. ☐ *I'm at the end of my rope! I just can't go on this way!* ☐ *These kids are driving me out of my mind. I'm at the end of my tether.*

at the end of one's **tether** Go to previous.

at the end of the day 1. *Lit.* at the time when work or one's waking hours end. (See also by the end of the day.) ☐ *I will have an answer at the end of the day.* ☐ *Will this be finished at the end of the day or before?* **2.** *Fig.* when everything else has been taken into consideration. ☐ *At the end of the day you will have to decide where you want to live.* ☐ *The committee interviewed many applicants for the post, but at the end of the day made no appointment.*

at the expense of someone or something *Fig.* to the detriment of someone or something; to the harm of someone or something. ☐ *He had a good laugh at the expense of his brother.* ☐ *He took a job in a better place at the expense of a larger income.*

at the forefront (of something**)** and **in the forefront (of** something**)** *Fig.* at the place of greatest activity; vital or important to some activity. ☐ *I interviewed Max Brown, the director who is in the forefront of the movie industry.* ☐ *The university I go to is at the forefront of computer technology.*

at the height of something *Fig.* at the most intense or forceful aspect of something. ☐ *At the height of his career, Tom was known around the world.* ☐ *At the height of the party, there were 50 people present.*

at the helm (of something**)** *Fig.* in the position of being in control of something. ☐ *The president is at the helm of the company.* ☐ *Things will go well with Anne at the helm.*

at the last gasp *Fig.* at the very last; at the last chance; at the last minute. (Refers to someone's last breath before death.) ☐ *She finally showed up at the last gasp, bringing the papers that were needed.* ☐ *We got there at the last gasp, just before our names were called.*

at the last minute *Fig.* at the last possible chance; in the last few minutes, hours, or days. (Often an exaggeration.) ☐ *Please don't make reservations at the last minute.* ☐ *Why do you ask all your questions at the last minute?*

at the latest not beyond the time mentioned. ☐ *Please pay this bill in ten days at the latest.* ☐ *I'll be home by midnight at the latest.*

at the mercy of someone and **at** someone's **mercy** *Fig.* under the control of someone; without defense against someone. ☐ *We were left at the mercy of the arresting officer.* ☐ *Mrs. Franklin wanted Mr. Franklin at her mercy.*

at (the) most no more than the amount mentioned. ☐ *A: How far away is the beach? B: Ten miles at most.* ☐ *At the most, there were only 15 people in the audience.*

at the outset *Fig.* at the very beginning. ☐ *At the outset, we were told everything we had to do.* ☐ *I learned at the outset of the project that I was to lead it.*

at the point of doing something Go to on the point of doing something.

at the present time and **at this point (in time)** *Cliché* now; at present. (Used often as a wordy replacement for *now.*) ☐ *We don't know the location of the stolen car at the present time.* ☐ *The patient is doing nicely at the present time.*

at the rear of something located at the back part of something. ☐ *I keep my tools at the rear of my garage.* ☐ *There's a stream at the rear of my property.*

at the same time 1. *Lit.* during the same moment; simultaneously. ☐ *We arrived at the same time.* ☐ *Too many things are happening at the same time, and I am confused.* **2.** *Fig.* nevertheless; however; along with that. ☐ *Bill was able to pay for the damage. At the same time, he was very angry about the accident.* ☐ *We agree to your demands. At the same time, we object strongly to your methods.*

at the top of one's **game** *Fig.* good and as good as one is likely to get. (Usually of sports.) ☐ *I guess I was at the top of my game last year. This year, I stink.*

at the top of one's **lungs** Go to next.

at the top of one's **voice** and **at the top of** one's **lungs** *Fig.* very loudly. ☐ *Bill called to Mary at the top of his voice.* ☐ *How can I drive safely when you're all screaming at the top of your lungs?*

at the top of the hour *Fig.* at the exact beginning of an hour. (Alludes to the big hand on a clock pointing to the 12. Often heard on television or the radio. See also at the bottom of the hour.) ☐ *Every class in my school starts at the top of the hour.* ☐ *Our next newscast will be at the top of the hour.*

at the (very) outside at the very most. ☐ *The car repairs will cost $300 at the very outside.* ☐ *I'm now on my way and I'll be there in three hours at the outside.*

at the wheel 1. operating the wheel that turns a ship's rudder; at the helm. ☐ *The cabin boy was at the wheel with the captain close by.* **2.** operating the steering wheel of a car. ☐ *Bobby was at the wheel when the car went off the road.*

at (the) worst in the most negative or pessimistic view. ☐ *At worst, Tom can be seen as greedy.* ☐ *Ann will receive a ticket for careless driving, at the worst.*

at the zenith of something *Fig.* at the highest point of something; at the pinnacle of something. ☐ *Tragically, at the zenith of his career, the teacher died suddenly.* ☐ *The scientist was at the zenith of her career when she made her discovery.*

at this juncture at this point; at this pause. ☐ *There is little more that I can say at this juncture.* ☐ *We can, if you wish, at this juncture, request a change in venue.*

at this point (in time) Go to at the present time.

at this rate at this speed; if things continue in the same way. (Usually of a pessimistic view.) ☐ *Hurry up! We'll never get there at this rate.* ☐ *At this rate, all the food will be gone before we get there.*

at this stage (of the game) *Fig.* at the current point in some event or situation; currently. ☐ *We'll have to wait and see. There isn't much we can do at this stage of the game.* ☐ *At this stage, we are better off not calling the doctor.*

at times sometimes; occasionally. ☐ *I feel quite sad at times.* ☐ *At times, I wish I had never come here.*

at will whenever one wants; freely. ☐ *You're free to come and go at will.* ☐ *The soldiers were told to fire their guns at will.* ☐ *You can eat anything you want at will.*

at work 1. at one's place of work. ☐ *I'm sorry to call you at work, but this is important.* ☐ *She's at work now. She'll be home at supper time.* **2.** working [at something]; busy [with something]. (See also at play.) ☐ *Tom is presently at work on his project. He'll be finished in a half hour.* ☐ *Don't disturb me when I'm busy at work.*

atone for something to make amends for an error. ☐ *You must atone for the bad things you have done.*

attach oneself **to** someone **1.** *Fig.* to become emotionally involved with someone. ☐ *Fred seems to have attached himself to a much older woman, who has captured his attention.* ☐ *Somehow, Susan has attached herself emotionally to Tom, and she is distraught over his being away.* **2.** *Fig.* to follow after someone; to become a constant companion to someone. ☐ *Andy's little brother attached himself to Andy and his friends—much to Andy's distress.* ☐ *John attached himself to his older brother and drove him crazy.*

attach oneself **to** something **1.** *Lit.* to connect or secure oneself to something. ☐ *During the storm, Tony attached himself to the helm and proceeded to steer the boat.* ☐ *The caterpillar attached itself to a branch and began to spin its cocoon.* **2.** *Fig.* to choose to associate with a particular thing, group, or organization. ☐ *Ron attached himself to a volleyball team that practices at the school.* ☐ *The manager attached himself to the luncheon club and became a regular fixture there.*

attach to someone *Fig.* [for blame, importance, guilt, fault, etc.] to become "fixed" onto someone or an organization. ☐ *A lot of guilt attaches to Henry for his part in the plot.* ☐ *Most of the blame for the accident attaches to Roger.*

attach to something [for something] to be meant to fit onto or into something. ☐ *This one attaches to this other one right at this point.* ☐ *This part should have attached to the back of the desk, but it didn't fit.*

attached to someone or something **1.** *Lit.* connected to someone or something. ☐ *The patient has a tube attached to his arm.* ☐ *A little shelf is attached to the wall.* **2.** *Fig.* fond of someone or something. ☐ *John is really attached to his old-fashioned ideas.* ☐ *I'm really attached to my long-time girlfriend.*

attack in force Go to in force.

*an **attack (of** an illness**)** a bout of some sickness; an instance or acute case of some disease. (*Typically: **have ~; produce ~; suffer ~**.) ☐ *Mr. Hodder had an attack of stomach upset that forced him to stay at home.*

attend to someone to listen to someone. ☐ *Please attend to your teacher's instructions.* ☐ *Attend to the announcement of the new flight departure time.*

attend to someone or something to take care of the needs of someone or something; to respond to a request or demand from someone or something. ☐ *Please attend to your wounded friend.* ☐ *Would you please attend to the action points of this memo?*

attest to something to certify or bear witness to a fact. ☐ *I cannot attest to what you have reported.* ☐ *The witness attested to the suspect's presence at the scene of the crime.*

attire someone **in** something to dress someone in something. ☐ *The mother attired her children in new, clean clothes.* ☐ *She attired herself in her finest garments.*

attract someone or something **to** someone or something else to draw or pull someone or something to someone or something else. ☐ *The poster attracted a large number of people to the concert.* ☐ *The shouting attracted a lot of attention from the people who were nearby.*

attribute something **to** someone or something to ascribe something to someone or something; to believe that someone or something is the source of something. ☐ *We attribute our success to your good advice.* ☐ *I attribute all these ill-mannered memos to Andrew.*

attune someone or something **to** someone or something else *Fig.* to bring someone or something into accord with someone or something else; to adjust someone or something to someone or something else. (Usually metaphorical. Not used for musical tuning.) ☐ *You should try to attune yourself to our needs and direction.* ☐ *Try to attune your comments to the level of your audience.*

auction something **off**† to sell something [to the highest bidder] at an auction. ☐ *He auctioned his home off.* ☐ *He auctioned off his home.* ☐ *The duke was forced to auction off his ancestral home to pay his taxes.*

audition for something to try out for a part in something. (In a setting in which one's singing, speaking, or playing is heard and judged.) ☐ *I plan to audition for the lead role in the school play.* ☐ *Liz auditioned for* The Mikado.

audition someone **for** something to allow someone to try out for a part in a performance; to judge someone's singing, speaking, or playing potential for a part in a performance. ☐ *Will you audition anyone else for the part?* ☐ *Have you been auditioned for a part in the school play?*

augur well for someone or something to indicate or predict good things for someone or something. (Usually in the negative.) ☐ *This latest economic message does not augur well for the stock market.* ☐ *I am afraid that this poll data does not augur well for the incumbent in the election.*

avail oneself **of** something to help oneself by making use of something that is available. ☐ *We availed ourselves of Tom's goodwill and let him repair the fence.* ☐ *The campers availed themselves of the first chance in a week to take a shower.*

avenge oneself **(on** someone or something**) (for** something**)** and **avenge** oneself **(against** someone or something**) (for**

A

something) to get even with, or take revenge against someone or something for some hurt or damage. ☐ *They avenged themselves on the enemy for the surprise attack.* ☐ *He avenged himself against the storekeeper for the false charges.* ☐ *Mary avenged herself for her ex-husband's neglect to pay child support.* ☐ *Tom avenged himself on Bill for Bill's previous insults.*

avenue of escape *Fig.* the pathway or route along which someone or something escapes. ☐ *The open window was the bird's only avenue of escape from the house.* ☐ *Bill saw that his one avenue of escape was through the back door.*

average out (at something**)** and **average out (to** something**)** to equal something as the average of a set of figures. ☐ *The figures averaged out at what was expected.* ☐ *Will the charges average out to a reasonable figure?* ☐ *Over time, our expenses will average out to a low monthly outlay.*

average something **up**† to calculate the average of a set of figures. ☐ *Please add these figures and average them up.* ☐ *Please average up all the monthly expenses for the previous year.* ☐ *Will you please average these figures up on the calculator?*

avert something **(away) from** someone or something to turn or divert something away from someone or something. ☐ *We will attempt to avert attention from the problems.* ☐ *She averted her eyes from Bill when he walked by.*

avoid someone or something **like the plague** *Fig.* to ignore or keep away from someone or something totally. ☐ *What's wrong with Bob? Everyone avoids him like the plague.* ☐ *I don't like opera. I avoid it like the plague.*

(Aw) shucks! *Rur.* Gosh!; a mild oath. ☐ *Shucks, ma'am. It wasn't anything at all.* ☐ *Aw shucks, I ain't never been this close to a woman before.*

awake(n) from something to wake up from something, such as a dream or a deep sleep. ☐ *Tom awakened from a deep sleep at the sound of the phone ringing.* ☐ *At dawn, she awoke from her slumbers.*

awake(n) someone **from** something to cause someone to wake up from something. ☐ *The crowing of the rooster awakened Sally from her slumbers.* ☐ *She awakened herself from a deep sleep when she fell out of bed.*

awake(n) someone **to** something to make someone alert to something, such as a problem or a need. ☐ *We need to awaken the voters to the need for more taxes.* ☐ *They awakened themselves to their callousness and began to treat other people better.*

awake(n) to something to wake up while experiencing something. ☐ *Mary awoke to the smell of freshly brewed coffee.* ☐ *I love to awaken to music.*

award something **(to** someone**) (for** something**)** and **award (**someone**)** something **(for** something**)** to give a prize or reward to someone (for something). ☐ *The committee awarded a plaque to Andy for his loyalty.* ☐ *They awarded prizes for efficiency to two different people.*

award something **to** someone or something [for a judge or other legal entity] to decide in favor of a person or group. ☐ *The judge awarded the judgment to the plaintiff.* ☐ *The jury awarded a large sum to the smaller company.*

***away from it all** at a place where one can avoid completely what one is leaving behind. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I need a few days off to get away from it all.* ☐ *Everyone needs to get away from it all every now and then.*

***away from** one's **desk** *Fig.* not available for a telephone conversation; not available to be seen or spoken to. (Sometimes said by the person who answers a telephone in an office. It means that the person whom the caller wants is not immediately available due to personal or business reasons. *Typically: **be ~; step ~**.) ☐ *I'm sorry, but Ann is away from her desk just now. Can you come back later?* ☐ *Tom has stepped away from his desk, but if you leave your number, he will call you right back.*

***away (from** someone or something**)** avoiding someone or something; maintaining a physical distance from someone or something. (*Typically: **get ~; keep ~; stay ~**.) ☐ *Please keep away from me if you have a cold.* ☐ *Stay away from the construction site, Timmy.*

awkward as a bull in a china shop Go to a bull in a china shop.

***awkward as a cow on a crutch** and ***awkward as a cow on roller skates** very clumsy or off balance. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *When Lulu was overweight, she was awkward as a cow on a crutch.* ☐ *Tom will never be a gymnast. He's as awkward as a cow on roller skates!*

***awkward as a cow on roller skates** Go to previous.

the **ax** Go to the sack.

Bb

a **babe in arms 1.** *Lit.* a very young baby that is carried by an adult. ☐ *I have known that since I was a babe in arms!* ☐ *A young mother with a babe in arms stood in line with the rest of the students.* **2.** *Fig.* an innocent or naive person. ☐ *He's a babe in arms when it comes to taking girls out.* ☐ *Mary has no idea how to win the election. Politically she's a babe in arms.*

A **babe in the woods** *Fig.* a naive or innocent person; an inexperienced person. (Like a child lost in the woods.) ☐ *Bill is a babe in the woods when it comes to dealing with plumbers.* ☐ *As a painter, Mary is fine, but she's a babe in the woods as a musician.*

babysit for someone and **babysit (with)** someone **1.** to attend and care for a child for a period of time. ☐ *I'm looking for someone to babysit for my cousin.* ☐ *Will you babysit with my cousin?* **2.** to attend and care for a child for someone for a short period of time. ☐ *Would you mind babysitting Roger for me for a few minutes?* ☐ *Sure, I will babysit for you.*

back and fill *Fig.* to act indecisively; to change one's direction repeatedly; to reverse one's course. (Originally nautical, referring to trimming the sails so as to alternately fill them with wind and release the wind, in order to maneuver in a narrow space.) ☐ *The president spent most of his speech backing and filling on the question of taxation.* ☐ *The other candidate was backing and filling on every issue, depending on whom she was addressing.*

back and forth in one direction and then the other repeatedly; from one place to another repeatedly. ☐ *We tossed the ball back and forth between us.* ☐ *The tiger paced back and forth in its cage.*

back at it (again) doing something again. (Usually said in criticism.) ☐ *I thought you stopped smoking, but I see you are back at it again.*

***back (at** someone**)** repaying someone for a bad deed. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~**.) ☐ *Tom called me a jerk, but I'll get back at him.* ☐ *I don't know how I'll get back for her insult, but I will.*

back away (from someone or something**)** and **back off (from** someone or something**) 1.** *Lit.* to move backwards from a person or thing; to withdraw physically from someone or something. ☐ *You should back away from the fire.* ☐ *Please back off from the man who is threatening you.* **2.** *Fig.* to begin to appear uninterested in someone or something; to withdraw one's interest from someone or something. ☐ *The board of directors began to back away from the idea of taking over the rival company.* ☐ *Tom backed off from the whole idea of investing in stocks.*

back down (from someone or something**)** to yield to a person or a thing; to fail to carry through on a threat. ☐ *Jane backed down from her position on the budget.* ☐ *It's probably better to back down from this situation; looks like you are at a disadvantage.*

back down (on something**)** to lessen or drop an earlier rigid position on something; to yield something in an argument. ☐ *She backed down on her demands.* ☐ *In the end, she backed down.*

back down (something**)** to go down something backwards, such as a ladder or inclined driveway. ☐ *Harry backed down the ladder safely.* ☐ *Looking behind him, he backed down slowly.*

back East to or from the eastern United States, especially the northeastern or New England states. (Used even by people who have never been in the East.) ☐ *Sally felt that she had to get back East for a few days.* ☐ *Tom went to school back East, but his brother attended college in the Midwest.*

***back in(to) (the) harness** *Fig.* back doing one's job. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I don't look forward to getting back into the harness next Monday.* ☐ *When my vacation is over, I have to get back into harness the very next day.* ☐ *I'm not looking forward to having to get back in harness after my trip abroad.*

***back in(to) circulation 1.** *Fig.* back enjoying one's social contacts; back continuing to make new friends and develop a social life. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *After her illness, Kristine looked forward to getting back into circulation.* ☐ *I want to get back in circulation and have some fun.* **2.** *Fig.* becoming available for dating again. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Now that Fred and Amy are through, Amy is getting back into circulation.* ☐ *Now that you're divorced, are you going to get back into circulation?*

back into someone or something to move backwards, bumping into someone or something; to move a car backwards into something, such as a garage or a parking space. (See also **back** someone or something **into** someone or something.) ☐ *I'm sorry. I didn't mean to back into you.* ☐ *I backed into the potted plant.*

the **back of the beyond** the most remote place; somewhere very remote. ☐ *John hardly ever comes to the city. He lives at the back of the beyond.* ☐ *Mary likes city life, but her husband likes to live in the back of the beyond.*

back off (from someone or something**)** Go to **back away (from** someone or something**)**.

***back on** one's **feet 1.** *Lit.* standing up again after a fall. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *She struggled to get back on her feet after she fell.* **2.** *Fig.* recovered from an illness and out of one's sickbed. *Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I will go back to work as soon as I get back on my feet.* ☐ *I want to get back on my feet as soon as possible.* **3.** *Fig.* recovered from anything, especially financial problems. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I can't afford to buy a car until I get a job and get back on my feet.* ☐ *I'll get back on my feet as soon as I start working again.*

B

***back on track** *Fig.* running according to schedule again. (*Typically: **get ~; get** something **~; have** something **~; put** something **~**.) ☐ *I hope we can have this project back on track by the end of the week.*

back oneself **into a corner** *Fig.* to manage to get oneself into a position where there is limited escape. (Ranging from literal to figurative.) ☐ *He tells different stories to different people. Finally he backed himself into a corner and had to admit his lies.*

back onto someone or something to go backwards, moving or rolling onto someone or something. ☐ *The motorcycle backed onto my toe.* ☐ *Don't back onto anything as you go down the driveway!*

back-order something [for a merchant] to order something that is not in stock and make delivery to the customer when the goods become available. ☐ *The store didn't have the replacement part for my vacuum cleaner, so the manager back-ordered it for me.* ☐ *The shop had to back-order some of the items on my list.*

back out (of something**) 1.** *Lit.* [for someone or something] to move out of something backwards. ☐ *The rabbit tried to back out of its burrow.* ☐ *The rabbit backed out.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to withdraw from something, such as an agreement, negotiations, an argument, etc. ☐ *Are you going to try to back out of our agreement?* ☐ *You won't back out, will you?*

back over someone or something [for a car or other vehicle] to roll backwards over someone or something. ☐ *Sandy backed over her brother's bicycle.* ☐ *She almost backed over her brother.*

***back (**some place**)** returned to some place; at some place again. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; arrive ~**.) ☐ *I can't wait till we get back home.* ☐ *When will we get back? Is it much farther?*

back someone **for** something to support or endorse someone for something, such as a public office. ☐ *We all back Tom for president.* ☐ *I am backing Jane for treasurer.*

back someone or something **into** someone or something to guide or move someone or something backwards into someone or something. ☐ *Don't back your car into anyone.* ☐ *Using hand signals, the attendant backed all the cars into the parking spaces.*

back someone or something **off (from** something**)** to guide or move someone or something a short distance from something. ☐ *I backed the car off from the curb a tiny bit.* ☐ *Using signals, I backed the car off from the crushed bicycle.*

back someone or something **onto** someone or something to guide or move someone or something backwards onto someone or something. ☐ *I backed the car onto the flowers accidentally.* ☐ *Using hand signals, the mechanic helped the driver back the car onto the ramp.*

back someone or something **out† (from** something**)** to **back** someone or something **out of** something. ☐ *Judy backed out the car from the parking place.* ☐ *She backed it out from its space.*

back someone or something **out of** something and **back** someone or something **out†** to guide or move someone or something backwards out of something or some place. ☐ *Judy backed the car out of the garage.* ☐ *Please back out the car.* ☐ *Don backed Fred out of the garage.*

back someone or something **up to** someone or something and **back** someone or something **up†** to guide or move someone or something backwards to someone or something. ☐ *She backed the car up to the end of the street.* ☐ *Using hand signals, Todd helped back Mary up to the gas pump.* ☐ *He backed up the motor home carefully.*

back someone **up†** to provide someone with help in reserve; to support someone. ☐ *Don't worry. I will back you up when you need me.* ☐ *Will you please back up Nancy over the weekend?*

back something **up† 1.** *Lit.* to drive a car backwards. ☐ *Will you back your car up a little?* ☐ *I will back up the car.* **2.** *Lit.* to cause objects to obstruct a pathway or channel and cause a slowdown in the flow. ☐ *The wreck backed the cars up for a long way.* ☐ *Some dead branches and leaves backed the sewer up.* **3.** *Fig.* to give additional support or evidence about something. (To support or strengthen the facts.) ☐ *My story of the crime will back your story up.* ☐ *That backs up my story, all right.*

back the wrong horse *Fig.* to support someone or something that cannot win or succeed. ☐ *I don't want to back the wrong horse, but it seems to me that Jed is the better candidate.* ☐ *Fred backed the wrong horse in the budget hearings.*

back to basics return to basic instruction; start the learning process over again. ☐ *Class, you seem to have forgotten the simplest of facts, so it's back to basics for the first week of classes.*

back to square one *Fig.* back to the beginning. (As with a board game.) ☐ *Negotiations have broken down, and it's back to square one.* ☐ *We lost our appeal of the lower court decision, so back to square one.*

back to the drawing board *Fig.* time to start from the start; it is time to plan something over again. (Plans or schematics are drawn on a drawing board. Note the variations shown in the examples.) ☐ *It didn't work. Back to the drawing board.* ☐ *I flunked English this semester. Well, back to the old drawing board.*

back to the salt mines *Cliché* time to return to work, school, or something else that might be unpleasant. (The phrase implies that the speaker is a slave who works in the salt mines.) ☐ *It's one o'clock and lunch break is over. Back to the salt mines.* ☐ *School starts in the fall, so then it's back to the salt mines again.*

back up 1. *Lit.* [for objects] to obstruct and accumulate in a pathway or channel. ☐ *Something clogged the sewer and it backed up.* **2.** *Fig.* to refuse to go through with something; to back out (of something). ☐ *Fred backed up at the last minute, leaving me to do the job alone.*

back up (to someone or something**)** to move backwards to someone or something. (See also **back** someone or something **up to** someone or something.) ☐ *The bus backed up to the end of the parking space.*

back up (to something**)** to go back to something said in a conversation. ☐ *Wait—back up a little. What did you say that phone number was?* ☐ *Let's back up to what you just said and go over that point again.*

backfire on someone *Fig.* [for something, such as a plot] to fail unexpectedly; to fail with an undesired result. □ *Your plot backfired on you.* □ *I was afraid that my scheme would backfire on me.*

backhanded compliment and **left-handed compliment** an unintended or ambiguous compliment. □ *Backhanded compliments are the only kind he ever gives!* □ *And I think his left-handed compliments are all given by accident, too!*

the **backroom boys** Go to the **boys in the back room**.

backseat driver *Fig.* an annoying passenger who tells the driver how to drive; someone who tells others how to do things. □ *I don't need any backseat driver on this project.* □ *Stop pestering me with all your advice. Nobody likes a backseat driver!*

back-to-back 1. *Lit.* adjacent and touching backs. □ *They started the duel by standing back-to-back.* □ *Two people who stand back-to-back can manage to see in all directions.* **2.** *Fig.* following immediately. (Actually such things are front to back, with the "end" of one event followed in time by the beginning of another.) □ *The doctor had appointments set up back-to-back all day long.* □ *I have three lecture courses back-to-back every day of the week.*

***bad blood (between** people**)** unpleasant feelings or animosity between people. (*Typically: **be ~; have ~**.) □ *There is bad blood between Fred and Jim. They cannot be civil to one another.* □ *There is no bad blood between us. I don't know why we should quarrel.*

a **bad egg** Go to a **rotten egg**.

A **bad excuse is better than none.** *Prov.* If you offer some explanation for an unwanted action, there is a slight chance that it will be accepted and you will therefore not be in trouble, but if you have no explanation at all, you do not even have that slight chance. □ *Fred: I can't believe we played cards till midnight! What will I tell my wife when she asks why I'm so late getting home? Bill: Tell her something came up at the office. Fred: But that's a lousy excuse. She'll never believe it. Bill: A bad excuse is better than none.*

a **bad hair day** a bad day in general. (As when one's inability to groom one's hair in the morning seems to color the events of the day.) □ *I'm sorry I am so glum. This has been a real bad hair day.* □ *It's just one bad hair day after another.*

Bad money drives out good. *Prov.* If there is counterfeit or inflated currency in circulation, people will hoard their genuine currency; worthless things will drive valuable things out of circulation. (This principle is also known as *Gresham's Law.*) □ *When the government reduced the amount of copper in the pennies it produced, we saw that bad money drives out good; everyone saved copper pennies and only spent the less pure ones.* □ *Ever since cheap, flimsy furniture began to be manufactured in large quantities, it has been very difficult to find solid, well-made furniture. Bad craftsmanship, like bad money, drives out good.*

Bad news travels fast. *Prov.* Information about trouble or misfortune disseminates quickly (more quickly than good news). □ *John: Hi, Andy. I'm sorry to hear you got fired. Andy: How did you know about that already? It only happened this morning. John: Bad news travels fast.* □ *I called my mother to tell her about my car accident, but my aunt had already told her. Bad news travels fast.*

a **bad penny** a worthless person. □ *Wally is a bad penny. Someday he'll end up in jail.* □ *My little brother is a real bad penny. Every time he shows up, he wants to borrow money.*

A **bad penny always turns up.** *Prov.* A worthless person always comes back to the place he or she started out. □ *Jill: I just found out that Tom left town after we fought last Saturday. What if I never see him again? Jane: Don't worry. A bad penny always turns up.*

a **bad time** Go to a **hard time**.

bad times and **difficult times; trying times; hard times; tough times** a period that offers difficulties, such as when there is not enough food, money, or work. □ *We went through trying times when Perry was out of work, but we all bounced back.*

badger someone **into** something *Fig.* to pester someone into doing something. □ *Don't try to badger us into doing it.* □ *My brother and I were badgered into cleaning out the garage.*

badger someone or something **to death** *Fig.* to bother and annoy someone or some group. □ *If you don't tell him what he wants to know, he will badger you to death until he finds out.*

bad-mouth someone or something to say negative things about someone or something. □ *Mr. Smith was always bad-mouthing Mrs. Smith. They just didn't get along.* □ *John bad-mouths his car constantly because it is too small for him.*

bag and baggage and **part and parcel** with one's luggage; with all one's possessions. □ *Sally showed up at our door bag and baggage one Sunday morning.* □ *All right, if you won't pay the rent, out with you, bag and baggage!* □ *Get all your stuff—part and parcel—out of here!*

Bag it! and **Bag your face!** *Sl.* **Be quiet!; Shut up** and go away! □ *Mary: Sally, you look just terrible! What happened? Sally: Bag it! Mary: Sorry I asked!* □ *Bill: Did I ever tell you about the time I went to Germany? Sue: Give it a rest, Bill. Bag it!* □ *Sue: Can I borrow your car again? Mary: Bag your face, Sue! Sue: Well, I never!*

bag of bones an extremely skinny person or animal with bones showing. (The skin is the figurative bag.) □ *I've lost so much weight that I'm just turning into a bag of bones.* □ *Get that old bag of bones off the racetrack!*

bag of tricks *Fig.* a collection of special techniques or methods. □ *What have you got in your bag of tricks that could help me with this problem?* □ *Here comes Mother with her bag of tricks. I'm sure she can help us.*

bag on someone *Sl.* to criticize someone. □ *Stop bagging on me! I'm tired of all your complaining.* □ *If you are going to bag on everyone all the time, I don't want to hear about it.*

bag some rays Go to **catch some rays**.

Bag that! *Sl.* Forget that! □ *Bag that! The number I gave you was wrong.* □ *There are four—no, bag that!—six of the red ones and three blue ones.*

Bag your face! Go to **Bag it!**

bail out (of something**) 1.** *Lit.* to jump out of an airplane with a parachute. □ *John still remembers the first time he*

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bailed out of a plane. ☐ *When we get to 8,000 feet, we'll all bail out and drift down together. We'll open our parachutes at 2,000 feet.* **2.** *Fig.* to abandon a situation; to get out of something. ☐ *John got tired of school, so he just bailed out.* ☐ *Please stay, Bill. You've been with us too long to bail out now.*

bail someone or something **out**† *Fig.* to rescue someone or something from trouble or difficulty. (Based on **bail** someone **out of jail.**) ☐ *The proposed law was in trouble, but Senator Todd bailed out the bill at the last minute.* ☐ *I was going to be late with my report, but my roommate lent a hand and bailed me out at the last minute.*

bail someone **out of jail** and **bail** someone **out**† **1.** *Lit.* to deposit a sum of money that allows someone to get out of jail while waiting for a trial. ☐ *John was in jail. I had to go down to the police station to bail him out.* ☐ *I need some cash to bail out a friend!* **2.** *Fig.* to help someone who is having difficulties. ☐ *When my brother went broke, I had to bail him out with a loan.*

bail something **out**† **1.** to remove water from the bottom of a boat by dipping or scooping. ☐ *Tom has to bail the boat out before we get in.* ☐ *You should always bail out a boat before using it.* **2.** to empty a boat of accumulated water. ☐ *Would you bail this boat out?* ☐ *I will bail out the boat.*

bait and switch *Fig.* a deceptive merchandising practice where one product is advertised at a low price to get people's attention [the bait], but pressure is applied to get the customer to purchase a more expensive item. ☐ *Walter described how the store used bait and switch, since they never seemed to have in stock the bargains that they advertised.* ☐ *Wilbur accused the merchant of bait and switch practices and stalked out of the store.*

bake something **from scratch** Go to **from scratch.**

a **baker's dozen** thirteen. (Bakers often added an extra item to an order for a dozen.) ☐ *We ended up with a baker's dozen each of socks and undershirts on our shopping trip.*

the **balance of power** the situation where the power held by one governing body or adversary is balanced by the power of another. ☐ *The balance of power was threatened when China captured our airplane.*

balance out to equal out; to become even or fair. ☐ *These things all balance out in the end.* ☐ *Don't worry. Things will balance out.*

balance something **against** something else to consider one thing in reference to another; to weigh one possibility against another possibility. ☐ *We will have to balance all the good he did against all the bad.* ☐ *The good will be balanced against the bad in the final reckoning.*

balance something **with** something else to offset something with something else; to **balance** something **against** something else. ☐ *The teacher tends to balance a harsh grading scheme with a strong sense of fair play.* ☐ *Roger balanced the spicy soup with a bland first course.* ☐ *They balanced his bad behavior with the good, but still felt he was much too rude.*

balance the accounts 1. *Lit.* and **balance the books** to determine through bookkeeping that accounts are in balance, that all money is accounted for. ☐ *Jane was up all night balancing the accounts.* ☐ *The cashier was not allowed to leave the bank until the manager balanced the books.* **2.** *Fig.* to get even [with someone]. ☐ *Tom hit Bob. Bob balanced the accounts by breaking Tom's toy car.* ☐ *Once we have balanced the accounts, we can shake hands and be friends again.*

bald as a baby's backside Go to next.

***bald as a coot** and ***bald as a baby's backside** completely bald. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *If Tom's hair keeps receding like that, he'll be bald as a coot by the time he's thirty.* ☐ *Fred: Now, I'll admit my hair is thinning a little on the top, but— Jane: Thinning? You're not thinning, you're as bald as a baby's backside!*

***baleful as death** promising evil; very threatening. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *The wind's moan was as baleful as death.* ☐ *His voice sounded baleful as death.*

balk at something to resist and object to something; to shy away from doing something. ☐ *I hope they don't balk at finishing their work.* ☐ *They will probably balk at it.*

ball and chain 1. a wife. (Mostly jocular.) ☐ *I've got to get home to my ball and chain.* ☐ *My ball and chain is mad at me.* **2.** a person's special burden; a job. (Prisoners sometimes were fettered with a chain attached to a leg on one end and to a heavy metal ball on the other.) ☐ *Tom wanted to quit his job. He said he was tired of that old ball and chain.* ☐ *Mr. Franklin always referred to his wife as his ball and chain.*

the **ball is in** someone's **court** *Fig.* to be someone else's move, play, or turn. (From tennis.) ☐ *The ball's in your court now. You do something.* ☐ *I can't do anything as long as the ball is in John's court.*

ball of fire and **fireball** an energetic and ambitious person; a go-getter. ☐ *That guy is a real ball of fire when it comes to sales.* ☐ *I don't want to hire some young fireball. I need wisdom and thoughtfulness.*

ball someone or something **up**† to interfere with someone or something; to mess someone or something up. ☐ *Who balled this television up?* ☐ *Someone balled up the television.*

ball something **up**† to roll something up into a ball. (Alluding to something, such as rope, being tangled up and so useless.) ☐ *She balled the clay up and stuck it to the clown's face as a nose.* ☐ *Why are you balling up the paper?*

a **ballpark figure** *Fig.* an estimate; an off-the-cuff guess. ☐ *I don't need an exact number. A ballpark figure will do.*

the **balls of** one's **feet** the bottom part of the feet just behind the toes. ☐ *Mary got blisters on the balls of her feet from playing tennis.* ☐ *The dancer balanced on the balls of his feet.*

ban someone **from** something **1.** to prohibit someone from doing something. ☐ *We banned everyone from smoking.* ☐ *Everyone has been banned from smoking.* **2.** to prohibit someone from entering something or some place. (The same as **bar** someone **from** some place.) ☐ *They banned us from the building.* ☐ *The manager banned the children from the theater.*

band together (against someone or something**)** to unite in opposition to someone or something; to unite against someone or something. ☐ *We must band together against the enemy.* ☐ *Everyone banded together to finish the cleanup work.*

bandage someone or something **up†** to wrap bandages on someone or on someone's wounds. ☐ *We should bandage the wounds up first.* ☐ *We should bandage up the wounds first.* ☐ *I have to bandage him up before we can move him.* ☐ *She bandaged herself up with the supplies she kept in her backpack.*

bandy something **about†** to spread something, such as someone's good name, around in an unfavorable context; to toss words around in a gossipy fashion. (*Bandy* means to toss or hit something back and forth.) ☐ *Just stop bandying words about and start telling the truth!* ☐ *There is no need to keep bandying about those rumors.*

bandy with someone to argue [with someone]; to argue by "playing catch with words." (*Bandy* means to toss or hit something back and forth.) ☐ *Why are you bandying with me?* ☐ *She has been bandied with enough. Give her a straight answer.*

bang against someone or something to knock or strike against someone or something. ☐ *The shutter banged against the side of the house.* ☐ *The board banged against me and hurt my shin.*

bang (away) at something to hit at something repeatedly, causing harm or making noise. ☐ *Someone is banging away at the door.* ☐ *Stop banging at the door.*

(bang) dead to rights in the act; (guilty) without question. ☐ *We caught her dead to rights with the loot still on her.* ☐ *There he was, bang dead to rights with the smoking gun still in his hands.*

bang for the buck value for the money spent; excitement for the money spent; a favorable cost-to-benefit ratio. (Expressed as an amount of **bang for the buck**.) ☐ *I didn't get anywhere near the bang for the buck I expected.* ☐ *How much bang for the buck did you really think you would get from a twelve-year-old car—at any price?*

bang into someone or something to knock or bump into someone or something. ☐ *Why did you bang into me with your car?* ☐ *I banged into the door by accident.*

bang on someone or something to strike someone or something repeatedly. (Especially to beat on a person or a drum.) ☐ *Please stop banging on that drum!* ☐ *Max was banging on Lefty when the cops arrived.*

bang one's **head against a brick wall** Go to **beat** one's **head against the wall.**

bang someone or something **around†** to knock someone or something about; to beat or strike someone or something. ☐ *Let's bang him around a little and see if that will change his mind.* ☐ *Why are you banging around my friend?* ☐ *Don't bang those pans around.* ☐ *He banged himself around badly in the car wreck.*

bang someone **up†** to beat someone up; to assault someone; to damage someone. ☐ *The crooks banged him up a little bit.* ☐ *The crash banged up the passengers in the car.* ☐ *She banged herself up badly.*

bang something **against** someone or something to strike something against someone or something. (Usually refers to striking with something that can make a banging noise.) ☐ *She banged the spoon against the pan to call everyone to dinner.* ☐ *He banged the pan against me and made me very angry.*

bang something **in†** to crush something; to dent or collapse something. ☐ *Who banged the side of the washing machine in?* ☐ *Who banged in the side of the washing machine?*

bang something **into** someone or something to strike someone or something with something. ☐ *Mark banged his fist into the cushion and swore.* ☐ *He banged the pole into Liz by accident.*

bang something **out†** to play something on the piano, loudly, banging on the keys; to type something on a keyboard by pounding on the keys. ☐ *Let me bang this melody out and see if you can guess who wrote it.* ☐ *Please bang out the school song good and loud.* ☐ *I banged out the newspaper story and just barely made my deadline.*

bang something **up†** to crash or wreck something; to damage something. ☐ *Don't bang my best skillet up!* ☐ *Who banged up my best skillet?*

bang the drum for someone or something Go to **beat the drum for** someone or something.

banish someone or something **from** some place to ban or evict someone or something from some place. ☐ *The town council banished motorcycles from all the parks in town.* ☐ *The new law banished vagrants from the train station.*

bank on something *Fig.* to be so sure of something that one can trust it as one might trust a bank with one's money. ☐ *I will be there on time. You can bank on it.* ☐ *I need a promise of your help. I hope I can bank on it.*

bank something **up† (against** something**) 1.** to heap or mound up something so that it presses against something. ☐ *Walter banked the coals up against the side of the furnace.* ☐ *He banked up the coals against the side.* ☐ *Tim banked the coals up.* **2.** to heap or mound up something to guard against something. ☐ *They had to build barriers to hide behind. They banked dirt and rubble up against the oncoming attackers.* ☐ *Who banked up this dirt against the flood?* ☐ *The river was rising, so we banked some dirt up.*

banker's hours *Fig.* short work hours: 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. ☐ *When did you start keeping banker's hours?* ☐ *There aren't many bankers who keep banker's hours these days.*

baptism of fire *Fig.* a first experience of something, usually something difficult or unpleasant. ☐ *My son's just had his first visit to the dentist. He stood up to this baptism of fire very well.* ☐ *Mary's had her baptism of fire as a teacher. She was assigned to the worst class in the school.*

bar none with no exceptions. (Follows an assertion.) ☐ *This is the best of all, bar none.*

bar someone **from** some place to prevent someone from entering some place. (See also **ban** someone **from** something.) ☐ *Please don't bar me from the movie theater. I will be quiet from now on.* ☐ *They were barred from the concert for smoking.*

bare one's **soul (to** someone**)** *Fig.* to reveal one's innermost thoughts to someone; to tell another person exactly how one feels about someone or something. ☐ *Mary bared her soul to Jane and Jane told Mary her problems also.* ☐ *You don't have to bare your soul to me. Just tell me why you are crying.*

bare one's **teeth** Go to **show** one's **teeth.**

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the **bare** something the smallest or least possible. ☐ *Bob did the bare minimum of work to pass the class.* ☐ *Food, clothing, and shelter are the bare necessities of life.*

bare something **to** someone to reveal or disclose something to someone. ☐ *I have to know a guy pretty well before I will bare my innermost thoughts to him.* ☐ *Our criminal involvement was bared to the judge.*

bare-bones *Cliché* limited; stripped down; lacking refinements or extras. ☐ *This one is the bare-bones model. It has no accessories at all.*

barf out *Sl.* to become deranged, to a greater or lesser degree. ☐ *Terry barfed out when he heard about the damage Nick had done to his car.* ☐ *Yuck! I thought I was going to barf out.*

barf someone **out** *Sl.* to disgust someone. (Fixed order.) ☐ *You just barf me out!* ☐ *I barf myself out every time I look in the mirror.*

bargain (for someone or something**) (with** someone**)** Go to **bargain (over** someone or something**) (with** someone**)**.

bargain for something and **bargain on** something to plan for something; to expect something. ☐ *We knew the project would be difficult, but we didn't bargain for this kind of trouble.* ☐ *I bargained on an easier time of it than this.*

bargain on something Go to previous.

bargain (over someone or something**) (with** someone**)** and **bargain (for** someone or something**) (with** someone**)** to negotiate with someone about obtaining someone or something. ☐ *I refuse to bargain over money with Dan.* ☐ *We will bargain with the supplier over prices.* ☐ *You can't bargain over Claire with Jeff as if she were a car!*

bargaining chip *Fig.* something to be used (traded) in negotiations. ☐ *I want to use their refusal to meet our terms as a bargaining chip in future negotiations.* ☐ *I need to have a few bargaining chips ready when we get down to drawing up the contract.*

barge in (on someone or something**)** *Fig.* to break in on someone or something; to interrupt someone or something. ☐ *Oh! I'm sorry. I didn't mean to barge in on you.* ☐ *They barged in on the church service and caused a commotion.* ☐ *Please don't interrupt me! You can't just barge in like that!*

barge in(to some place**)** *Fig.* to go or come rudely into some place. (See also **barge into** someone or something.) ☐ *He just barged right in without knocking.* ☐ *Don't barge in like that, without letting us know you're here!*

barge into someone or something *Fig.* to bump or crash into someone or something, possibly on purpose. ☐ *She just barged into me and nearly knocked me over.* ☐ *Tom tripped, barged into the water cooler, and hurt his knee.*

bark at someone *Fig.* to speak harshly to someone. ☐ *Don't bark at me like that over such a trivial mistake!* ☐ *Ken barked at the children for being noisy.*

bark at someone or something *Lit.* [for a dog] to make a characteristic sharp sound at someone or something. (See also **bark at** someone.) ☐ *The dog is barking at the traffic again.* ☐ *Their guard dog was barking at me.*

bark something **out at** someone and **bark** something **at** someone; **bark** something **to** someone; **bark** something **out† (to** someone**)** *Fig.* to say something harshly to someone. ☐ *The sergeant barked the orders out at the recruits.* ☐ *He barked an order at his staff.* ☐ *The teacher barked a reprimand out to the class.* ☐ *He barked out the order clearly and loudly.*

bark up the wrong tree *Fig.* to make the wrong choice; to ask the wrong person; to follow the wrong course. (Alludes to a dog in pursuit of an animal, where the animal is in one tree and the dog is barking at another tree.) ☐ *If you think I'm the guilty person, you're barking up the wrong tree.* ☐ *The hitters blamed the team's bad record on the pitchers, but they were barking up the wrong tree.*

A **barking dog never bites.** *Prov.* Someone who makes threats all the time seldom carries out the threats. ☐ *Old Mrs. Smith keeps saying she'll call the police if we walk on her lawn, but don't worry. A barking dog never bites.* ☐ *My boss threatens to fire me at least once a week, but a barking dog never bites.*

barrel along to move along rapidly. ☐ *The car was barreling along at a fairly rapid clip.* ☐ *Don't barrel along so fast that you miss the turn.*

barrel in(to some place**)** *Fig.* to move into a place rapidly and with great force. ☐ *Tony barreled into the room and interrupted the card game.* ☐ *He just barreled in without knocking.*

a **barrel of fun** *Fig.* a tremendous amount of fun. ☐ *Jill is just a barrel of fun in class.* ☐ *We had a barrel of fun at your party.*

barrel out (of some place**)** to move rapidly out of a place; to burst out of a place. ☐ *The kids barreled out of town as fast as they could go.* ☐ *They heard the police siren and quickly barreled out.*

barter for something and **barter over** something to trade [something] for something else; to acquire something by exchanging goods or services, not by using money. ☐ *I want to barter for a large amount of cloth.* ☐ *Will you barter for this month's rent?* ☐ *We will not barter over what you owe us.*

barter something **away†** to trade something away; to lose something of value in a trade. ☐ *Don't barter my car away!* ☐ *Don't barter away anything of such high value.*

barter something **for** something else to trade something for something else. ☐ *He sought to barter the car for a large computer.* ☐ *She bartered the piano for a settee.*

barter something **off†** to get rid of something by trading it for something else. ☐ *See if you can barter that old desk off.* ☐ *She bartered off the used bookshelf.*

barter with someone to enter into trading with someone without using money; to bargain with someone. ☐ *Are you willing to barter with me, or is this strictly a cash transaction?*

base one's **opinion on** something to make a judgment or form an opinion from something. ☐ *You must not base your opinion on one bad experience.* ☐ *I base my opinion on many years of studying the problem.*

base something **(up)on** someone or something to ground something, such as one's opinion, decision, or thinking, on someone or something; to found one's ideas or attitude on something. (*Upon* is more formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *I base my opinion on many, many facts.* ☐ *I based my opinion upon my own seasoned judgment.*

bash someone or something **around†** to treat someone or something roughly (physically or figuratively); to beat on or abuse someone or something (physically or otherwise). ☐ *Stop bashing me around, and let's talk.* ☐ *The robber acted as though he was about to bash around his victims.*

bash something **against** someone or something to strike something against someone or something. ☐ *He accidentally bashed his head against a beam.* ☐ *She bashed her sore elbow against Ted's forehead and both of them were hurt.*

bash something **in†** to crush something inward or to the inside. ☐ *Don't bash the door in!* ☐ *It sounds like someone is bashing in the door.*

bash something **up†** to crash something; to strike something and damage it. ☐ *She bashed the car up badly.* ☐ *How did she bash up the car?*

bask in something *Fig.* to enjoy or revel in something, such as praise, fame, etc. (Alludes to a person or animal resting in the warming rays of the sun.) ☐ *Alice enjoyed basking in her newfound fame.* ☐ *Lily loves basking in praise.*

a **basket case** *Fig.* a person who is a nervous wreck. (Formerly referred to a person who is physically disabled in all four limbs because of paralysis or amputation.) ☐ *After that all-day meeting, I was practically a basket case.* ☐ *My weeks of worry were so intense that I was a real basket case afterwards.*

bat something **around† 1.** *Lit.* to knock something around with a bat or something similar. ☐ *Terry spent a little time batting a ball around, then he went home.* ☐ *Let's bat around some balls before we go home.* **2.** *Fig.* to discuss something back and forth. ☐ *Let's bat this around a little bit tomorrow at our meeting.* ☐ *Do you want to bat around this matter a little more?*

ba(t)ch (it) to live alone like a bachelor. ☐ *I tried to bach it for a while, but I got too lonely.* ☐ *I didn't want to batch, but I had to.*

bathe someone or something **in** something **1.** *Lit.* to cleanse someone or something in something; to coat someone or something all over with some liquid. (In a container of liquid or the liquid itself.) ☐ *She bathed the baby in warm water.* ☐ *Liz bathed her injured hand in cold water.* ☐ *She bathed herself in the warm spring water and took a long nap under a tree.* **2.** *Fig.* to blanket or spread over someone or something, as with light, vapor, color, etc. ☐ *The candles bathed her in a soft glow.* ☐ *The red of the sunset bathed the trees in an eerie light.*

batten down the hatches *Fig.* to prepare for difficult times. (From a nautical expression meaning, literally, to seal the hatches against the arrival of a storm. The word order is fixed.) ☐ *Here comes that contentious Mrs. Jones. Batten down the hatches!* ☐ *Batten down the hatches, Congress is in session again.*

batter someone or something **up†** to damage or harm someone or something. ☐ *Max threatened to batter Lefty up within an inch of his life.* ☐ *Who battered up this desk?*

batter something **down†** to smash or break down something, such as a wall, door, or any defensive structure. ☐ *Do they have to batter anything down as part of the construction project?* ☐ *They battered down the wall as a first step in enlarging the house.*

battle against someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to wage a fight against someone or something; to attempt to defeat someone or something. ☐ *The army battled against the enemy until both sides were exhausted.* **2.** *Fig.* to struggle with someone or something. ☐ *We are battling against the ancient enemies of ignorance and hatred.* ☐ *I am tired of battling against Karen.*

battle for something **1.** *Lit.* to fight to gain something. ☐ *The army battled for the town until they had defeated its defenders.* **2.** *Fig.* to attempt to win or gain something by struggling or arguing. ☐ *Both of them battled for Kristina's attention.*

battle of the bulge the attempt to keep one's waistline slim. (Jocular. Alludes to a World War II battle.) ☐ *She appears to have lost the battle of the bulge.* ☐ *I've been fighting the battle of the bulge ever since I turned 35.*

a **battle royal** a classic, hard-fought battle or argument. ☐ *The meeting turned into a battle royal and everyone left angry.*

battle something **out† 1.** *Lit.* to fight about something to a conclusion. ☐ *They battled the matter out and came to an agreement.* ☐ *The two young toughs went into the alley to battle out their differences.* **2.** *Fig.* to argue something to a conclusion; to struggle to reach a conclusion. ☐ *The Senate and the House disagree on the bill, so they will have to battle a compromise out.*

battle (with someone**) (over** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to argue or struggle with someone over someone or something. (Not meant to involve physical fighting.) ☐ *Why do you always have to battle with me over practically nothing?* ☐ *You shouldn't battle over just anything for the sake of argument!*

bawl someone **out†** to scold someone in a loud voice. ☐ *The teacher bawled the student out for arriving late.* ☐ *Principals don't usually bawl out students.*

bay at something to howl at something. (Usually said of a dog, wolf, or coyote.) ☐ *The dogs were baying at the moon.* ☐ *We heard a coyote in the distance, baying at the moon.*

Be careful. 1. an instruction to take care in a particular situation. ☐ *Bill: I'm going to the beach tomorrow. Sally: Be careful. Use lots of sunscreen!* ☐ *Jane: Well, we're off to the Amazon. Mary: Heavens! Be careful!* **2.** a way of saying good-bye while cautioning someone to take care. ☐ *John: See you around, Fred. Fred: Be careful.* ☐ *Alice: Well, I'm off. John: Bye, Alice, be careful.*

be for doing something Go to next.

be for someone or something and **be for** doing something supporting or in favor of someone or something. ☐ *I'm for abandoning the scheme.* ☐ *Mary is running for office, and the whole family is for her.*

be game to be ready for action; to be agreeable to participating in something. ☐ *"I'm game," David replied when I suggested we go for a long hike.* ☐ *We're going to the park to play football. Are you game?*

be given precedence over someone or something Go to **precedence over** someone or something.

Be good. a departure response meaning "good-bye and behave yourself." ☐ *Jane: Well, we're off. Be back in a week. Mary: Okay, have fun. Be good. Jane: Do I have to?* ☐ *Tom: Bye. Be good. Bill: See you next month.*

B

Be happy to (do something). Go to **(I'd be) happy to (do something).**

be in aid of to be intended to help, cure, or resolve. ☐ *What is all this in aid of?* ☐ *I don't understand what your comments are in aid of.*

Be just before you're generous. *Prov.* Do what you ought to do before you do things that you want to do; pay your debts before you give money away. ☐ *Jill: It's payday! I can't wait to go out and buy my niece that nice toy train set for her birthday. Jane: But, Jill, we have bills to pay. Be just before you're generous.*

Be my guest. Help yourself.; After you. (A polite way of indicating that someone else should go first, help himself or herself to something, or take the last one of something.) ☐ *Mary: I would just love to have some more cake, but there is only one piece left. Sally: Be my guest. Mary: Wow! Thanks!* ☐ *Jane: Here's the door. Who should go in first? Bill: Be my guest. I'll wait out here. Jane: You're so polite!*

be one's brother's keeper to be responsible for someone else. (Used of others besides just real brothers.) ☐ *I can't force these kids to go to school and get an education so they can get jobs. I am not my brother's keeper.* ☐ *You can't expect me to be my brother's keeper. Each of us should be responsible for himself!*

be one's own man and **be one's own master** to be someone who is not controlled by other people; to be an independent person. ☐ *Bert longed to be his own master, but at the same time feared losing the security he had as the employee of a large company.* ☐ *When I go away to college, I'll be my own man. My parents won't be able to tell me what to do anymore.*

be one's own master Go to previous.

Be quiet! Stop talking or making noise. (Regarded as a bit harsh or overbearing, but made polite with *please.*) ☐ *Bill (entering the room): Hey, Tom! Tom: Please be quiet! I'm on the phone.* ☐ *Tom: Hey, Bill! Bill: Be quiet! You're too loud. Tom: Sorry.*

be so bold as to do something and **make so bold as to do something** to dare to do something. ☐ *Would you care to dance, if I may make so bold as to ask?* ☐ *She was so bold to confront her rival.*

be that as it may *Cliché* even if what you say is true. ☐ *I am sorry to hear about your troubles, but, be that as it may, you still must carry out your responsibilities.* ☐ *Be that as it may, I still cannot help you.*

be the last person (to do something) to be the most unlikely person of whom one could think in a particular situation; to be the most unlikely person to do something. (Also literal.) ☐ *Mary is the last person you should ask to chair the meeting—she's so shy.*

Be there or be square. *Sl.* Attend or be at some event or place or be considered uncooperative or not "with it." ☐ *There's a bunch of people going to be at John's on Saturday. Be there or be square.*

be too and **be so** to be something (despite any information to the contrary). (An emphatic form of *is, am, are, was, were.*) ☐ *Mother: Billy, you aren't old enough to be up this late. Billy: I am too!* ☐ *I was so! I was there exactly when I said I would be!*

Beam me up, Scotty! Get me out of here!; Take me away from this mess! (From the late 1960s television program *Star Trek.*) ☐ *This place is really crazy! Beam me up, Scotty!* ☐ *I've heard enough! Beam me up, Scotty!*

beam someone or something up† (to some place) to transport someone or something (up) to something. (Originally in the context of a *Star Trek* adventure, but also used jocularly.) ☐ *The captain asked the first mate to beam him up.* ☐ *Please beam up the crew, Roger.* ☐ *Beam me up so I can see your penthouse suite!*

beam up *Sl.* to die. (Alluding to the television program *Star Trek.*) ☐ *Pete Dead? I didn't think he was old enough to beam up.* ☐ *I was so exhausted after climbing four flights that I was afraid I would beam up.*

bear a grudge (against someone) and **have a grudge (against someone); hold a grudge (against someone)** to continue feeling an old resentment for someone; to harbor continual anger for someone. ☐ *She bears a grudge against the judge who sentenced her.* ☐ *I have a grudge against my landlord for not fixing the leaky faucet.*

bear a resemblance to someone or something to have a degree of similarity to someone or something. ☐ *This wallet bears a strong resemblance to the one I lost last month.* ☐ *Do you think that Wally bears any resemblance to his sister Mary?*

bear down (on someone or something) to press down on someone or something. ☐ *Bear down on the pen. You have to make a lot of copies.* ☐ *Don't bear down too hard or you'll break it.*

bear fruit 1. *Lit.* [for a plant or tree] to yield fruit. ☐ *Our apple tree didn't bear fruit this year.* **2.** *Fig.* to yield results. ☐ *I hope your new plan bears fruit.* ☐ *We've had many good ideas, but none of them has borne fruit.*

bear in mind that... to remember [something]; to consider [something]. ☐ *Bear in mind that the trip will be expensive.* ☐ *I asked the teacher to bear in mind that I am just a beginner.*

bear off (of something) to turn off a road or course. ☐ *Bear off the main road to the left.* ☐ *Don't bear off too sharply.*

bear one's cross and **carry one's cross** *Fig.* to handle or cope with one's burden; to endure one's difficulties. (This is a biblical theme. It is always used figuratively except in the biblical context.) ☐ *It's a very painful disease, but I'll bear my cross.* ☐ *I can't help you with it. You'll just have to carry your own cross.*

bear someone or something in mind Go to **keep someone or something in mind.**

bear someone or something up† to hold someone or something up; to support someone or something. ☐ *Will this bench bear me up?* ☐ *This bench is so sturdy it would bear up an elephant.*

bear someone up† to sustain or encourage someone. ☐ *Your encouragement bore me up through a very hard time.* ☐ *I will bear up the widow through the funeral service as well as I can.*

bear something out† [for facts or evidence] to support or confirm a story or explanation. ☐ *The facts don't bear this out.* ☐ *Her story bears out exactly what you said.*

B

bear the blame for something Go to the **blame for** something.

bear the brunt (of something**)** to withstand the worst part or the strongest part of something, such as an attack. ☐ *I had to bear the brunt of her screaming and yelling.* ☐ *Why don't you talk with her the next time she complains? I'm tired of bearing the brunt of her objections.*

bear up (against something**)** to withstand something. ☐ *She was unable to bear up against the criticism.* ☐ *Ken bore up against the challenge of his disabling injury well.*

bear up (under something**)** **1.** *Lit.* to hold up under something; to sustain the weight of something. ☐ *How is the new beam bearing up under the weight of the floor?* ☐ *It isn't bearing up. It broke.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to remain brave under a mental or emotional burden. ☐ *Jill did not bear up well under problems with her family.* ☐ *Jill bore up quite well amid serious difficulties.*

bear (up)on something [for information or facts] to concern something or be relevant to something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *How do those facts bear on this matter?* ☐ *They do not bear upon this matter at all.*

bear watching to need close, attentive observation or monitoring. ☐ *This problem will bear watching.* ☐ *This is a very serious disease, and it will bear watching for further developments.*

bear with someone or something to be patient with someone or something; to wait upon someone or something. (Especially through difficulties.) ☐ *Please bear with me for a moment while I try to get this straightened out.* ☐ *Can you bear with the committee until it reaches a decision?*

beard the lion in his den and **beard** someone **in** his **den** *Prov.* to confront someone on his or her own territory. ☐ *I spent a week trying to reach Mr. Toynbee by phone, but his secretary always told me he was too busy to talk to me. Today I walked straight into his office and bearded the lion in his den.* ☐ *If the landlord doesn't contact us soon, we'll have to beard him in his den.*

beat a dead horse Go to **flog a dead horse.**

beat a (hasty) retreat to withdraw from a place very quickly. ☐ *We went out into the cold weather, but beat a retreat to the warmth of our fire.* ☐ *The dog beat a hasty retreat to its own yard.*

beat a path to someone's **door** *Fig.* [for people] to arrive (at a person's place) in great numbers. (The image is that so many people will wish to come that they will wear down a pathway to the door.) ☐ *I have a new product so good that everyone will beat a path to my door.* ☐ *If you really become famous, people will beat a path to your door.*

beat about the bush Go to **beat around the bush.**

beat against someone or something to strike against someone or something. ☐ *The wind beat against the sides of the house.* ☐ *Max beat against Lefty's jaw with his quick jabs.*

beat around the bush and **beat about the bush** *Fig.* to avoid answering a question; to stall; to waste time. ☐ *Stop beating around the bush and answer my question.* ☐ *Let's stop beating about the bush and discuss this matter.*

beat at something to strike out at something. ☐ *He beat at his attacker to no avail.* ☐ *Lily beat at the snake, but didn't harm it.*

beat down (on someone or something**)** to fall on someone or something. ☐ *The rain beat down on us for an hour.* ☐ *The rock slide beat down on the car and totally ruined the body.*

Beat it! *Inf.* **Go away!; Get out!** ☐ *Bill: Sorry I broke your radio. Bob: Get out of here! Beat it!* ☐ *"Beat it, you kids! Go play somewhere else!" yelled the storekeeper.*

beat on someone or something to pound or hammer on someone or something. ☐ *She beat on him until he let her go.* ☐ *Stop beating on that drum!*

beat one's **brains out**† **(to** do something**)** to try very hard to do something. ☐ *If you think I'm going to beat my brains out to do this, you are crazy.* ☐ *I beat out my brains to do this for you!* ☐ *I won't beat my brains out again for you!*

beat one's **gums** to waste time talking a great deal without results. (As if one were toothless.) ☐ *I'm tired of beating my gums about this over and over.* ☐ *You're just beating your gums. No one is listening.*

beat one's **head against the wall** and **bang** one's **head against a brick wall** *Fig.* to waste one's time trying hard to accomplish something that is completely hopeless. ☐ *You're wasting your time trying to figure this puzzle out. You're just beating your head against the wall.* ☐ *You're banging your head against a brick wall trying to get that dog to behave properly.*

beat oneself **up** *Fig.* to be overly critical of one's behavior or actions; to punish oneself with guilt and remorse over past actions. (Not a physical beating. Fixed order.) ☐ *It's over and done with. There's no need to beat yourself up.* ☐ *He's beating himself up over his role in the accident.*

beat someone **down**† *Fig.* to defeat or demoralize someone. ☐ *The constant bombing finally beat them down.* ☐ *The attackers beat down the defenders.*

beat someone **down to size** and **knock** someone **down to size** *Fig.* to make a person more humble, sometime by actual physical beating. ☐ *If you keep acting so arrogant, someone is going to beat you down to size.* ☐ *It's time someone knocked you down to size.* ☐ *I'll try to be less arrogant. I don't want anyone to beat me down to size.*

beat someone **into (**doing**)** something to beat a person until the person agrees to do something or to assume a particular attitude. ☐ *They had to beat John into submission before he gave up.* ☐ *Max threatened to beat Lefty into helping him rob the candy store.*

beat someone **into** something *Fig.* to beat a person until the person turns into a particular physical state, such as a pulp, a mess, etc. ☐ *Fred threatened to beat Mike into a pulp if he didn't do as he was asked.* ☐ *Mike beat Fred into a bloody mess.*

beat someone or something **back**† to drive someone or something back to where it came from. ☐ *We beat them back to where they were before the war started.* ☐ *The army beat back the defenders and saved the town.* ☐ *They were able to beat the wolves back and make an escape.*

beat someone or something **off**† to drive someone or something away by beating. ☐ *They beat the enemy off.* ☐ *The*

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army beat off the savage attack, saving the town. ☐ *I was able to beat off the intruder.*

beat someone or something **out†** to beat someone or something; to win over someone or something. ☐ *The other team beat us out readily.* ☐ *They beat out every other team in the league, too.* ☐ *I will win! You will not beat me out!*

beat someone **out†** to outdistance someone; to perform better than someone. ☐ *We have to beat the other company out, and then we'll have the contract.* ☐ *I beat out Walter in the foot race.*

beat someone's **brains out 1.** to hit or batter someone severely. ☐ *She threatened to beat my brains out.* ☐ *Those thugs nearly beat his brains out.* **2.** to drive oneself hard (to accomplish something). ☐ *I beat my brains out all day to clean this house, and you come in and get dirt on the carpet!* ☐ *Don't beat your brains out. Just give it a good try.*

beat someone **to** something to get to something before someone else; to claim something before someone else does. (See also **beat** someone **into** something.) ☐ *You beat me to it and took the last cookie.* ☐ *Ken beat John to the door.*

beat someone **to the punch** and **beat** someone **to the draw** *Fig.* to do something before someone else does it. ☐ *I wanted to have the new car, but Sally beat me to the punch.* ☐ *I planned to write a book about using the new software program, but someone else beat me to the draw.*

beat someone **up†** to harm or subdue a person by striking him. ☐ *The robber beat me up and took my money.* ☐ *I really wanted to beat up that intruder.*

beat something **down† 1.** to break something in; to break through something. ☐ *Don't beat the door down! I'm coming!* ☐ *Please don't beat down the door!* **2.** to flatten something. ☐ *Sam beat the veal down to the thickness of a half an inch.* ☐ *First you beat down the meat to a very thin layer.*

beat something **into** someone and **beat** something **in†** *Fig.* to use physical abuse to get someone to learn something; to work very hard to get someone to learn something. (Beating something into someone or someone's head.) ☐ *Do I have to beat this into your head? Why can't you learn?* ☐ *Why do I have to beat in this information?* ☐ *Can't you learn by yourself? Does someone have to beat it in?*

beat something **into** something to beat or whip something with a utensil, until it changes into something else. ☐ *Beat the white of the egg into stiff peaks.* ☐ *Beat the batter into a smooth consistency.*

beat something **up† 1.** to whip up something, such as an egg. ☐ *Beat the egg up and pour it in the skillet.* ☐ *Beat up another egg and do the same.* **2.** to ruin something; to damage something. ☐ *The banging of the door has really beat this wall up.* ☐ *The frequent pounding of the door handle beat up the wall.*

beat the clock *Fig.* to do something before a deadline; to finish before the time is up. (Alludes to accomplishing something before a clock reaches a specific time.) ☐ *Sam beat the clock, arriving a few minutes before the doors were locked.* ☐ *They were afraid they would be late and hurried in order to beat the clock.*

beat the drum for someone or something and **bang the drum for** someone or something *Fig.* to promote or support someone or something. (As if one were beating a drum to get attention.) ☐ *I spent a lot of time beating the drum for our plans for the future.* ☐ *The senator is only banging the drum for his special interests.*

beat the gun *Fig.* to manage to do something before the ending signal. (Originally from sports, referring to scoring in the last seconds of a game just before the referee fires a gun to signal the end of the game.) ☐ *The field goal beat the gun and was in the air just in time.* ☐ *Tom tried to beat the gun, but he was one second too slow.*

beat the hell out of someone and **beat the living daylights out of** someone; **beat the pants off (of)** someone; **beat the shit out of** someone; **beat the socks off (of)** someone; **beat the stuffing out of** someone; **beat the tar out of** someone **1.** *Fig.* to defeat someone very badly. (Caution: the use of the word *shit* is considered vulgar and is offensive to many people. *Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Our team beat the hell out of the other side.* ☐ *We beat the stuffing out of the other side.* **2.** *Fig. Inf.* to batter someone severely. (Alludes to physical violence, not the removal of someone's pants. *Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *The thugs beat the living daylights out of their victim.* ☐ *If you do that again, I'll beat the pants off of you.* ☐ *Before the boxing match Max said he would beat the socks off Lefty.*

beat the (natural) stuffing out of someone Go to kick the (natural) stuffing out of someone.

beat the pants off (of) someone Go to beat the hell out of someone.

beat the rap *Sl.* to evade conviction and punishment (for a crime). ☐ *He was charged with drunk driving, but he beat the rap.* ☐ *The police hauled Tom in and charged him with a crime. His lawyer helped him beat the rap.*

beat the shit out of someone Go to beat the hell out of someone.

beat the socks off (of) someone Go to beat the hell out of someone.

beat the stuffing out of someone Go to beat the hell out of someone.

beat the tar out of someone Go to beat the hell out of someone.

beat up on someone to batter someone, usually physically. ☐ *Lefty beat up on Max and made a mess of him.* ☐ *Don't beat up on me, you bully!*

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. *Prov.* Different people have different ideas about what is beautiful. ☐ *Bob: I can't believe Ted bought that ugly old car. Fred: He loves it. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.* ☐ *Jill: Have you seen Mary's pictures of her new baby? He looks pretty ugly, to my eyes. Jane: Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.*

Beauty is only skin-deep. *Prov.* A person who looks beautiful may not have a pleasing personality; a person's good looks may not last. ☐ *Fred: I hope Nancy will go out with me. She's so beautiful! Jane: I hate to disappoint you, but in Nancy's case, beauty is definitely only skin-deep.* ☐ *Don't be so proud of your pretty face. Beauty is only skin-deep.*

beckon to someone to signal someone to come. ☐ *Wally beckoned to Sally, and she came over to him.* ☐ *Lily beckoned to Max and he turned his back on her.*

B

become of someone or something to happen or occur to someone or something. ☐ *Whatever became of Joe and his friends?* ☐ *I don't know what became of my other plaid sock.*

***becoming on** someone [of clothing] complimentary to someone; [of clothing] enhancing one's good looks. (*Typically: **be ~; look ~**.) ☐ *The dress you wore last night is not becoming on you.* ☐ *That color is very becoming on you.*

bed down (for something**)** to lie down to sleep for a period of time. ☐ *After she had bedded down for the night, the telephone rang.* ☐ *All the chickens bedded down hours ago.*

bed down some place to sleep somewhere; to find a place to sleep somewhere. ☐ *I need to bed down somewhere for the night.* ☐ *Can I bed down here with you?*

a **bed of roses** a luxurious situation; an easy life. ☐ *Who said life would be a bed of roses?* ☐ *If I had a million bucks, I would be in a bed of roses.*

bed (someone or something**) down† (**some place**)** to put someone or something into a bed or on bedding some place. ☐ *We bedded the kids down on mattresses on the floor.* ☐ *We bedded down the horses for the night.*

bed-and-breakfast a type of lodging for travelers or tourists offering a place to sleep and breakfast the next morning, typically in a small inn or private home. ☐ *We visited six European countries and stayed in a bed-and-breakfast every night.* ☐ *I had to take a bed-and-breakfast because the hotels in the city were much too expensive.*

bedeck someone or something **with** something to decorate someone or something with something. ☐ *She bedecked herself with garlands of daisies.* ☐ *Karen bedecked the room with flowers.*

*a **bee in** one's **bonnet** a single idea or a thought that remains in one's mind; an obsession. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** one **~**.) ☐ *I have a bee in my bonnet over that cool new car I saw, and I can't stop thinking about it.* ☐ *I got a bee in my bonnet about swimming. I just wanted to go swimming all the time.*

beef about someone or something *Sl.* to complain about someone or something. ☐ *Stop beefing about Karen.* ☐ *He is always beefing about his working conditions.*

beef something **up†** to add strength or substance to something. ☐ *Let's beef this music up with a little more on the drums.* ☐ *They beefed up the offer with another thousand dollars.*

been around have had many experiences in life. ☐ *You don't need to warn me about anything! I've been around.*

been had and **was had; have been had 1.** (of a woman) been copulated with; been made pregnant. ☐ *I've been had, and I'm going to have the baby.* ☐ *When she said she had been had, I didn't know it happened on her honeymoon.* **2.** been mistreated, cheated, or dealt with badly. ☐ *Look at this cheap shirt that I paid $30 for! I was had!* ☐ *I've been had by that lousy gyp joint.*

beer up *Sl.* to drink a lot of beer. ☐ *Those guys are out there beering up like mad.* ☐ *Stop beering up and go home!*

before long soon. ☐ *Billy will be grown-up before long.* ☐ *If we keep spending so much, before long we'll be without any money.*

***before** someone ahead of or in front of someone in order. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; go ~**.) ☐ *Who is before Mary?* ☐ *I am before all of you.*

***before** someone's **time** happening before someone was born or old enough to know what was going on. (*Typically: **be ~; happen ~; occur ~**.) ☐ *Of course I don't remember it. It was before my time.* ☐ *All that happened before your time.*

before you can say Jack Robinson and **quicker than you can say Jack Robinson** *Fig.* almost immediately. (Often found in children's stories.) ☐ *And before you could say Jack Robinson, the bird flew away.* ☐ *I'll catch a plane and be there quicker than you can say Jack Robinson.*

before you know it almost immediately. ☐ *I'll be there before you know it.* ☐ *If you keep spending money like that, you'll be broke before you know it.*

beg for someone or something to plead to be given someone or something. ☐ *He missed Jane a lot and was just begging for her to return to him.* ☐ *Jane begged for another helping of ice cream.*

beg of someone to request earnestly of someone. (Usually added to a request.) ☐ *Please help me. I beg of you.* ☐ *I beg of you to help me.*

beg off (on something**)** to ask to be released from something; to refuse an invitation. ☐ *I'm sorry, but I'll be out of town on the day of your party. I'll have to beg off on your invitation.* ☐ *I have an important meeting, so I'll have to beg off.*

beg something **from** someone to plead for something from someone. ☐ *She begged the amount of a telephone call from someone who walked by.* ☐ *I begged a dollar from a kind lady who went by.*

beg something **of** someone to request earnestly that someone do something or grant something. ☐ *Please help me. I beg it of you.* ☐ *She begged a favor of Max.*

beg something **off†** to decline an invitation politely. ☐ *She begged the trip to the zoo off.* ☐ *We all begged off the dinner invitation.*

beg the question 1. to carry on a false argument where one assumes as proved the very point that is being argued, or more loosely, to evade the issue at hand. (Essentially a criticism of someone's line of argument.) ☐ *Stop arguing in circles. You're begging the question.* ☐ *A: Why do two lines that are equidistant from one another never meet? B: Because they are parallel. A: You are begging the question.* **2.** to invite the (following) question. (This reinterpretation of **beg the question** is incorrect but is currently in widespread use.) ☐ *His complaints beg the question: Didn't he cause all of his problems himself?*

beg to differ (with someone**)** *Fig.* to disagree with someone; to state one's disagreement with someone in a polite way. (Usually used in a statement made to the person being disagreed with.) ☐ *I beg to differ with you, but you have stated everything exactly backwards.* ☐ *If I may beg to differ, you have not expressed my position as well as you seem to think.*

beggar (all) description to defy description; to be unable to be described. ☐ *The house was a horrible mess. The place beggared description.* ☐ *Our reaction to the proposal beggars description. We were deeply disturbed for days.*

B

Beggars can't be choosers. *Prov.* If someone gives you something you asked for, you should not complain about what you get. ☐ *I asked Joe to lend me his bicycle, and he sent me this old, rusty one. But beggars can't be choosers.* ☐ *Jill: Let me wear your green dress; I don't like the blue one you lent me. Jane: Beggars can't be choosers.*

begin an all-out effort Go to an all-out effort.

begin by doing something to start out by doing something first. ☐ *We will begin by painting the house.* ☐ *She began by opening the door.*

begin to see daylight *Fig.* to begin to see the end of a long task. ☐ *I've been working on my thesis for two years, and at last I'm beginning to see daylight.* ☐ *I've been so busy. Only in the last week have I begun to see daylight.*

begin to see the light *Fig.* to begin to understand something. (See also see the light (at the end of the tunnel).) ☐ *My algebra class has been hard for me, but I'm beginning to see the light.* ☐ *I was totally confused, but I began to see the light after your explanation.*

begin with someone or something to start off a sequence with someone or something. ☐ *Let's have dinner begin with a nice clear soup.* ☐ *I will begin with Liz and take Frank next.*

beginner's luck absolute luck; the luck of an inexperienced person. (Referring to surprisingly good luck.) ☐ *I could never have accomplished this if I had practiced a lot. My win was just beginner's luck.*

the **beginning of the end** *Fig.* the start of the termination of something or of someone's death. ☐ *When he stopped coughing and grew still, I knew it was the beginning of the end.* ☐ *The enormous debt we ran up marked the beginning of the end as far as our standard of living was concerned.*

beguile someone **into** something to charm someone into doing something. ☐ *You can't beguile me into stealing for you!* ☐ *I beguiled Tom into driving me to the airport.*

beguile someone **out of** something **1.** to charm someone out of doing something. ☐ *I will try to beguile them out of doing it.* ☐ *He beguiled her out of leaving.* **2.** to charm something away from someone. ☐ *She's trying to beguile the old man out of a substantial amount of his money.* ☐ *Max beguiled the old lady out of her rings.*

beguile someone **with** something to charm or fascinate someone with something. ☐ *She beguiled her date with tales of her luxurious lifestyle.* ☐ *He spent the evening beguiling her with stories of the Old West.*

***behind bars** in jail. (*Typically: **be ~; put** someone **~**.) ☐ *Very soon, you will be behind bars for your crimes.* ☐ *Max should be behind bars soon for his conviction on burglary charges.*

behind closed doors in secret; away from observers, reporters, or intruders, usually in a closed room. ☐ *They held the meeting behind closed doors, as the law allowed.* ☐ *Every important issue was decided behind closed doors.*

***behind schedule** having failed to do something by the appointed time, especially the time given on a written plan. (*Typically: **be ~; fall ~; get ~**.) ☐ *We have to hurry and finish soon or we will fall behind schedule.* ☐ *The project is behind schedule by six months.*

behind someone's **back** without someone's knowledge; secret from someone. ☐ *Please don't talk about me behind my back.* ☐ *She sold the car behind his back, while he was away on vacation.*

***behind the eight ball 1.** *Fig.* in trouble; in a weak or losing position. (Alludes to the eight ball in pool, which in certain games cannot be touched without penalty. *Typically: **be ~; get ~; have** someone **~; put** someone **~**.) ☐ *I'm behind the eight ball again and can't see how to relieve my dilemma.* ☐ *John is behind the eight ball because he started writing his term paper far too late.* **2.** *Fig.* broke. ☐ *Sorry, I'm really behind the eight ball this month. I can't make a contribution.* (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; have** someone **~; put** someone **~**.) ☐ *I was behind the eight ball again and couldn't make my car payment.*

behind the scenes without receiving credit or fame; out of public view. (Referring originally to those who worked on a theatrical piece but do not appear on the stage.) ☐ *The people who worked behind the scenes are the real heroes of this project.* ☐ *I worked behind the scenes in the play.* ☐ *We should thank the people who are behind the scenes of our success.*

behind the times old-fashioned. ☐ *Sarah is a bit behind the times. Her clothes are quite old-fashioned.* ☐ *Our 90-year-old state senator is a bit behind the times.*

Behind you! Look behind you!; There is danger behind you! ☐ *"Behind you!" shouted Tom just as a car raced past and nearly knocked Mary over.* ☐ *Alice shouted, "Behind you!" just as the pickpocket made off with Fred's wallet.*

behoove one **to** do something *Cliché* [for someone] to be obliged to do something. ☐ *It behooves you to apologize to her for how you insulted her.* ☐ *It behooves me to make up for all the help you have given me.*

belabor the point to spend too much time on one item of discussion. ☐ *I don't want to belabor the point, but the sooner we get this matter settled, the better.* ☐ *If the speaker would agree not to belabor the point further, I will place it on the agenda for resolution at the next meeting.*

belch out to burst, billow, or gush out. ☐ *Smoke belched out of the chimney.*

belch something **up**† to cause the release of something that goes upward. ☐ *The fire belched flames and smoke up.* ☐ *The volcano belched up clouds of poison gasses.*

believe in someone or something to trust or have faith in someone or something; to accept a fact or what someone says as truth. ☐ *You must believe in your own abilities.* ☐ *I believe in myself and my talent.*

believe it or not (you may) choose to accept something as true or not; it may seem amazing but it's true. ☐ *It's late, but believe it or not, I just got home from work.* ☐ *I'm over fifty years old, believe it or not.*

Believe nothing of what you hear, and only half of what you see. *Prov.* Rumors are usually false, and sometimes the things you see can be misleading as well; be very skeptical until there is proof. ☐ *Jill: I heard the football team is losing its best player. He has not been at practice for two days. Jane: Believe nothing of what you hear, and only half of what you see.* ☐ *The paper reported that the city government is going bankrupt, but I believe nothing of what I hear, and only half of what I see.*

believe something **of** someone to accept a statement about someone as truth. ☐ *What a terrible thing for Jill to do. I can't believe it of her.* ☐ *I can believe anything of Max. He's such a conniving person.*

Believe you me! *Inf.* You really should believe me!; You'd better take my word for it! ☐ *Alice: Is it hot in that room? Fred: It really is. Believe you me!* ☐ *Sue: How do you like my cake? John: Believe you me, this is the best cake I've ever eaten!*

bell, book, and candle things that are miraculous or that signal that something unusual or bizarre may soon happen. (Alluding originally to the items used when performing the rite of excommunication from the Roman Catholic Church.) ☐ *Look, I can't work miracles! Do you expect me to show up at your house with bell, book, and candle, and make everything right? You have to take charge of your own destiny!* ☐ *On the top shelf of the tiny used-book store, Jim saw a bell, book, and candle sitting in a row, and he knew he was going to find some very interesting reading material.*

bellow something **out**† to cry something out loudly with great force. ☐ *Don't just say it. Bellow it out!* ☐ *Bellow out your name so we know who you are!*

bells and whistles *Fig.* extra, fancy add-ons or gadgets. ☐ *I like cars that are loaded with all the bells and whistles.* ☐ *All those bells and whistles add to the cost.*

belly out [for a sheet of fabric, such as a ship's sail] to fill out in the wind. ☐ *The sails bellied out as the ship turned to catch the wind.* ☐ *When the sails bellied out, we began to move forward.*

belly up 1. intoxicated by alcohol. ☐ *Fred was boiled—belly up—glassy-eyed.* ☐ *After four beers, I was belly up, for sure.* **2.** *Sl.* (of a business) bankrupt; dead. (Like a dead fish that floats belly up.) ☐ *That's the end. This company is belly up.* ☐ *After the fire the firm went belly up.*

belly up (to something**)** to move up to something, often a bar. (Usually in reference to nudging one's way to a bar.) ☐ *The man swaggered in and bellied up to the counter and demanded my immediate attention.* ☐ *As he bellied up, he said, "Do you know who I am?"*

belong to someone or something to be owned by someone or something. ☐ *This one belongs to me.* ☐ *This desk belongs to the company. You can't take it home!*

belong under something to be classified under some general category. ☐ *This one belongs under the other category.* ☐ *This file belongs under A.*

below average lower or worse than average. ☐ *Tom's strength is below average for a child his size.* ☐ *Dad asked why my grades are below average.*

below par not as good as average or normal. ☐ *I feel a little below par today. I think I am getting a cold.* ☐ *His work is below par, and he is paid too much money.*

below someone ranking below someone. ☐ *I am below Terri, but my scores are better than Carol's.* ☐ *I am below everyone in the class.*

***below** someone or something positioned under or lower than someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; lie ~; sink ~; sit ~**.) ☐ *The sun is below the horizon.* ☐ *The swimming hole is below the dam.*

belt a drink **down**† *Fig.* to drink an alcoholic drink rapidly. (See also **belt** someone or something **down**.) ☐ *She belted a couple of drinks down and went out to face her guests.* ☐ *How many drinks did Gloria belt down?*

belt someone or something **down**† to secure someone or something with a belt or strap. ☐ *Please belt the child's seat down and put the child in it.* ☐ *Did you belt down the kids?*

belt someone **up**† to secure someone with a belt, such as a seat belt in a car. ☐ *I had to belt her up because the seat belt was so complicated.* ☐ *We belted up the kids securely.*

belt something **out**† *Fig.* to sing or play a song loudly and with spirit. ☐ *When she's playing the piano, she really belts the music out.* ☐ *She really knows how to belt out a song.*

belt the grape *Sl.* to drink wine or liquor heavily and become intoxicated. ☐ *He has a tendency to belt the grape—every afternoon after work.* ☐ *She's been belting the grape more than her husband wants.*

belt up Go to **buckle up**.

bend back to lean or bend backwards. ☐ *He bent back to pick up the book, and he fell.* ☐ *When she bent back, she ripped something.*

bend before something to bend under the pressure of moving air. ☐ *The trees bent before the wind.* ☐ *Our roses bent gracefully before the breeze.*

bend down to curve downward; [for someone] to lean down. ☐ *Please bend down and pick up the little bits of paper you just dropped.* ☐ *The snow-laden bushes bent down.*

bend forward to lean forward; to curve forward. ☐ *The tree bent forward in the wind.* ☐ *I bent forward to pick up the pencil.*

bend in to curve or turn inward. ☐ *The shore bent in about a mile to the west.* ☐ *The side of the shed bent in under the force of the wind.*

bend one's **elbow** and **bend the elbow; lift** one's **elbow** to take a drink of an alcoholic beverage; to drink alcohol to excess. ☐ *He's down at the tavern, bending his elbow.* ☐ *Paul gets lots of exercise. I saw him bend his elbow thirty times at a bar yesterday.*

bend over [for someone] to bend down at the waist. ☐ *I bent over and picked up the coin.* ☐ *When he bent over, something ripped.*

bend over backwards (to do something**)** Go to **fall over backwards (to** do something**)**.

bend over backwards (to do something**) (for** someone**)** *Fig.* to work very hard to accomplish something for someone; to **go out of** one's **way (to** do something**) (for** someone**)**. (See also **fall over backwards (to** do something**)**.) ☐ *He will bend over backwards to help you.* ☐ *I bent over backwards for you, and you showed no thanks!*

bend someone or something **back**† to curve or arch someone or something backward. ☐ *We bent the child back a little so we could examine the spider bite.* ☐ *Ouch! Don't bend back my hand!* ☐ *Bend the branch back so we can get a better view.*

bend someone **out of shape** *Fig.* to make someone angry. ☐ *The cheating that was going on really bent Joe out of shape.* ☐ *Why do you let yourself get bent out of shape? Chill, man, chill.*

B

bend someone's **ear** *Fig.* to talk to someone, perhaps annoyingly. (As if talking so much that the other person's ear is moved back.) ☐ *Tom is over there, bending Jane's ear about something.* ☐ *I'm sorry. I didn't mean to bend your ear for an hour.*

bend something **out of shape** to distort something by twisting or bending. ☐ *Jill bent the spring out of shape.* ☐ *I bent the coat hanger out of shape by hanging my leather jacket on it.*

bend the elbow Go to **bend** one's **elbow.**

bend the law and **bend the rules** *Fig.* to cheat a little bit without breaking the law. (Jocular.) ☐ *I didn't break the rules. I just bent the rules a little.* ☐ *Nobody ever got arrested for bending the law.*

bend the rules Go to previous.

beneath contempt exceedingly contemptible. ☐ *What you have done is beneath contempt.* ☐ *Your rude behavior is beneath contempt.*

beneath one's **dignity** too rude or coarse for a polite person to do. ☐ *That kind of thing is beneath my dignity, and I hope yours as well.* ☐ *I would have thought something like that to be beneath your dignity.*

beneath someone too shameful for a polite person to do. ☐ *That kind of thing is beneath Fred. I'm appalled that he did it.* ☐ *That sort of foul language is beneath you!*

***beneath** something under something. (*Typically: **be ~; sit ~.**) ☐ *What is that beneath the table?* ☐ *The cat is beneath the piano.*

benefit by something and **benefit from** something to profit or gain by something. ☐ *We hope to benefit by the collapse of our competition.* ☐ *We will all benefit from the new tax laws.*

benefit from something Go to previous.

*the **benefit of the doubt** a judgment in one's favor when the evidence is neither for one nor against one. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~.**) ☐ *I was right between a B and an A. I got the benefit of the doubt—an A.* ☐ *I thought I should have had the benefit of the doubt, but the judge made me pay a fine.*

bent on doing something *Fig.* determined to do something. ☐ *I believe you are bent on destroying the entire country.* ☐ *I am bent on saving the planet.*

bent out of shape 1. *Fig.* angry; insulted. ☐ *Man, there is no reason to get so bent out of shape. I didn't mean any harm.* ☐ *I got bent out of shape because of the way I was treated.* **2.** intoxicated by alcohol or drugs. ☐ *I was so bent out of shape I thought I'd never recover.* ☐ *I've been polluted, but never as bent out of shape as this.*

bequeath something **to** someone to will something to someone; to leave something to someone. ☐ *My uncle bequeathed some furniture to me.* ☐ *I will bequeath this watch to my grandson.*

bereft of someone or something left without someone or something. (*Bereft* is the past participle of *bereave*, functioning here as an adjective.) ☐ *Tom was bereft of all hope.* ☐ *The child was bereft of his parents.*

beset someone **with** something to surround someone with harassment; to harass someone with something. ☐ *Please do not beset them with problem after problem.* ☐ *They beset us with requests for money.*

beside oneself **(with** something**)** *Fig.* in an extreme state of some emotion. ☐ *I was beside myself with joy.* ☐ *Sarah could not speak. She was beside herself with anger.*

beside the point and **beside the question** irrelevant; of no importance. ☐ *That's very interesting, but beside the point.* ☐ *That's beside the point. You're evading the issue.*

beside the question Go to previous.

besiege someone or something **with** something **1.** *Lit.* to attack someone or a group with something. ☐ *We besieged the enemy with bombs and bullets.* **2.** *Fig.* to overwhelm someone or something with something ☐ *They besieged us with orders for the new book.* ☐ *We besieged the company with complaints.*

besmirch someone or something **with** something to dirty or soil someone or someone's reputation with something. ☐ *Please don't continue to besmirch Alice with that gossip.* ☐ *You have besmirched my reputation with your comments.* ☐ *He besmirched her with vile gossip in order to turn people against her.*

The **best defense is a good offense.** *Prov.* If you attack your opponents, they will be so busy fighting off your attack that they will not be able to attack you. (Often associated with sports. Often pronounced with the accent on the first syllable, similar to *offense*.) ☐ *The team mostly practiced offensive moves because the coach believed that the best defense is a good offense.* ☐ *Jim thought that the best defense is a good offense, so he always tried to pass other drivers before they could pass him.*

The **best is the enemy of the good.** *Prov.* If you are too ambitious and try to make something better than you are capable of, you may ruin it. ☐ *Bob: After I revise it a few more times, my novel will be the best ever written. Alan: I don't think you should revise it any more. Remember, the best is the enemy of the good.* ☐ *In fund-raising as in other areas, the best is the enemy of the good. If you ask someone for a larger contribution than he can possibly give, he may give you nothing at all.*

*the **best of both worlds** a situation wherein one can enjoy two different opportunities. (*Typically: **enjoy ~; have ~; live in ~.**) ☐ *When Don was a fellow at the university, he had the privileges of a professor and the freedom of a student. He had the best of both worlds.* ☐ *Donna hated to have to choose between retirement and continuing working. She wanted to do both so she could live in the best of both worlds.*

the **best of** someone Go to the **better of** someone.

the **best part of** something almost all of something; a large part of something; the major part of something. ☐ *The discussion took the best part of an hour.* ☐ *The best part of the meeting was taken up by budgetary matters.*

The **best things come in small packages.** and **Good things come in small packages.** *Prov.* Small packages often contain valuable things. (Sometimes said of petite or short people.) ☐ *Jill: I'm upset at George. He only gave me this tiny box for my birthday. Jane: Don't get upset till you know what's in it. Good things do come in small packages.* ☐ *Child: I hate being so short. Grandmother: You shouldn't. The best things come in small packages.*

The **best things in life are free.** *Prov.* The most satisfying experiences do not cost any money. ☐ *Don't be gloomy because you're broke. The best things in life are free.* ☐ *Yesterday I took my children to the zoo. We didn't spend a penny, but we had a wonderful time. The best things in life are free.*

the **best-case scenario** *Cliché* the optimum outcome being considered. (Compare this with the worst-case scenario.) ☐ *Now that we've seen the negative angle, let's look at the best-case scenario.* ☐ *In the best-case scenario, we're all dead eventually—but then that's true of the worst-case scenario also.*

The **best-laid plans of mice and men oft(en) go astray.** and The **best-laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft a-gley.** *Prov.* Things often go wrong even though you have carefully planned what you are going to do. (The *gang aft a-gley* version is Scots dialect, and comes from Robert Burns' poem "To a Mouse.") ☐ *Jill: I reserved a hotel room for us three weeks ago, but now the clerk says he has no record of our reservation. So much for our fun weekend in the city. Jane: Well, these things happen. The best-laid plans of mice and men oft go astray.* ☐ *I had all the arrangements made for my party, and then the guest of honor got sick and I had to call the whole thing off. The best-laid schemes of mice and men gang aft a-gley.* ☐ *If a little rain can ruin the best-laid plans of mice and men, think what an earthquake might do!*

bestow something **on** someone to give something to someone; to present something to someone. ☐ *The mere presence of the queen bestowed wisdom and grace on the court.* ☐ *Fine gifts were bestowed on the visiting prince.*

bet on someone or something to wager on someone or something. ☐ *Are you really going to bet on that horse?* ☐ *I bet on Paul. He is the fastest runner.*

bet one's **bottom dollar** and **bet** one's **life** *Fig.* to be quite certain (about something). (A *bottom dollar* is the last dollar.) ☐ *I'll be there. You bet your bottom dollar.* ☐ *I bet my bottom dollar you can't swim across the pool.* ☐ *You bet your life I can't swim that far.*

bet one's **life** Go to previous.

bet someone **dollars to doughnuts** *Fig.* to bet something of value against something worth considerably less. ☐ *I bet you dollars to doughnuts that she is on time.* ☐ *He bet me dollars to doughnuts that it would snow today.*

bet something **on** someone or something to wager something on someone or something. ☐ *I bet one thousand dollars on that horse!* ☐ *Fred bet a few bucks on his favorite football team.*

bet the farm Go to sell the farm.

bet with someone to make a bet or wager with someone. ☐ *No, I won't bet with you. That's not my style.* ☐ *Max will bet with anyone.*

betroth someone **to** someone to promise someone in marriage to someone else. ☐ *The king betrothed his daughter to a prince from the neighboring kingdom.* ☐ *She betrothed herself to one of the peasant boys from the village.*

Better be an old man's darling than a young man's slave. *Prov.* A young woman should prefer to marry an old man who dotes on her rather than a young man who may treat her badly. ☐ *When Mr. Nash proposed to me, I thought he was too old, but my mother advised me, "Better be an old man's darling than a young man's slave."* ☐ *When Marion's friends objected that her fiancé was much too old for her, she said, "Better be an old man's darling than a young man's slave."*

Better (be) safe than sorry. *Prov. Cliché* You should be cautious—if you are not, you may regret it. ☐ *It may be time-consuming to check the oil in your car every time you buy gasoline, but better safe than sorry.* ☐ *Bob: I don't need a tetanus shot just because I stepped on a nail. Mary: I still think you should get one. Better be safe than sorry.*

Better be the head of a dog than the tail of a lion. *Prov.* It is better to be the leader of a less prestigious group than to be a subordinate in a more prestigious one. ☐ *Joe: I can be the headmaster of a small secondary school, or I can be a teacher at a famous university. Which job offer do you think I should take? Nancy: Better be the head of a dog than the tail of a lion.* ☐ *A professional writing workshop had asked Bob to join, but he elected to stay with his amateur group, since he thought it better to be the head of a dog than the tail of a lion.*

Better keep still about it. and Someone **had better keep still about it.; Better keep quiet about it.;** Someone **better keep quiet about it.** A particular person ought not to tell about or discuss something. (The *someone* can stand for any person's name, any pronoun, or even the word *someone* meaning "you-know-who." If there is no *Someone had,* the phrase is a mild admonition to keep quiet about something.) ☐ *Mary: I saw you with Bill last night. Jane: You'd better keep quiet about it.* ☐ *Jane: Tom found out what you're giving Sally for her birthday. Bill: He had better keep quiet about it!*

Better late than never. *Prov. Cliché* Doing something late is better than not doing it. ☐ *I'm sorry I'm late to the party. Better late than never, right?* ☐ *Jill: Lisa's birthday was two weeks ago. Should I send her a card now? Jane: Better late than never.*

better left unsaid [refers to a topic that] should not be discussed; [refers to a thought that] everyone is thinking, but would cause difficulty if talked about in public. (A typical beginning for this phrase might be *It is, That is, The details are,* or even *Some things are.* See the examples.) ☐ *Mary: I really don't know how to tell you this. Bob: Then don't. Maybe it's better left unsaid.* ☐ *Bill: I had such a terrible fight with Sally last night. I can't believe what I said. Bob: I don't need to hear all about it. Some things are better left unsaid.*

Better luck next time. 1. an expression that comforts someone for a minor failure. (Said with a pleasant tone of voice.) ☐ *Bill: That does it! I can't run any farther. I lose! Bob: Too bad. Better luck next time.* ☐ *Mary: Well, that's the end of my brand new weight lifting career. Jane: Better luck next time.* **2.** an expression that ridicules someone for a failure. (Said with rudeness or sarcasm. The tone of voice distinguishes ② from ①.) ☐ *Sally: I lost out to you, but I think you cheated. Mary: Better luck next time.* ☐ *Sue: You thought you could get ahead of me, you fool! Better luck next time! Joan: I still think you cheated.*

***the better of** someone and ***the best of** someone triumph over someone. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~**.) ☐ *Bill got*

the best of John in the boxing match. ☐ *I tried to get the better of Tom in the golf match, but he won anyway.*

B

better off (doing something**)** and **better off (if** something **were done)** in a better position if something were done. ☐ *She'd be better off selling her house.* ☐ *They are better off flying to Detroit than driving.*

better off (somewhere**)** and **better off (if** one **were** somewhere else**)** in a better position somewhere else. ☐ *They would be better off in a cheaper apartment.* ☐ *We'd all be better off if we were in Florida.* ☐ *I know I'd be better off in a warmer climate.*

Better the devil you know than the devil you don't know. *Prov.* If you have to choose between a familiar but unpleasant situation and an unfamiliar situation, choose the familiar one because the unfamiliar situation may turn out to be worse. ☐ *Jill: I hate my job so much that I'm thinking of asking for a transfer. Jane: I'd advise against it. Better the devil you know than the devil you don't know.* ☐ *Although she was unhappy in her marriage, Donna never considered pursuing romances with other men. "Better the devil you know than the devil you don't know," was her philosophy.*

between a rock and a hard place and **between the devil and the deep blue sea** *Fig.* in a very difficult position; facing a hard decision. ☐ *I couldn't make up my mind. I was caught between a rock and a hard place.* ☐ *He had a dilemma on his hands. He was clearly between the devil and the deep blue sea.*

between jobs and **between projects** *Euph.* unemployed. ☐ *Interviewer: Tell me about your current position. Job candidate: I'm between jobs right now.* ☐ *When Jill was between projects, she took a computer class at the community college.*

between life and death *Fig.* in a position where living or dying is an even possibility. (Especially with *caught* or *hovering.*) ☐ *And there I was on the operating table, hovering between life and death.* ☐ *The mountain climber hung by his rope, caught between life and death.*

between projects Go to between jobs.

between someone **and** someone else and **between** something **and** something else *Fig.* [of a choice] existing between a selection of people or a selection of things. ☐ *The choice is between Fred and Jill.* ☐ *It's between chocolate cake and cherry pie.*

between something **and** something else Go to previous.

between the devil and the deep blue sea Go to between a rock and a hard place.

between you (and) me and the bedpost and **between you and me and these four walls** *Fig.* a somewhat affected way of signaling that you are about to tell a secret. ☐ *Alan: What's wrong with Ellen these days? She seems so touchy. Jane: Between you and me and the bedpost, I've heard that her boyfriend is seeing someone else.* ☐ *Jill: How much did you get for your used car? Jane: Well—between you and me and these four walls—five thousand dollars.*

between you and me and these four walls Go to previous.

betwixt and between 1. *Lit.* between (people or things). ☐ *I liked the soup and the dessert and all that came betwixt and between.* ☐ *I sat betwixt and between all the actors who weren't on stage.* **2.** *Fig.* undecided about someone or something. ☐ *I wish she would choose. She has been betwixt and between for three weeks.* ☐ *Tom is so betwixt and between about getting married. I don't think he's ready.*

a **bevy of beauties** *Cliché* a group of very attractive women, as found in a beauty contest. ☐ *A whole bevy of beauties waltzed past the old man, but he didn't even notice.*

Beware of Greeks bearing gifts. *Prov.* Do not trust an opponent who offers to do something nice for you. (A line from the story of the Trojan horse, as told in Vergil's *Aeneid.*) ☐ *Jill: I can't believe Melanie brought me cookies today, when we've been fighting for weeks. Jane: Beware of Greeks bearing gifts. She probably has ulterior motives.* ☐ *When the rival company invited all his employees to a Christmas party, Tom's first impulse was to beware of Greeks bearing gifts, but then he upbraided himself for being paranoid.*

beware of someone or something to be cautious and watchful about someone or something. ☐ *Beware of Ted. He's acting irrational.* ☐ *You should beware of the dog.*

beyond a reasonable doubt almost without any doubt. (A legal phrase.) ☐ *The jury decided beyond a reasonable doubt that she had committed the crime.* ☐ *He was also found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.*

***beyond help** and ***beyond repair** beyond the help of anything; not able to be fixed. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *The poor dog that was hit by a truck is beyond help.* ☐ *This old car is beyond repair.*

beyond me completely missing or surpassing my understanding. ☐ *I'm confused. All this is beyond me.*

beyond measure *Fig.* in an account or to an extent more than can be quantified; in a very large amount. ☐ *They brought in hams, turkeys, and roasts, and then they brought vegetables and salads beyond measure.* ☐ *They thanked all of us beyond measure.*

beyond one's **depth 1.** *Lit.* in water that is too deep. ☐ *Sally swam out from the beach until she was beyond her depth.* ☐ *Jane swam out to get her even though it was beyond her depth, too.* **2.** *Fig.* beyond one's understanding or capabilities. ☐ *I'm beyond my depth in calculus class.* ☐ *Poor John was involved in a problem that was really beyond his depth.*

beyond one's **ken** outside the extent of one's knowledge or understanding. ☐ *Why she married that shiftless drunkard is beyond our ken.* ☐ *His mean attitude to others is quite beyond my ken.*

beyond one's **means** more than one can afford. ☐ *I'm sorry, but this house is beyond our means. Please show us a cheaper one.* ☐ *They feel that a Caribbean cruise is beyond their means.*

beyond repair Go to beyond help.

beyond some emotional response in too extreme a state to feel or care. ☐ *Do what you want. You have hurt me so much, I am beyond caring.* ☐ *The dying patient is beyond feeling. It doesn't matter now.*

***beyond** someone or something **1.** on the other side of something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *When we get beyond this bad road, I'll have to check the tires.* ☐ *I have to get beyond the large gentleman standing in the hall.*

2. finished with someone or something; having solved the problems relating to someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; move ~**.) ☐ *Things will be better when we get beyond this financial crisis.* ☐ *When the country gets beyond the current situation, things will have to get better.*

beyond the pale *Fig.* unacceptable; outlawed. (A *pale* is a barrier made of wooden stakes.) ☐ *Your behavior is simply beyond the pale.* ☐ *Because of Tom's rudeness, he's considered beyond the pale and is never asked to parties anymore.*

beyond the shadow of a doubt Go to without a shadow of a doubt.

beyond words *Fig.* more than one can say. (Especially preceded by *grateful, shocked,* and *thankful.*) ☐ *Sally was thankful beyond words.* ☐ *I don't know how to thank you. I'm grateful beyond words.*

bias someone **against** someone or something to prejudice someone against someone or something. ☐ *Please avoid biasing everyone against me.* ☐ *One bad experience biased all of us against that brand of sausage.*

bicker (with someone**) (about** someone or something**)** and **bicker (with** someone or something**) (over** someone or something**)** to argue with someone about someone or something. ☐ *Why are you always bickering with her about absolutely nothing?* ☐ *Please don't bicker with us over these small details.*

bid adieu to someone or something *Cliché* to say good-bye to someone or something. (The word *adieu* is French for *good-bye* and should not be confused with *ado.*) ☐ *Now it's time to bid adieu to all of you gathered here.* ☐ *He silently bid adieu to his favorite hat as the wind carried it down the street.*

bid something **down**† to lower the value of something, such as stock, by offering a lower price for it each time it comes up for sale. ☐ *We bid the price down and then bought all of it.* ☐ *I could see that the traders were bidding down the price, but I didn't want to take the risk.*

bid (something**) for** something and **bid (**something**) on** something to offer an amount of money for something at an auction. ☐ *I bid a thousand for the painting.* ☐ *I didn't want to bid for it.* ☐ *I wouldn't bid a cent on that rickety old table!*

bid (something**) on** something Go to previous.

bid something **up**† to raise the price of something at an auction by offering higher and higher prices; to increase the value of something, such as shares of stock, by offering a higher price for it each time it comes up for sale. ☐ *Who is bidding the price up on that painting?* ☐ *Someone bid up the price on each piece at auction and then backed off.*

bide one's **time** to wait patiently. ☐ *I've been biding my time for years, just waiting for a chance like this.* ☐ *He's not the type just to sit there and bide his time. He wants some action now.*

big and bold large and capable of getting attention. (Usually refers to things, not people.) ☐ *The big and bold lettering on the book's cover got lots of attention, but the price was too high.* ☐ *She wore a brightly colored dress. The pattern was big and bold and the skirt was very full.*

The **Big Apple** New York City. ☐ *We spent the weekend in the Big Apple.*

***big around as a molasses barrel** *Rur.* very big around. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *He ate till he was as big around as a molasses barrel.* ☐ *The athlete's chest was big around as a molasses barrel.*

***big as all outdoors** *Cliché* very big, usually referring to an indoor space of some kind. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *You should see Bob's living room. It's as big as all outdoors!* ☐ *The new movie theater is as big as all outdoors.*

***big as life (and twice as ugly)** and ***large as life (and twice as ugly); bigger than life (and twice as ugly)** *Cliché* a colorful way of saying that a person or a thing appeared, often surprisingly or dramatically, in a particular place. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *The little child just stood there as big as life and laughed very hard.* ☐ *I opened the door, and there was Tom as large as life.* ☐ *I came home and found this cat in my chair, as big as life and twice as ugly.*

a **big break** Go to a lucky break.

big bucks a very large amount of money. ☐ *He earns big bucks for doing almost nothing.*

a **big drink of water** and a **tall drink of water 1.** *Fig.* a very tall person. ☐ *Tim is sure a big drink of water.* ☐ *Kelly grew into a tall drink of water.* **2.** *Fig.* a boring person or thing. (A pun on "hard to take.") ☐ *She is a big drink of water, but she could be worse.* ☐ *The lecture was a big drink of water.*

*the **big eye 1.** a flirtatious look or gaze; a long look to get another's attention. (*Typically: **get ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Look at that pretty girl giving you the big eye.* ☐ *I thought she was cute, so I gave her the big eye.* **2.** obvious eye contact with someone. (*Typically: **get ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Tom gave me the big eye to let me know he wanted to talk to me.* ☐ *I tried to give her the big eye, but she never looked my way.*

a **big frog in a small pond** an important person in the midst of less important people. (Alludes to a large frog that dominates a small pond with few challengers.) ☐ *I'd rather be a big frog in a small pond than the opposite.* ☐ *The trouble with Tom is that he's a big frog in a small pond. He needs more competition.*

*a **big hand for** something lots of applause for something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *She got a big hand for singing so well.* ☐ *They always give the acrobats a big hand.*

*a **(big) head** a hangover. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Oh, man, that booze gave me a big head!* ☐ *Tom has a head this morning and won't be coming into work.*

big man on campus *Sl.* an important male college student. (Often derisive or jocular.) ☐ *Hank acts like such a big man on campus.* ☐ *Let some big man on campus do the dirty work for a change.*

the **big moment** and the **moment everyone has been waiting for** the special time that everyone has been waiting for. ☐ *The big moment has come. I will now announce the winner.* ☐ *This is the moment everyone has been waiting for. Now we will learn the name of the big winner.*

big of someone generous; kind or forgiving. (Sometimes sarcastic.) ☐ *He gave me some of his apple. That was very*

big of him. ☐ It was big of Sally to come over and apologize like that.

B

*the **big picture** the whole story of something; a complete view of something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~; know ~; see ~; show** someone **~**.) ☐ *The sales manager gave us all the big picture this morning, and I'm more confused than ever.*

*a **big send-off** a happy celebration before departing. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I had a wonderful send-off before I left.* ☐ *John got a fine send-off as he left for Europe.*

big with someone famous with or desired by someone or some group. ☐ *This kind of pizza is supposed to be big with people in Chicago.* ☐ *Rock concerts are big with the kids.*

bigger than life (and twice as ugly) Go to big as life (and twice as ugly).

The **bigger they are, the harder they fall.** *Prov.* When prominent people fail, their failure is more dramatic. ☐ *After the newspapers reported that the mayor cheated on his wife, he lost the election and he can't get any kind of job. The bigger they are, the harder they fall.* ☐ *Jackson used to be very wealthy, but he lost every cent in the stock market crash. The bigger they are, the harder they fall.*

The **biggest frog in the puddle** and The **biggest toad in the puddle** *Prov.* The most important or powerful person in some small, unimportant group. (See also a big frog in a small pond.) ☐ *Jill: Elaine seems to be obsessed with becoming class president. Jane: Yes, she really wants to be the biggest frog in the puddle.* ☐ *The people in my office don't care about doing their work; mostly they compete over who will be the biggest toad in the puddle.*

The **biggest toad in the puddle** Go to previous.

bilk someone **out of** something to get something away from someone by deception. ☐ *The crooks bilked the old lady out of a fortune.* ☐ *I was bilked out of my life's savings!*

bill someone **for** something to ask someone for payment for something in writing. ☐ *Just bill me for the balance.* ☐ *She billed them for her expenses and then tried to deduct the expenses from her income tax.*

billow out 1. [for something, such as smoke] to burst and flow outward. ☐ *At the site of the fire, smoke billowed out.* ☐ *Clouds of ash billowed out of the volcano.* **2.** [for a sheet of cloth] to fill with the wind. (Especially a ship's sail.) ☐ *The sail billowed out and we moved forward.* ☐ *Her skirt billowed out when the wind caught it.*

bind someone or something **down**† to tie or secure someone or something to something. ☐ *Bind the tarpaulin so it won't get away.* ☐ *We will bind down the patient tightly.* ☐ *They bound the hatch down so it could not be opened.*

bind someone or something **together**† to tie the parts of something together; to tie a number of things or people together. ☐ *Can you bind together all three parts?* ☐ *Bind these two bandits together and lead them to jail.*

bind someone or something **up**† **(in** something**)** and **bind** someone or something **up**† **(with** something**)** to tie someone or something up in something. ☐ *They bound the books up in leather straps.* ☐ *I will bind up the larger sticks in strong cord.*

bind someone or something **up**† **(with** something**)** Go to previous.

bind someone **over**† **(to** someone or something**)** to deliver someone to some legal authority; to deliver someone to some legal authority. (A legal usage.) ☐ *They bound the suspect over to the sheriff.* ☐ *The sheriff will bind over the suspect to the county jail.*

binge and purge to overeat and vomit, alternatively and repeatedly. (A symptom of the condition called bulimia.) ☐ *She had binged and purged a number of times before she finally sought help from a doctor.* ☐ *Terry had been binging and purging for a number of years and was very, very thin.*

A **bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.** *Prov.* Having something for certain is better than the possibility of getting something better. ☐ *I might get a better offer, but a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.* ☐ *Bill has offered to buy my car for $3,000 cash. Someone else might pay more, but a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.*

a **bird's-eye view 1.** *Lit.* a view seen from high above. ☐ *We got a bird's-eye view of Cleveland as the plane began its descent.* ☐ *From the top of the church tower you get a splendid bird's-eye view of the village.* **2.** *Fig.* a brief survey of something; a hasty look at something. ☐ *The course provides a bird's-eye view of the works of Mozart, but it doesn't deal with them in enough detail for your purpose.* ☐ *All you need is a bird's-eye view of the events of World War II to pass the test.*

the **birds and the bees** *Euph.* sex and reproduction. (See also the facts of life.) ☐ *My father tried to teach me about the birds and the bees.* ☐ *He's twenty years old and doesn't understand about the birds and the bees!*

Birds in their little nests agree. *Prov.* People who live together should try hard to get along peacefully. (Usually used to admonish children not to fight with each other.) ☐ *Brother: She called me a name! Sister: I did not! He's a liar! Father: Now, now, kids—birds in their little nests agree.* ☐ *Let's not argue about this, guys. Birds in their little nests agree.*

Birds of a feather flock together. *Prov.* Similar people tend to associate with each other. ☐ *I always thought Amy was pretentious, and now she's going out with that snobbish boy, Louis. Birds of a feather flock together.* ☐ *George: Why do you think Donald is dishonest? Ned: All his friends are dishonest. Birds of a feather flock together.*

a **bit much** beyond what is needed or tolerable. ☐ *The speech she gave in acceptance of the award was a bit much. She went on and on.*

a **bit of the action** Go to a piece (of the action).

*a **bit off** and *a **little off** a little crazy; a little out of whack. (*Typically: **be ~; find** someone **~**.) ☐ *This guy's a little off, but he is harmless.*

bitch about someone or something *Inf.* to complain about someone or something. (Use discretion with *bitch*, a word many consider coarse or vulgar.) ☐ *You are always bitching about your girlfriend.* ☐ *Stop bitching about your job so much.*

a **bitch of a** someone or something *Inf.* a really difficult person or thing. (Use discretion with *bitch*, a word many con-

sider coarse or vulgar.) ☐ *What a bitch of a day!* ☐ *He is really a bitch of a boss.*

bitch someone **off**† *Sl.* to make someone angry. (Use discretion with *bitch*, a word many consider coarse or vulgar.) ☐ *You really bitch me off, do you know that?* ☐ *That foul temper of yours could bitch off anybody.*

bitch someone or something **up**† *Inf.* to mess someone or something up. (Use discretion with *bitch*, a word many consider coarse or vulgar.) ☐ *Who bitched these cards up?* ☐ *I never bitch up anything!*

bite back (at someone or something**) 1.** *Lit.* to defend an attack by biting at someone or something. (Usually an animal.) ☐ *I threatened the dog and the dog bit back.* **2.** *Fig.* to fight back at someone; to return someone's anger or attack; to speak back to someone with anger. ☐ *She is usually tolerant, but she will bite back if pressed.* ☐ *Yes, she will bite back.*

bite into something **1.** *Lit.* to press one's teeth into something. ☐ *As he bit into the apple, the juices ran down his chin.* ☐ *Lily bit into the sandwich and smiled.* **2.** *Fig.* [for the wind or something similar] to blow sharply against someone, causing a stinging pain. ☐ *The cold wind bit into poor Wally, who only has a light jacket.* ☐ *The frigid air bit into my exposed skin.*

bite off more than one **can chew 1.** *Lit.* to take a larger mouthful of food than one can chew easily or comfortably. ☐ *I bit off more than I could chew, and nearly choked.* **2.** *Fig.* to take (on) more than one can deal with; to be overconfident. ☐ *Ann is exhausted again. She's always biting off more than she can chew.*

bite on someone *Sl.* to copy something that someone else has done; to dress the same way someone else does. ☐ *Nobody will bite on Sally. She has terrible taste.* ☐ *Jennifer is always biting on Anne, who is a careful dresser.*

bite on something **1.** to chew on something; to grasp something with the teeth. ☐ *The injured cowboy bit on a leather strap while they tried to fix his dislocated shoulder.* **2.** to respond to a lure; to **fall for** something. (Can refer literally to fishing, or be used figuratively.) ☐ *Do you think the fish will bite on this?* ☐ *No one would bite on that bait. Try another approach.*

bite one's **nails 1.** to use one's teeth to remove parts of one's fingernails as a means of shortening them. ☐ *Stop biting your nails! Use clippers!* **2.** to literally bite one's nails from nervousness or anxiety; to be nervous or anxious. ☐ *I spent all afternoon biting my nails, worrying about you.* ☐ *We've all been biting our nails from worry.*

bite one's **tongue 1.** *Lit.* to bite down on one's tongue by accident. ☐ *Ouch! I bit my tongue!* **2.** *Fig.* to struggle not to say something that you really want to say. ☐ *I had to bite my tongue to keep from telling her what I really thought.* ☐ *I sat through that whole silly conversation biting my tongue.*

bite someone's **head off** *Fig.* to speak sharply and with great anger to someone. (Fixed order.) ☐ *Don't bite my head off! Be patient.* ☐ *I'm very sorry I lost my tempter. I didn't mean to bite your head off.*

bite something **off**† to remove something in a bite. ☐ *Ann bit a piece off and chewed it up.* ☐ *She bit off a piece.*

bite the big one *Sl.* to die. ☐ *I was so tired that I thought I was going to bite the big one.* ☐ *I hope I am old and gray when I bite the big one.*

bite the bullet *Sl.* to accept something difficult and try to live with it. ☐ *You are just going to have to bite the bullet and make the best of it.* ☐ *Jim bit the bullet and accepted what he knew had to be.*

bite the dust 1. *Sl.* to die. ☐ *A shot rang out, and another cowboy bit the dust.* ☐ *The soldier was too young to bite the dust.* **2.** *Sl.* to break; to fail; to give out. ☐ *My old car finally bit the dust.* ☐ *This pen is out of ink and has bitten the dust.*

bite the hand that feeds one *Fig.* to do harm to someone who does good things for you. (Does not involve biting.) ☐ *I'm your mother! How can you bite the hand that feeds you?* ☐ *She can hardly expect sympathy when she bites the hand that feeds her.*

Bite the ice! *Sl.* Go to hell! ☐ *If that's what you think, you can just bite the ice!* ☐ *Get away from me! Bite the ice!*

*a **bite (to eat)** to get something to eat; to get food that can be eaten quickly. (*Typically: **get ~; grab ~; have ~**.) ☐ *I need a few minutes to grab a bite to eat.* ☐ *Bob often tries to get a bite between meetings.*

Bite your tongue! *Fig.* an expression said to someone who has just stated an unpleasant supposition that unfortunately may be true. ☐ *Mary: I'm afraid that we've missed the plane already. Jane: Bite your tongue! We still have time.* ☐ *Mary: Marry him? But you're older than he is! Sally: Bite your tongue!*

bitten by the same bug *Fig.* having the same need, desire, or obsession. ☐ *Bob and I were both bitten by the same bug and ended up getting new cars at the same time.*

a **bitter pill to swallow** *Fig.* an unpleasant fact that has to be accepted. (Does not involve pills or swallowing.) ☐ *It was a bitter pill for her brother to swallow when she married his enemy.* ☐ *We found his deception a bitter pill to swallow.*

blab something **around**† *Inf.* to gossip something to others; to spread some news or secret. ☐ *It's true, but don't blab it around.* ☐ *Did you blab around everything I told you to keep to yourself?*

blab something **out**† *Inf.* to speak out freely about something that is a secret. ☐ *Don't just blab it out!* ☐ *Don't blab out the names of the people who were there!*

black-and-blue *Fig.* bruised, physically or emotionally. ☐ *I'm still black-and-blue from my divorce.* ☐ *What is that black-and-blue mark on your leg?*

***black as a skillet** and ***black as a stack of black cats; *black as a sweep; *black as coal; *black as night; *black as pitch; *black as the ace of spades** completely dark or black. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *I don't want to go down to the cellar. It's as black as a skillet down there.* ☐ *Her hair was black as a stack of black cats.* ☐ *After playing in the mud all morning, the children were as black as night.* ☐ *The stranger's clothes were all black as pitch.*

***black as** one **is painted** as evil as described. (Usually negative. *Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *The landlord is not as black as he is painted. He seems quite generous to me.* ☐ *Young people are rarely black as they are painted in the media.*

B

black as pitch Go to **black as a skillet.**

black as the ace of spades Go to **black as a skillet.**

a **black eye 1.** *Lit.* a bruise near the eye from being struck. (*Typically **have ~; get ~; give** someone **~.**) ☐ *I got a black eye from walking into a door.* ☐ *I have a black eye where John hit me.* **2.** *Fig.* harm done to one's character. (*Typically **have ~; get ~; give** someone **~.**) ☐ *Mary got a black eye because of her constant complaining.* ☐ *The whole group now has a black eye, and it will take years to recover our reputation.*

*a **black mark beside** one's **name** *Fig.* something negative associated with a person. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** one **~.**) ☐ *I did it again! Now I've got still another black mark beside my name!*

black out 1. *Lit.* [for lights] to go out. ☐ *Suddenly the lights blacked out.* ☐ *The power went dead and everything blacked out from the heat.* **2.** *Fig.* to pass out; to become unconscious. ☐ *After I fell, I must have blacked out.* ☐ *I think I am going to black out.*

the **black sheep of the family** *Fig.* the worst member of the family. ☐ *Mary is the black sheep of the family. She's always in trouble with the police.* ☐ *He keeps making a nuisance of himself. What do you expect from the black sheep of the family?*

black something **out**† **1.** *Lit.* to cut or turn out the lights or electric power. ☐ *The lightning strike blacked the entire town out.* ☐ *The manager blacked out the whole building during the emergency to prevent an explosion.* **2.** *Fig.* to prevent the broadcast of a specific television or radio program in a specific area. ☐ *Will they black the game out around here?* ☐ *They blacked out the basketball game in this area.*

blackmail someone **into** doing something to force a person to do something by threatening to reveal some secret about the person. ☐ *Are you trying to blackmail me into doing what you want?* ☐ *They blackmailed me into doing it.*

*the **blame for** something the responsibility of having done something wrong or caused something bad to happen. (*Typically: **accept ~; bear ~; shoulder ~; take ~.**) ☐ *I absolutely refuse to shoulder the blame for the entire fiasco!*

blame someone **for** something to hold someone responsible for something; to name someone as the cause of something. ☐ *Please don't blame Jill for it.* ☐ *She blamed herself for everything that went wrong.*

blame something **on** someone to say that something is someone's fault; to place the guilt for something on someone. ☐ *Don't blame it on me.* ☐ *I blamed it all on someone else.*

blanch at something *Fig.* to cringe at something; to become pale at the thought of something. ☐ *Jill blanched at the thought of swimming in that cold water.* ☐ *Lily blanched at the sight before her.*

blanch with something *Fig.* to become pale with some emotion, such as anger or fear. ☐ *He saw the injury and blanched with fear.* ☐ *Lily blanched with anger as Max walked out.*

a **blank check** freedom or permission to act as one wishes or thinks necessary. ☐ *He's been given a blank check with regard to reorganizing the work force.* ☐ *The new manager has been given no detailed instructions about how to train the staff. He just has a blank check.*

blank something **out**† **1.** *Lit.* to erase something, as on a computer screen. ☐ *Who blanked out the information that was on my screen?* ☐ *Please blank your password out as soon as you type it.* **2.** *Fig.* to forget something, perhaps on purpose; to blot something out of memory. ☐ *I'm sorry, I just blanked your question out.* ☐ *I blanked out your question. What did you say?*

blanket someone or something **with** something *Fig.* to cover someone or something with something. ☐ *They blanketed the flames with a layer of foam.* ☐ *The children blanketed Jimmy with leaves and pretended he was lost.*

blast off (for some place**) 1.** [for a space vehicle] to take off and head toward a destination. ☐ *The rocket blasted off for the moon.* ☐ *Will it blast off on time?* **2.** *Sl.* [for someone] to leave for a destination quickly. ☐ *Ann blasted off for the library so she could study.* ☐ *I've got to blast off. It's late.*

blast something **off** something else to remove something from something else with a powerful charge, pressure, or force. ☐ *They blasted the writing off the wall with a stream of sand.* ☐ *We will have to blast the paint off the wall.*

blaze a trail 1. *Lit.* to make and mark a trail. ☐ *The scout blazed a trail through the forest.* **2.** *Fig.* to do early or pioneering work that others will follow up on. ☐ *Professor Williams blazed a trail in the study of physics.*

blaze away (at someone or something**)** [for gunfire] to fire continually at someone or something. ☐ *The guns blazed away at the oncoming ducks.* ☐ *The cowboy blazed away at his opponent in the gunfight.*

blaze down (on someone or something**)** [for the sun or other hot light] to burn from above onto someone or something. ☐ *The sun blazed down on the people on the beach.* ☐ *The stage lights blazed down on the set while the actors rehearsed.*

blaze up 1. *Lit.* [for flames] to expand upward suddenly. ☐ *The fire blazed up and warmed all of us.* ☐ *As the fire blazed up, we moved away from the fireplace.* **2.** *Fig.* [for trouble, especially violent trouble] to erupt suddenly. ☐ *The battle blazed up again, and the fighting started to become fierce.* ☐ *As the battle blazed up, the cowards fled into the hills.*

blaze with something to burn with some quality, such as great heat or sound. ☐ *The sun blazed with unbelievable heat.* ☐ *The fire blazed with much crackling.*

bleach something **out**† to remove the color or stain from something. ☐ *Wally bleached his jeans out so they looked more stylish.* ☐ *Can you bleach out this stain?*

bleed for someone *Fig.* to feel the emotional pain that someone else is feeling; to sympathize or empathize with someone. ☐ *I just bled for him when I heard his sad story.* ☐ *We bled for her as she related her recent woes.*

bleed from something for blood to emerge from a wound or other source. ☐ *He was bleeding from a number of wounds.* ☐ *He bled from his mouth and nose.*

bleed someone **white** and **bleed** someone **dry** to take all of someone's money; to extort money from someone. ☐ *The creeps tried to bleed me white.* ☐ *Richard got a picture*

of Fred and Joan together and tried to bleed both of them dry by threatening to show it to their spouses.

bleed to death to die from the loss of blood. ☐ *If something isn't done, he will bleed to death.* ☐ *I cut my finger. I hope I don't bleed to death.*

bleeding heart *Fig.* someone, usually considered politically liberal or leftist, who is very emotional about certain political issues, such as endangered species, downtrodden people, the suffering poor, etc. ☐ *Bob is such a bleeding heart. No cause is too far out for him.*

bleep something **out†** to replace a word or phrase in a radio or television broadcast with some sort of covering tone. (This is sometimes done to prevent a taboo word or other information from being broadcast.) ☐ *He tried to say the word on television, but they bleeped it out.* ☐ *They tried to bleep out the whole sentence.*

blend in (with someone or something**)** to mix well with someone or something; to combine with someone or something. ☐ *Everyone there blended in with our group.* ☐ *This color doesn't blend in with the upholstery fabric I have chosen.*

blend in(to something**)** to combine nicely with something; to mix well with something. ☐ *The oil won't blend into the water very well.* ☐ *It simply won't blend in.*

blend something **into** something else and **blend** something **in†** to mix something evenly into something else. ☐ *We should blend the strawberry jam into the peanut butter slowly.* ☐ *You should blend in some more jam.*

blend something **together (with** something**)** to mix something evenly with something else. ☐ *Blend the egg together with the cream.* ☐ *Blend the ingredients together and pour them into a baking pan.*

Bless one's **lucky star.** and **Bless** one's **stars.** *Prov.* Be thankful for a lucky thing that happened. (Also **Bless my stars!,** a mild interjection of surprise.) ☐ *I bless my lucky star that I met you, dear.* ☐ *I was in a car crash yesterday, and I bless my stars that no one was hurt.* ☐ *Alan: Look, honey! I gave the house a thorough cleaning while you were away. Jane: Bless my stars!*

Bless one's **stars.** Go to previous.

bless someone or something **with** something [for God or fate] to give someone or something a valuable gift. ☐ *God has blessed us with a bountiful harvest.* ☐ *Nature blessed the morning with a gentle rain.*

blessed event *Fig.* the birth of a child. ☐ *My sister is expecting a blessed event sometime in May.* ☐ *The young couple anxiously awaited the blessed event.*

Blessed is he who expects nothing, for he shall never be disappointed. *Prov.* If you do not expect good things to happen, you will not be disappointed when they fail to happen. ☐ *Ellen: This is going to be the best vacation we've ever had; we're going to have fun every minute of every day. Fred: Blessed is he who expects nothing, for he shall never be disappointed.* ☐ *Jill: Do you think you'll win the contest? Jane: I like to keep in mind that blessed is he who expects nothing, for he shall never be disappointed.*

a **blessing in disguise** *Fig.* something that at first seems bad, but later turns out to be beneficial. ☐ *Tony's motorcycle accident was a blessing in disguise, because he got enough insurance money from the other driver to make a down payment on a house.* ☐ *Dad's illness was a blessing in disguise; it brought the family together for the first time in years.*

B

a **blight on the land** *Fig.* something that harms the land or the enviornment. ☐ *Your garage is ugly! No, it's a blight on the land!*

blimp out to overeat; to eat too much and gain weight. ☐ *I blimp out almost every weekend.* ☐ *If I could stop blimping out, I could lose some weight.*

***blind as a bat 1.** completely blind. (Bats are not really blind. *Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *He lost his sight in an accident and is as blind as a bat.* **2.** not able to see well. ☐ *I'm as blind as a bat without my glasses.* **3.** unwilling to recognize problems or bad things. ☐ *Connie is blind as a bat when it comes to her daughter's disgraceful behavior.*

The **blind leading the blind** *Prov.* Someone who is not capable of dealing with a situation is guiding someone else who is not capable of dealing with it. (See also a case of the blind leading the blind.) ☐ *Jill: Mike is helping me fill out my tax forms this year. Jane: Is he a tax expert? Jill: He read a book about income tax once. Jane: Sounds to me like the blind leading the blind.* ☐ *Nathan offered to be my guide through Philadelphia, but since he'd never been there before either, it was a case of the blind leading the blind.*

blind luck Go to pure luck.

blind someone **to** something *Fig.* to prevent someone from seeing or understanding something. ☐ *The king blinded his subjects to what was going on by controlling what appeared in the newspapers.* ☐ *The lies and confusion blinded Jill to what was happening.* ☐ *She blinded herself to all his faults.*

blink at something **1.** *Lit.* to open and close the eyelids quickly, one or more times. ☐ *I blinked at the bright light and finally had to close my eyes.* ☐ *Don't blink at me while I am trying to take your picture.* **2.** *Fig.* to overlook something, such as a mistake. (As if one had blinked one's eyes rather than seeing the error.) ☐ *I just can't blink at that kind of behavior.* ☐ *We can't blink at what evil you did.*

blink one's **tears back†** *Fig.* to try to keep from crying. ☐ *She blinked back her tears and went on.* ☐ *He blinked his tears back and endured the pain.*

bliss out *Sl.* to be overcome with happiness. ☐ *She blissed out at the concert, because she loves that kind of music.*

bliss someone **out†** *Sl.* to cause someone to be overcome with happiness. ☐ *This kind of sunny weather just blisses me out.* ☐ *The lovely weather blissed out everyone after the long winter.*

blitz someone **out†** *Sl.* to shock or disorient someone. ☐ *The accident blitzed her out for a moment.* ☐ *The second act blitzed out the audience and thrilled them to pieces.*

blitzed out *Sl.* shocked or disoriented. ☐ *Ann was totally blitzed out by the events of the day.* ☐ *They were totally blitzed out by the bad news.*

block someone or something **in** some place and **block** someone or something **in†** to place an obstacle that prevents someone or something from getting out of something. ☐ *I can't get out of my parking space. Someone blocked me in my space.* ☐ *Don't block in any of the other cars in the garage.*

B

block someone **up**† to constipate someone. ☐ *That food always blocks me up.* ☐ *He blocked himself up by eating something he shouldn't.* ☐ *That vile stuff would block up anybody!*

block something **off**† to prevent movement through something by putting up a barrier; to close a passageway. ☐ *Sam blocked the corridor off with a row of chairs.* ☐ *He used some chairs to block off the hallway.*

block something **out**† **1.** to obscure a clear view of something. ☐ *The trees blocked the sun out.* ☐ *The bushes blocked out my view of the car that was approaching.* **2.** to lay something out carefully; to map out the details of something. ☐ *She blocked it out for us, so we could understand.* ☐ *Let me block out this project for you right now.*

block something **up**† to obstruct something; to stop the flow within a channel. ☐ *The heaps of debris blocked the channel up.* ☐ *The leaves blocked up the drain.*

blood and guts 1. *Fig.* strife; acrimony. ☐ *There is a lot of blood and guts around here, but we get our work done anyway.* ☐ *Cut out the blood and guts and grow up.* **2.** *Fig.* acrimonious. (This is hyphenated before a nominal.) ☐ *There are too many blood-and-guts arguments around here.* ☐ *Old blood-and-guts Wally is making his threats again.*

Blood is thicker than water. and **Blood runs thicker than water.** *Prov.* People who are related have stronger obligations to each other than to people outside the family. ☐ *My friends invited me to go camping on Saturday, but I have to go to my cousin's wedding instead. Blood is thicker than water, after all.* ☐ *If you ever need help, don't ask your friends. Come home and ask us, your family. Blood runs thicker than water.*

blood, sweat, and tears *Fig.* the signs of great personal effort. ☐ *There will be much blood, sweat, and tears before we have completed this project.* ☐ *After years of blood, sweat, and tears, Timmy finally earned a college degree.*

Blood will have blood. *Prov.* People will use violence to get revenge for violent acts; murderers will themselves be murdered. ☐ *Although no one suspected him of the murder he had committed, Parker lived in fear. He had heard that blood will have blood.* ☐ *I am afraid that the two gangs will never stop killing each other. Blood will have blood.*

Blood will tell. *Prov.* A person whose ancestors had certain characteristics, often bad ones, will eventually turn out to be similar. ☐ *Lisa's father was a gambler, and now Lisa has started to gamble, too. Blood will tell.* ☐ *William went to all the best schools, but he's just as vulgar as the rest of his family. Blood will tell.*

bloody but unbowed *Fig.* showing signs of a struggle, but not defeated. (Originally referring to the head. From the poem *Invictus* by William Earnest Henley.) ☐ *Liz emerged from the struggle, her head bloody but unbowed.* ☐ *We are bloody but unbowed and will fight to the last.*

blossom forth 1. *Lit.* [for a plant] to burst into flower. ☐ *All the trees blossomed forth at the same time.* ☐ *Each spring my tulips blossom forth in all their glory.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone or a concept] to develop or grow quickly. ☐ *A wonderful idea blossomed forth and caught on quickly.* ☐ *That summer she suddenly blossomed forth into a young woman.*

blossom into something **1.** *Lit.* [for a plant] to develop into full bloom. ☐ *The bush blossomed into beautiful red roses.* ☐ *Imagine this brown old bulb blossoming into a lovely flower.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone or a concept] to develop into something. ☐ *She blossomed into a lovely young lady.* ☐ *The idea blossomed into a huge real estate development.*

blossom out 1. *Lit.* [for a plant or tree] to become covered with flowers. ☐ *The apple tree blossomed out for the last time.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone or a concept] to develop fully, physically and intellectually. ☐ *She blossomed out in her studies and her excellent grades showed it.* ☐ *In her last year in school, she blossomed out.*

a **blot on the landscape** *Fig.* a sight that spoils the look of a place. ☐ *That monstrosity you call a house is a blot on the landscape. You should have hired a real architect!*

blot someone or something **out**† *Fig.* to forget someone or something by covering up memories or by trying to forget. ☐ *I try to blot those bad thoughts out.* ☐ *I tried to blot out those unhappy days.*

blot someone **out**† *Sl.* to kill someone. (Originally underworld slang.) ☐ *Sorry, chum, we got orders to blot you out.* ☐ *The gang blotted out the only living witness before the trial.*

blot something **out**† to make something invisible by covering it. (See also **blot** someone or something **out**.) ☐ *Don't blot the name out on the application form.* ☐ *Who blotted out the name on this form?*

blow a bundle (on someone**)** Go to **drop a bundle (on** someone**)**.

blow a fuse 1. to burn out the fuse on an electrical circuit and lose power. ☐ *The microwave oven blew a fuse, so we had no power.* ☐ *You'll blow a fuse if you use too many appliances at once.* **2.** and **blow** one's **fuse; blow a gasket; blow** one's **cork; blow** one's **lid; blow** one's **top; blow** one's **stack** *Fig.* to explode with anger; to lose one's temper. ☐ *Come on, don't blow a fuse.* ☐ *Go ahead, blow a gasket! What good will that do?*

blow away [for something light] to be carried away by the wind. ☐ *The leaves blew away on the autumn winds.* ☐ *My papers blew away!*

blow hot and cold *Fig.* to be changeable or uncertain (about something). ☐ *He keeps blowing hot and cold on the question of moving to the country.* ☐ *He blows hot and cold about this. I wish he'd make up his mind.*

blow in 1. Go to **blow in (from** some place**)**. **2.** Go to **blow in(to** some place**) (from** some place**)**. **3.** [for something] to cave in to the pressure of moving air. ☐ *The door blew in during the storm.* ☐ *The window blew in from the wind.*

blow in (from some place**)** [for a wind] to move air in from some place. ☐ *A huge mass of frigid air blew in from Canada.* ☐ *When the cold air blew in, we were dressed in short sleeves.*

blow in(to some place**) (from** some place**)** *Sl.* [for someone] to arrive at a place suddenly, or surprisingly, or with a casual air. ☐ *We blew into town about midnight from Detroit.* ☐ *It was late when we blew in from Detroit.* ☐ *What time did you blow in?*

blow into something to force air into something. ☐ *He blew into the balloon.* ☐ *I blew into the box, hoping to get some of the little bits of paper out.*

Blow it out your ear! *Sl.* Go away!; Leave me alone! ☐ *Oh, blow it out your ear, you cornball!* ☐ *You are not cool, you're just weird! Blow it out your ear!*

blow itself out [for a storm or a tantrum] to lose strength and stop; to subside. (Fixed order.) ☐ *The storm blew itself out.* ☐ *Eventually, the hurricane blew itself out.*

blow off 1. *Lit.* [for something] to be carried off something by moving air. ☐ *The leaves of the trees blew off in the strong wind.* ☐ *My papers blew off the table.* **2.** *Lit.* [for a valve or pressure-maintaining device] to be forced off or away by high pressure. (See the examples.) ☐ *The safety valve blew off and all the pressure escaped.* ☐ *The valve blew off, making a loud pop.* **3.** *Fig.* [for someone] to become angry; to lose one's temper; to blow off (some) steam. ☐ *I just needed to blow off. Sorry for the outburst.* ☐ *I blew off at her.* **4.** *Sl.* to goof off; to waste time; to procrastinate. ☐ *You blow off too much.* ☐ *All your best time is gone—blown off.* **5.** *Sl.* a time-waster; a goof-off. (Usually **blow-off**.) ☐ *Fred is such a blow-off!* ☐ *Get busy. I don't pay blow-offs around here.* **6.** *Sl.* something that can be done easily or without much effort. (Usually **blow-off**.) ☐ *Oh, that is just a blow-off. Nothing to it.* ☐ *The test was easy—a blow-off.* **7.** and **blow** someone or something **off**† *Sl.* to ignore someone or something; to skip an appointment with someone; to not attend something where one is expected. ☐ *He decided to sleep in and blow this class off.* ☐ *It wasn't right for you to just blow off an old friend the way you did.* **8.** and **blow** someone **off**† *Sl.* to ignore someone in order to end a romantic or other relationship. ☐ *She knew that he had blown her off when he didn't even call her for a month.* ☐ *Steve blew off Rachel before he started seeing Jane.* **9.** *Sl.* the final insult; an event that causes a dispute. (Usually **blow-off**.) ☐ *The blow-off was a call from some girl named Lulu who asked for Snookums.* ☐ *When the blow-off happened, nobody was expecting anything.* **10.** *Sl.* a dispute; an argument. (Usually **blow-off**.) ☐ *After a blow-off like that, we all need a break.* ☐ *There was a big blow-off in the office today.*

blow off (some) steam Go to let off (some) steam.

Blow on it! *Sl.* Cool it!; Take it easy! ☐ *It's all right, Tom. Blow on it!* ☐ *Hey, man. Relax. Blow on it!*

blow on something to force air across something especially with a puff of breath. ☐ *Jill blew on the hot soup.* ☐ *Blow on the fire to make it burn hotter.*

blow one's **cookies** Go to blow (one's) lunch.

blow one's **cool** Go to lose one's cool.

blow one's **cork** Go to blow a fuse.

blow one's **fuse** Go to blow a fuse.

blow one's **groceries** Go to blow one's lunch.

blow one's **lid** Go to blow a fuse.

blow one's **lines** Go to fluff one's lines.

blow (one's**) lunch** and **lose** one's **lunch; blow** one's **cookies; blow** one's **groceries** *Sl.* to vomit. ☐ *I almost lost my lunch, I ran so hard.* ☐ *I wanted to blow my lunch, that's how rotten I felt.* ☐ *He got carsick and blew his cookies all over the front seat.*

blow one's **nose** to expel mucus and other material from the nose using air pressure from the lungs. ☐ *Excuse me, I have to blow my nose.* ☐ *Bill blew his nose into his handkerchief.*

blow one's **own horn** and **toot** one's **own horn** *Fig.* to brag. ☐ *Gary sure likes to toot his own horn.* ☐ *"I hate to blow my own horn," said Bill, "but I am always right."*

blow one's **stack** Go to blow a fuse.

blow one's **top** Go to blow a fuse.

blow over *Fig.* [for something] to diminish; to subside. (As with a storm or a temper tantrum.) ☐ *Her display of temper finally blew over.* ☐ *The storm will blow over soon, I hope.*

blow someone **a kiss** to pantomine the sending of a kiss to a person visible nearby by kissing one's hand and "blowing" the kiss off the hand toward the person. ☐ *As she boarded the train she blew him a kiss, and he waved back.*

blow someone **away 1.** *Sl.* [for something shocking or exciting] to overwhelm a person; to excite a person very much. ☐ *The amount of the check blew me away.* ☐ *The loud noise from the concert blew me away.* **2.** *Sl.* to murder someone, usually by gunfire. ☐ *Mr. Big ordered Lefty to blow Max away.* ☐ *Max tried to blow Lefty away.*

blow someone or something **away**† [for the wind] to carry someone or something away. ☐ *The wind almost blew her away.* ☐ *It nearly blew away all the houses.*

blow someone or something **down**† [for a rush of air] to knock someone or something over. ☐ *The wind blew Chuck down.* ☐ *The tornado blew down many buildings.*

blow someone or something **out of the water** *Fig.* to destroy utterly someone or something, such as a plan. (Alludes to a torpedo or other weapon striking a ship and causing a great explosion that makes pieces of the ship fly out of the water.) ☐ *I will blow him out of the water if he shows up around here.* ☐ *The boss blew the whole idea out of the water.*

blow someone or something **over** [for the wind] to move strongly and upset someone or something. ☐ *The wind almost blew us over.* ☐ *The tornado blew the shed over.*

blow someone or something **to bits** Go to blow someone or something to smithereens.

blow someone or something **to kingdom come** *Fig.* to destroy someone or something by means of an explosion. ☐ *You'd better get that gas leak fixed or it will blow you and your car to kingdom come.*

blow someone or something **to pieces** Go to next.

blow someone or something **to smithereens** and **blow** someone or something **to bits; blow** someone or something **to pieces** *Lit.* to explode someone or something into tiny pieces. (See also blow something to smithereens.) ☐ *The bomb blew the ancient church to smithereens.* ☐ *The explosion blew the tank to bits.* ☐ *The explosion blew the car to pieces.*

blow someone or something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to destroy someone or something by explosion. ☐ *The terrorists blew the building up at midday.* ☐ *They blew up the bridge.* **2.** *Fig.* to exaggerate something [good or bad] about someone or something. ☐ *I hope no one blows the story up.* ☐ *The media always blows up reports of celebrity behavior.* ☐ *The press blew the story up unnecessarily.*

B

blow someone **out** *Sl.* to kill someone, especially with gunshots. (Fixed order.) ☐ *Lefty set out to blow Max out once and for all.* ☐ *Lefty wanted to blow Max out too.*

blow someone **over†** **1.** *Lit.* [for the wind or an explosion] to knock someone over. ☐ *The force of the wind nearly blew me over.* ☐ *The wind blew over the old tree.* **2.** *Fig.* to surprise or astound someone. (Fixed order.) ☐ *Her announcement just blew me over.* ☐ *The whole event just blew me over.*

blow someone's **brains out†** *Sl.* to kill someone with a gun. ☐ *Careful with that gun, or you'll blow your brains out.* ☐ *Max was so depressed that he wanted to blow out his brains.*

blow someone's **cover** *Sl.* to reveal someone's true identity; to ruin someone's scheme for concealment. ☐ *The dog recognized me and blew my cover.* ☐ *I didn't mean to blow your cover by calling out to you.*

blow someone's **doors off†** *Sl.* [for a driver] to speed past another vehicle. ☐ *Wow, he almost blew my doors off!* ☐ *The truck passed us and blew off our doors!*

blow someone's **mind** **1.** *Sl.* to disturb or distract; to destroy the function of one's brain. ☐ *It was a terrible experience. It nearly blew my mind.* ☐ *She blew her mind on drugs.* **2.** *Sl.* to overwhelm someone; to excite someone. ☐ *It was so beautiful, it nearly blew my mind.* ☐ *The loud guitar music was so wild. It blew my mind.*

blow someone **to** something *Sl.* to pay for something or someone, such as a meal, a movie, a drink, etc. ☐ *Let me blow you to a meal.* ☐ *I think I'll blow myself to a fancy dessert.*

blow something *Sl.* to ruin or waste something. ☐ *I had a chance to do it, but I blew it.* ☐ *He blew the whole five dollars on candy.*

blow something **out†** to extinguish a flame with a puff of breath. ☐ *I blew the candle out.* ☐ *I blew out the candles one by one.*

blow something **out of (all) proportion** Go to out of (all) proportion.

blow something **to smithereens** and **blow** something **to bits; blow** something **to pieces** *Fig.* to destroy an idea or plan by exposing its faults. (See also blow someone or something to smithereens.) ☐ *The discovery blew my case to pieces.* ☐ *The opposing lawyer blew my case to smithereens.*

blow something **up†** **1.** to inflate something. ☐ *He didn't have enough breath to blow the balloon up.* ☐ *They all blew up their own balloons.* **2.** to have a photograph enlarged. ☐ *How big can you blow this picture up?* ☐ *I will blow up this snapshot and frame it.*

blow something **wide open** and **bust** something **wide open** *Sl.* to expose corrupt practices or a secret plan; to put an end to corruption. ☐ *The press is trying to blow the town wide open, and the feds are trying to hush them up so they can move about in secret.* ☐ *I'm going to bust this racket wide open.*

blow the joint *Sl.* to get out of a place, usually in a hurry or without delay. ☐ *Come on, let's blow the joint before there's trouble.* ☐ *They blew the joint about an hour ago.*

blow the lid off (something**)** *Sl.* to expose something to public view. ☐ *The police inspector blew the lid off the work of the gang of thugs.* ☐ *The investigation blew the lid off the scandal.*

blow the whistle (on someone**)** **1.** *Fig.* to report someone's wrongdoing to someone (such as the police) who can stop the wrongdoing. (Alludes to blowing a whistle to attract the police.) ☐ *The citizens' group blew the whistle on the street gangs by calling the police.* ☐ *The gangs were getting very bad. It was definitely time to blow the whistle.* **2.** *Fig.* to report legal or regulatory wrongdoing of a company, especially one's employer, to authorities. ☐ *She was fired for blowing the whistle on the bank's mismanagement of accounts, but she then sued the bank.*

blow up **1.** *Lit.* [for something] to explode. ☐ *The bomb might have blown up if the children had tried to move it.* ☐ *The firecracker blew up.* **2.** *Fig.* to burst into anger. ☐ *I just knew you'd blow up.* ☐ *So she blew up. Why should that affect you so much?* **3.** *Fig.* an angry outburst; a fight. (Usually **blowup**.) ☐ *After the third blowup, she left him.* ☐ *One blowup after another from you. Control your temper!* **4.** *Fig.* an enlarged version of a photograph, map, chart, etc. (Usually **blowup**.) ☐ *Here's a blowup of the scene of the crime.* ☐ *Kelly sent a blowup of their wedding picture to all her relatives.* **5.** *Fig.* the ruination of something; the collapse of something. (Usually **blowup**.) ☐ *The blowup in the financial world has ruined my chances for early retirement.* ☐ *After the blowup at the company, the top managers called one another to compare notes.* **6.** *Fig.* to fall apart or get ruined. ☐ *The whole project blew up. It will have to be canceled.* ☐ *All my planning was blown up this afternoon.* **7.** [for a storm] to arrive accompanied by the blowing of the wind. ☐ *A terrible storm blew up while we were in the movie theater.* ☐ *I was afraid that a rainstorm was blowing up.*

blow up in someone's **face** **1.** *Lit.* to blow up or explode suddenly. ☐ *The bomb blew up in the terrorist's face.* ☐ *The firecracker blew up in his face and injured him.* **2.** *Fig.* [for something] to get ruined while someone is working on it. ☐ *All my plans blew up in my face.* ☐ *It is terrible for your life to get ruined and blow up in your face.*

a **blow-by-blow account** and a **blow-by-blow description** *Fig.* a detailed description (of an event) given as the event takes place. (This referred originally to reporting on boxing.) ☐ *I want to listen to a blow-by-blow account of the prizefight.* ☐ *The lawyer got the witness to give a blow-by-blow description of the argument.*

a **blow-by-blow description** Go to previous.

blown (up) *Sl.* intoxicated. ☐ *I guess I'm a little too blown up to drive.*

blue around the gills Go to pale around the gills.

blue blood **1.** *Fig.* the blood [heredity] of a noble family; aristocratic ancestry. ☐ *The earl refuses to allow anyone who is not of blue blood to marry his son.* ☐ *Although Mary's family is poor, she has blue blood in her veins.* **2.** *Fig.* a person of aristocratic or wealthy ancestry. ☐ *Because his great-grandparents made millions, he is regarded as one of the city's blue bloods.*

blue collar of the lower class or working class; of a job or a worker, having to do with manual labor. (Also, when used as an attributive adjective, often **blue-collar**. Com-

pare this with *white collar*. Alludes to the typical color of work shirts worn by mechanics, laborers, etc.) ☐ *His parents were both blue-collar workers. He was the first person in his family to go to college.* ☐ *They bought a house in a nice, settled, blue-collar neighborhood.*

*the **blues 1.** sadness; a mood of depression. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~**.) ☐ *You'll have to excuse Bill. He's getting the blues thinking about Jane.* ☐ *I get the blues every time I hear that song.* **2.** a traditional style of popular music characterized by lyrics expressing hardship, lost love, etc. ☐ *Buddy had been singing the blues ever since the Depression.*

bluff one's **way out (of** something**)** to get out of a difficult situation by deception or cunning. ☐ *I will try to bluff my way out of this mess.*

bluff someone **into** something to mislead or deceive someone into doing something. ☐ *Are you trying to bluff me into giving up without a fight?* ☐ *I won't be bluffed into revealing the whereabouts of the safe.*

bluff someone **out (of** something**)** to get something away from someone through deception. ☐ *We bluffed her out of her share of the pie.* ☐ *I bluffed Liz out of her rightful turn to drive.*

blurt something **out† (at** someone**)** to say something to someone without thinking. (Usually to say something that should not be said.) ☐ *It was a secret. Why did you blurt it out?* ☐ *Why did you blurt out our hiding place?*

blush with something [for someone's cheeks] to redden from a particular emotion or reaction. ☐ *She blushed with shame.* ☐ *You could see that Lily was blushing with anger, even though she tried to conceal it.*

board someone or an animal **out†** to send someone or an animal away to live, temporarily. (Usually said of a school-age child or a pet.) ☐ *They decided to board Billy out.* ☐ *They boarded out the dog while they were on vacation.*

board something **up†** to enclose or seal a building or part of a building with boards or panels. ☐ *We will have to board this house up if we can't sell it.* ☐ *Should I board up the house while I am away that season?*

board with someone to live with someone temporarily, usually while paying to do so. ☐ *I will board with my aunt when I go to school in Adamsville.* ☐ *I do not wish to board with relatives.*

boast about someone or something and **boast of** someone or something to speak highly about someone or something that one is proud of. ☐ *I just have to boast about my grandchildren. Do you mind?* ☐ *Is he boasting about his car again?* ☐ *I don't like to boast of what I did.*

bode somehow **for** someone or something to foretell or portend fortune or misfortune for someone or something. (Typically with *ill* or *well*.) ☐ *Things do not bode well for the stock market.* ☐ *Things do not bode well for your future at this job.*

bodily functions *Euph.* anything the body does automatically or as a normal occurrence, especially urinating and defecating. ☐ *The dog needed to go outside and perform her bodily functions.* ☐ *It is not polite to discuss bodily functions at the dinner table.*

the **body politic** the people of a country or state considered as a political unit. ☐ *The body politic was unable to select between the candidates.*

bog down to become encumbered and slow. (As if one were walking through a bog and getting stuck in the mud. Often preceded by a form of **get**.) ☐ *The process bogged down and almost stopped.* ☐ *The truck got bogged down in the mud soon after it started.*

***bogged down** stuck; prevented from making progress. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; become ~**.) ☐ *The students became bogged down with the algebra problems.* ☐ *The Smiths really got bogged down in decorating their house.*

boggle at something to be amazed at something, particularly something large or surprising. ☐ *The audience boggled at the size of the loss.* ☐ *I boggled at the damage to my car.*

boggle someone's **mind** to confuse someone; to overwhelm someone; to **blow** someone's **mind**. ☐ *The immense size of the house boggles my mind.* ☐ *She said that his arrogance boggled her mind.*

boil down to something **1.** and **boil down** *Lit.* [for a liquid] to be condensed to something by boiling. ☐ *Boil this mixture down to about half of what it was.* **2.** *Fig.* [for a complex situation] to be reduced to its essentials. ☐ *It boils down to the question of who is going to win.* ☐ *It boils down to a very minor matter.*

boil over [for a liquid] to overflow while being boiled. (See also **boil over (with** something**)**.) ☐ *The sauce boiled over and dripped onto the stove.* ☐ *Don't let the stew boil over!*

boil over (with something**)** *Fig.* [for someone] to erupt in great anger. ☐ *The boss boiled over with anger.* ☐ *Things got out of hand and the crowd's passions boiled over.*

boil something **away† 1.** *Lit.* to boil a liquid until it is gone altogether. ☐ *She left the kettle on and boiled the water away.* ☐ *Boil away some of that water.* **2.** *Lit.* to remove a volatile chemical from a solution by boiling. ☐ *Boil the alcohol away or the sauce will be ruined.* ☐ *You should boil away some of the liquid.*

boil something **down† 1.** *Lit.* to condense or thicken something, such as a liquid. ☐ *I have to boil this gravy down for a while before I can serve it.* ☐ *You boil down the sauce and I'll set the table.* **2.** *Fig.* to reduce a problem to its simple essentials. ☐ *If we could boil this problem down to its essentials, we might be able to solve it.* ☐ *We don't have time to boil down this matter. This is too urgent.*

boil something **out†** Go to next.

boil something **out of** something and **boil** something **out†** to remove something from something by boiling. ☐ *I boiled the wax out of the cloth.* ☐ *You can boil out the stain.*

boil something **up†** *Rur.* to cook a batch of food by boiling. ☐ *She boiled some beans up for dinner.* ☐ *She boiled up some potatoes.*

boil with something *Fig.* to show the heat or intensity of one's anger. ☐ *You could see that she was just boiling with anger.* ☐ *Tom was boiling with rage when we got there.*

***bold as brass** very bold; bold to the point of rudeness. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Lisa marched into the manager's office, bold as brass, and demanded her money back.* ☐ *The tiny*

kitten, as bold as brass, began eating the dog's food right under the dog's nose.

B

bollix something **up**† *Inf.* to ruin something; to mess something up. ☐ *Please don't bollix my stereo up.* ☐ *Who bollixed up the folded laundry?*

bolster someone **up**† *Fig.* to give someone emotional support and encouragement. ☐ *We bolstered her up the best we could, but she was still unhappy.* ☐ *I don't mind bolstering up people who are depressed.*

bolster something **up**† to give added support to something. ☐ *The carpenter bolstered the shelf up with a nail or two.* ☐ *I had to bolster up the door or it would have fallen in.*

a **bolt from the blue** *Fig.* a sudden surprise. (Alludes to a stroke of lightning from a cloudless sky.) ☐ *Joe's return to Springfield was a bolt from the blue.* ☐ *The news that Mr. and Mrs. King were getting a divorce struck all their friends as a bolt from the blue.*

bolt out (of some place**)** to run out of some place very quickly. ☐ *Frank bolted out of the room in a flash.* ☐ *I bolted out after him.*

bolt something **down**† **1.** *Lit.* to fasten something down securely with bolts. ☐ *Did anyone bolt the washing machine down?* ☐ *Someone should bolt down this washing machine.* **2.** *Fig.* to eat something too rapidly. ☐ *Don't bolt your food down.* ☐ *She bolted down her dinner and ran out to play.*

bomb out (of something**)** *Sl.* to flunk out of or fail at something, especially school or a job. ☐ *She was afraid she would bomb out of school.* ☐ *Her brother bombed out the year before.*

bomb someone **out**† to cause people to flee by bombing their homes and towns. ☐ *The planes bombed the villagers out.* ☐ *The attack bombed out everyone for miles around.*

bomb something **out**† to destroy a place by bombing. ☐ *I hope they don't bomb the village out.* ☐ *The planes bombed out the factory.*

bombard someone or something **with** something to cast or shoot something at someone or something. (See also **bombard** someone **with questions**.) ☐ *The boys bombarded their friends with snowballs.* ☐ *Gerald bombarded his friends with criticism.*

bombard someone **with questions** *Fig.* to ask someone many questions, one after another. ☐ *The press bombarded the president with questions.* ☐ *The company spokesperson was bombarded with leading questions.*

bone of contention *Fig.* the subject or point of an argument; an unsettled point of disagreement. ☐ *We've fought for so long that we've forgotten what the bone of contention is.* ☐ *The question of a fence between the houses has become quite a bone of contention.*

bone up (on something**)** to study something thoroughly; to review the facts about something. ☐ *I have to bone up on the state driving laws because I have to take my driving test tomorrow.* ☐ *I take mine next month, so I'll have to bone up, too.*

boo someone **off the stage** and **boo** someone **off**† to jeer and hoot, causing a performer to leave the stage. ☐ *The rude audience booed the performer off the stage.* ☐ *The audience booed off the comedian.*

booby prize a mock prize given to the worst player or performer. ☐ *Bob should get the booby prize for the worst showing in the race.*

boogie down (to somewhere**)** *Sl.* to hurry (to somewhere); to go (somewhere). ☐ *So, why don't you boogie down to the store and load up with goodies for the weekend?* ☐ *I'm gonna boogie down and see what's going on.*

book (on) out *Sl.* to leave in a hurry; to depart very suddenly and rapidly. ☐ *I'm in a hurry, so I've got to book out right now.* ☐ *Let's book on out of this place as soon as we can.*

book someone **on** something to reserve a place for someone on some travel conveyance. ☐ *They booked us on a direct flight to San Juan.* ☐ *He booked himself on a flight to Manaus.*

book someone **through (to** some place**)** to make transportation arrangements for someone that involve a number of changes and transfers. ☐ *The travel agent booked me through to Basra.* ☐ *I would be happy to book you through if you would like.*

book something **up**† to reserve all the available places. ☐ *The travel agency booked all the good seats up.* ☐ *Who booked up all these seats?*

boom out [for a loud sound] to sound out like thunder. ☐ *His voice boomed out such that everyone could hear.* ☐ *An explosion boomed out and frightened us all.*

boom something **out**† [for someone] to say something very loud; to shout. ☐ *Will someone with a loud voice boom the names out?* ☐ *The announcer boomed out the names of the players.*

boost someone **up**† to give someone a helpful lift up to something. ☐ *She boosted me up so I could get into the window.* ☐ *They boosted up the child for a better view.*

***the boot** dismissal from employment or from a place that one is in. (*Typically: **get ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I guess I wasn't dressed well enough to go in there. They gave me the boot.* ☐ *I'll work harder at my job today. I nearly got the boot yesterday.*

boot someone or an animal **out**† and **kick** someone or an animal **out**† **1.** *Lit.* to send or remove someone or an animal from a place forcefully, often by kicking. ☐ *I kicked the cat out and then went to bed.* ☐ *Tom kicked out the dog.* **2.** *Fig.* to force someone or something to leave some place. ☐ *We booted out the people who didn't belong there.* ☐ *The doorman booted the kid out.*

boot something **up**† to start up a computer. ☐ *She booted her computer up and started writing.* ☐ *Please go boot up your computer so we can get started.*

boot up [of a computer] to begin operating; to start up one's computer. ☐ *He turned on the computer and it booted up.* ☐ *Try to boot up again and see what happens.*

booze it up *Sl.* to drink heavily; to drink to get drunk. (Fixed order.) ☐ *She wanted to get home and booze it up by herself.* ☐ *He boozes it up every Friday after work.*

booze up *Sl.* to drink heavily. ☐ *Those guys are always boozing up.* ☐ *Stop boozing up and go home.*

border (up)on something **1.** *Lit.* [for something] to touch upon a boundary. (*Upon* is more formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Our property borders on the*

lakeshore. ☐ *The farm borders upon the railroad tracks.* **2.** *Fig.* [for some activity or idea] to be very similar to something else. (Not usually physical objects. *Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *This notion of yours borders upon mutiny!* ☐ *That plan borders on insanity.*

bore someone **stiff** and **bore** someone **to death; bore** someone **to tears** *Fig.* to be exceedingly dull and uninteresting. (*Stiff* means "dead.") ☐ *The play bored me stiff.* ☐ *The lecture bored everyone to death.*

bore someone **to death** Go to previous.

bore someone **to tears** Go to **bore** someone **stiff**.

bore the pants off of someone *Fig.* to be exceedingly dull and uninteresting to someone. ☐ *You bore the pants off of me!* ☐ *The lecture bored the pants off of everybody.*

bore through someone *Fig.* [for someone's gaze] to seem to penetrate the person being gazed or stared at. ☐ *Her stare bored right through me.*

bore through something to pierce or drill through something. ☐ *The drill bit could not bore through the steel plate.*

bored silly and **bored to distraction; bored stiff; bored to death; bored to tears** very bored; extremely dull and uninteresting (Usually an exaggeration.) ☐ *I was bored silly at the lecture.* ☐ *The dull speaker left me bored to distraction.* ☐ *I am bored to tears. Let's go home.*

bored to distraction Go to previous.

born and bred Go to next.

born and raised and **born and bred** born and nurtured through childhood, usually in a specific place. ☐ *She was born and raised in a small town in western Montana.* ☐ *Freddy was born and bred on a farm and had no love for city life.*

born on the wrong side of the blanket *Rur.* [of a child] illegitimate. ☐ *All his life, Edward felt that people looked down on him because he was born on the wrong side of the blanket.* ☐ *Just between you and me, I suspect Mrs. Potter's oldest child was born on the wrong side of the blanket.*

born out of wedlock born to an unmarried mother. ☐ *The child was born out of wedlock.* ☐ *In the city many children are born out of wedlock.*

born with a silver spoon in one's **mouth** *Fig.* born into wealth and privilege. ☐ *James doesn't know anything about working for a living; he was born with a silver spoon in his mouth.* ☐ *Most of the students at the exclusive private college were born with silver spoons in their mouths.*

borrow something *Euph.* to steal something. ☐ *The bank robber borrowed a car to drive out of state.* ☐ *I discovered that my office mate had been borrowing money out of my wallet when I wasn't looking.*

borrow something **from** someone to request and receive the use of something from someone. ☐ *Can I borrow a hammer from you?* ☐ *Sorry, this hammer was borrowed from my father.*

borrow trouble *Fig.* to worry needlessly; to make trouble for oneself. ☐ *Worrying too much about death is just borrowing trouble.* ☐ *Do not get involved with politics. That's borrowing trouble.*

bosom buddy and **bosom pal** a close friend; one's closest friend. ☐ *Of course I know Perry. He is one of my bosom pals.*

bosom pal Go to previous.

boss someone **around**† to give orders to someone; to keep telling someone what to do. ☐ *Stop bossing me around. I'm not your employee.* ☐ *Captain Smith bosses around the whole crew. That's his job.*

botch something **up**† to mess something up; to do a bad job of something. ☐ *You really botched this up.* ☐ *I did not botch up your project.*

both sheets in the wind intoxicated. (A ship's sheets are the ropes or lines that control the sails. See also **three sheets in the wind**.) ☐ *She's both sheets in the wind at the moment.* ☐ *She's not just both sheets in the wind—they're all in the wind.*

bother about something to care about something; to take the trouble to deal with something. ☐ *Please don't bother about this mess. I'll clean it up.* ☐ *Don't bother about it.*

bother one's **(pretty little) head about** someone or something *Rur.* to worry about something. (Stereotypically polite Southern talk to a woman; often said facetiously or patronizingly.) ☐ *Now, don't bother your pretty little head about all this.* ☐ *Don't bother your head about me.*

bother someone **with** someone or something and **bother** someone **about** someone or something to annoy someone with someone or something; to worry someone about someone or something. (Either a physical annoyance or a mental annoyance.) ☐ *Don't bother me with that!* ☐ *Don't bother yourself about the bill. I'll pay it.*

bother with someone or something to take the time or trouble to deal with someone or something. (Usually negative.) ☐ *Please don't bother with Jill. She can take care of herself.* ☐ *Don't bother me with your problems.*

the **bottle** drinking alcohol. ☐ *His friends thought he was a bit too fond of the bottle.* ☐ *She tried to stay away from the bottle, but she never could manage it for long.*

bottle something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to put some sort of liquid into bottles. ☐ *She bottled her homemade chili sauce up and put the bottles in a box.* ☐ *She bottled up a lot of the stuff.* **2.** *Fig.* to constrict something as if it were put in a bottle. ☐ *The patrol boats bottled the other boats up at the locks on the river.* ☐ *The police bottled up the traffic while they searched the cars for the thieves.* **3.** and **bottle** something **up**† **(inside (**someone**))** *Fig.* to hold one's feelings within; to keep from saying something that one feels strongly about. ☐ *Let's talk about it, John. You shouldn't bottle it up.* ☐ *Don't bottle up your problems. It's better to talk them out.* ☐ *Don't bottle it up inside you.* ☐ *Don't bottle up all your feelings.*

the **bottom fell out (of** something**)** *Fig.* a much lower limit or level of something was reached. ☐ *The bottom fell out of the market and I lost a lot of money.*

the **bottom line 1.** *Lit.* the last figure on a financial profit-and-loss statement, or on a bill. ☐ *What's the bottom line? How much do I owe you?* ☐ *Don't tell me all those figures! Just tell me the bottom line.* **2.** *Fig.* the result; the final outcome. ☐ *I know about all the problems, but what is the bottom line? What will happen?* ☐ *The bottom line is that you have to go to the meeting because no one else can.*

B

the **bottom of the barrel** and the **bottom of the heap** *Fig.* the location of persons or things of the very lowest quality; someone or something of the lowest quality. (The fruit at the bottom of a barrel of apples is likely to be bruised from the weight of the other apples.) ☐ *That last secretary you sent me was really the bottom of the barrel.* ☐ *I don't need any candidates from the bottom of the heap.*

the **bottom of the heap** Go to previous.

bottom out *Fig.* to reach the lowest or worst point of something. ☐ *All my problems seem to be bottoming out. They can't get much worse.* ☐ *Interest rates bottomed out last February.*

Bottoms up! and **Here's looking at you.; Here's mud in your eye.; Here's to you.** *Inf.* an expression said as a toast when people are drinking together. (Alludes to the bottoms of the drinking glasses.) ☐ *Bill: Bottoms up. Tom: Here's mud in your eye. Bill: Ah, that one was good. Care for another?*

bounce along 1. *Lit.* to move along bouncing. (As might be done by a ball.) ☐ *The ball bounced along and finally came to rest.* ☐ *The beach ball sort of bounced along until it came to the water.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to move along happily. ☐ *He was so happy that he just bounced along.* ☐ *He stopped bouncing along when he saw all the work he had to do.*

bounce back (from something**) 1.** *Lit.* [for something] to rebound; [for something] to return bouncing from where it had been. ☐ *The ball bounced back from the wall.* ☐ *A rubber ball always bounces back.* **2.** and **bounce back (after** something**)** *Fig.* [for someone] to recover after a disability, illness, blow, or defeat. (See also **rebound from** something.) ☐ *She bounced back from her illness quickly.* ☐ *She bounced back quickly after her illness.*

bounce for something Go to **spring for** something.

bounce off ((of) something**)** to rebound from something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *The ball bounced off the wall and struck a lamp.* ☐ *It hit the wall and bounced off.*

bounce out (of something**)** to rebound out of or away from something. ☐ *The ball bounced out of the corner into my hands.* ☐ *The ball bounced out of the box it had fallen into.*

bounce something **around† (with** someone**)** to discuss something with a number of people; to move an idea from person to person like a ball. ☐ *I need to bounce this around with my family.* ☐ *I need to bounce around something with you.*

bounce something **back and forth 1.** *Lit.* to bat, toss, or throw something alternately between two people. (Usually a ball.) ☐ *The two guys bounced the ball back and forth.* ☐ *John and Timmy bounced it back and forth.* **2.** *Fig.* to discuss an idea back and forth among a group of people. ☐ *Let's bounce these ideas back and forth awhile and see what we come up with.* ☐ *The idea was bounced back and forth for about an hour.*

bounce something **off (of)** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to make something rebound off someone or something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *She bounced the ball off the wall, turned, and tossed it to Wally.* ☐ *She bounced the ball off of Harry, into the wastebasket.* **2.** and **bounce** something **off†** *Fig.* to try an idea or concept out on someone or a group. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Let me bounce off this idea, if I may.* ☐ *Can I bounce something off of you people, while you're here?*

bounce up and down to spring up and down due to natural elasticity or from being jostled or thrown. ☐ *The ball bounced up and down for an amazingly long time.* ☐ *I bounced up and down in the back of that truck for almost an hour.*

bound and determined *Cliché* very determined; very committed or dedicated (to something). ☐ *We were bound and determined to get there on time.* ☐ *I'm bound and determined that this won't happen again.*

bound for somewhere headed for a specific goal or destination. ☐ *Bill accidentally got on a bus bound for Miami.* ☐ *Our baseball team is bound for glory.*

bound hand and foot with hands and feet tied up. ☐ *The robbers left us bound hand and foot.* ☐ *We remained bound hand and foot until the police found us and untied us.*

bound to do something certain to do something; destined to do something. ☐ *Jill's bound to do a good job.* ☐ *We are bound to tell the truth.*

bound up with someone or something deeply concerned or involved with someone or something. ☐ *He's so bound up with his work, he has time for nothing else.* ☐ *Andrew is bound up with his girlfriend and has time for no one else.*

bow and scrape *Fig.* to be very humble and subservient. ☐ *Please don't bow and scrape. We are all equal here.* ☐ *The salesclerk came in, bowing and scraping, and asked if he could help us.*

bow before someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to bend or curtsy in respect to someone or something. ☐ *I will not bow before any king or queen.* ☐ *Henry insisted that I bow before him.* **2.** *Fig.* to submit to someone or something; to surrender to someone or something. ☐ *Our country will never bow before a dictator's demands.* ☐ *We will not bow before such a corrupt politician.*

bow down (to someone or something**)** and **bow to** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to bend or curtsy to someone or something. ☐ *Do you expect me to bow down or something when you enter?* ☐ *He bowed down low to the duchess.* ☐ *She faced forward and bowed to the altar.* **2.** *Fig.* to submit to someone or something; to yield sovereignty to someone or something. ☐ *I will not bow down to you, you dictator!* ☐ *We will never bow to a foreign prince.*

bow out (of some place**)** to bow as one departs from a place. ☐ *The servant bowed out of the room.* ☐ *The servant departed, bowing out as he left.*

bow out (of something**)** *Fig.* to retire or resign as something. ☐ *It's time to bow out as mayor.* ☐ *I think I will bow out and leave this job to someone else.*

bow to someone's **demands** *Fig.* to yield to someone's demands; to agree to do something that someone has requested. ☐ *In the end, they had to bow to our demands.* ☐ *We refused to bow to their demands that we abandon the project.*

bow to the porcelain altar *Sl.* to vomit, especially as a result of drinking too much alcohol. (The *porcelain altar* is a euphemism for a toilet bowl.) ☐ *He spent the whole*

night bowing to the porcelain altar. ☐ *I have the feeling that I will be bowing to the porcelain altar before morning.*

bowl someone **over 1.** *Lit.* to knock someone over. (Fixed order.) ☐ *We were bowled over by the wind.* ☐ *Bob hit his brother and bowled him over.* **2.** *Fig.* to surprise or overwhelm someone. (Fixed order.) ☐ *The news bowled me over.* ☐ *The details of the proposed project bowled everyone over.*

bowl up to fill a pipe bowl with smokable material. ☐ *The detective bowled up and struck a match.* ☐ *Roger bowled up, but forgot to light his pipe.*

box someone **in**† *Fig.* to put someone into a bind; to reduce the number of someone's alternatives. (See also the following entry.) ☐ *I don't want to box you in, but you are running out of options.* ☐ *I want to box in the whole staff, so they'll have to do it my way.*

box someone or something **in**† to trap or confine someone or something. ☐ *He boxed her in so she could not get away from him.* ☐ *They tried to box in the animals, but they needed more space.* ☐ *Don't try to box me in.*

box someone **up**† to confine someone in a small area. ☐ *Please don't box me up in that little office.* ☐ *The boss boxed up Fred in a tiny office.* ☐ *Why the president boxes himself up in such a little office is beyond me.*

box something **up**† to place something in a box. ☐ *Please box the books up and put them into the trunk of the car.* ☐ *Please box up four of these for me.*

boxed in *Fig.* in a bind; having few alternatives. ☐ *I really feel boxed in around here.* ☐ *I got him boxed in. He'll have to do it our way.*

boxed on the table *Sl.* died on the (operating) table. (Medical.) ☐ *The surgeon did the best job possible, but the patient boxed on the table.* ☐ *Another patient boxed on the table. That's three this month.*

boxed (up) 1. *Sl.* intoxicated. ☐ *I am way boxed, and I feel sick.* ☐ *She got boxed up on gin.* **2.** *Sl.* in jail. ☐ *I committed the crime, and I was boxed for a long time for it.* ☐ *Pat was boxed up for two days till we got bond money.*

Boy howdy! *Rur.* an exclamation of excited surprise. ☐ *Bob: Well, I finally got here. Fred: Boy howdy! Am I glad to see you!* ☐ *Bill: How do you like my horse? Fred: That's one fine-looking filly! Boy howdy!*

the **boys in the back room** and the **backroom boys** *Fig.* any private group of men who make decisions, usually political decisions. (See also **smoke-filled room**.) ☐ *The boys in the back room picked the last presidential candidate.* ☐ *The backroom boys have decided too many things in the past. Their day is over.*

Boys will be boys. *Prov.* Boys are expected to be irresponsible or boisterous. (Also said ironically about men.) ☐ *You can't blame David for breaking the window with his baseball. Boys will be boys.* ☐ *My husband can't resist driving eighty miles an hour in his new sports car. Boys will be boys.*

brace oneself **for** something **1.** *Lit.* to hang onto something or prop oneself against something in preparation for something that might cause one to fall, blow away, wash away, etc. ☐ *Hold onto the rail. Brace yourself. Here comes another huge wave.* **2.** *Fig.* to prepare for the shock or force of something. ☐ *Brace yourself for a shock.* ☐ *As the boat leaned to the right, I braced myself for whatever might happen next.*

brace someone or something **up**† to prop up or add support to someone or something. ☐ *They braced the tree up for the expected windstorm.* ☐ *They braced up the tree again after the storm.*

brace up to take heart; to be brave. ☐ *Brace up! Things could be worse.* ☐ *I told John to brace up because things would probably get worse before they got better.*

brag about someone or something to boast about someone or something; to talk proudly about someone or something. ☐ *He bragged about how selfish he was.* ☐ *Jill brags a lot about her kids.*

brain someone *Fig.* to strike a person hard on the skull as if to knock out the person's brains. (Often said as a vain threat.) ☐ *I thought he was going to brain me, but he only hit me on the shoulder.* ☐ *If you don't do it, I'll brain you.*

brainwash someone **with** something to drive specific knowledge or propaganda into someone's brain, by constant repetition and psychological conditioning. ☐ *The dictator brainwashed his people with lie after lie.* ☐ *You have brainwashed yourself with your own propaganda.*

branch off (from something**)** to separate off from something; to divide away from something. ☐ *A small stream branched off from the main channel.* ☐ *An irrigation ditch branched off here and there.*

branch out (from something**) 1.** *Lit.* [for a branch] to grow out of a branch or trunk. (Having to do with plants and trees.) ☐ *A twig branched out of the main limb and grew straight up.* ☐ *The bush branched out from the base.* **2.** *Fig.* to expand away from something; to diversify away from narrower interests. ☐ *The speaker branched out from her prepared remarks.* ☐ *The topic was very broad, and she was free to branch out.*

branch out (into something**)** *Fig.* to diversify and go into new areas. ☐ *I have decided to branch out into some new projects.* ☐ *Business was very good, so I decided to branch out.*

(brand) spanking new very new; just purchased and never before used. ☐ *My car is spanking new.* ☐ *Look at that brand spanking new car!*

brass someone **off**† *Sl.* to make someone angry. (Primarily military. As angry as the "brass," or officers, might get about something.) ☐ *You really brass me off.* ☐ *The private brassed off the sergeant.*

brave something **out**† to endure something; to put up with something courageously. ☐ *I don't know if all the men can brave the attack out.* ☐ *The soldiers braved out the attack.*

The **bread always falls on the buttered side.** *Prov.* When things go wrong, they go completely wrong. ☐ *Not only did my phone break, but it broke today—today of all days, when I'm expecting a really important call. The bread always falls on the buttered side.* ☐ *When the painting fell off the wall, it landed on a priceless porcelain vase and broke it. The bread always falls on the buttered side.*

bread and water *Fig.* the most minimal meal possible; a meal as once was given to prisoners. (Usually used in reference to being in prison or jail.) ☐ *Wilbur knew that if he got in trouble again it would be at least a year on bread*

and water. □ *This dinner is terrible again. I would rather have bread and water! Why don't we ever have pizza?*

B

Bread is the staff of life. *Prov.* Food is necessary for people to survive. □ *Miranda likes to give money to charities that feed people. "Other services are important," she reasons, "but bread is the staff of life."* □ *Jill: Want to go to lunch with us, Bob? Bob: No. I must work on my novel while inspiration lasts. Jill: Don't forget to eat. Bread is the staff of life, you know.*

bread-and-butter letter a letter or note written to follow up on a visit; a thank-you note. □ *When I got back from the sales meeting, I took two days to write bread-and-butter letters to the people I met.* □ *I got sort of a bread-and-butter letter from my nephew, who wants to visit me next summer.*

***a break** a chance; another chance or a second chance. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) □ *I'm sorry. Please don't send me to the principal's office. Give me a break!* □ *I got a nice break. They didn't send me to prison.*

break a code to figure out a code; to decipher a secret code. □ *The intelligence agents finally broke the enemy's code.* □ *When they broke the code, they were able to decipher messages.*

break a habit and **break the habit; break** one's **habit** to end a habit. □ *I was not able to break the habit of snoring.* □ *It's hard to break a habit that you have had for a long time.*

break a law and **break the law** to fail to obey a law; to act contrary to a law. □ *Lisa broke the law when she drove the wrong way on a one-way street.* □ *If you never break the law, you will never get arrested.*

Break a leg! *Fig.* Good luck! (A special theatrical way of wishing a performer good luck. Saying "good luck" is considered by actors to be a jinx.) □ *"Break a leg!" shouted the stage manager to the heroine.* □ *Let's all go and do our best. Break a leg!*

break a record to destroy a previously set high record by setting a new one. □ *The athlete broke all the school records in swimming.* □ *The league record was broken after thirty years.*

break a story [for a media outlet] to be the first to broadcast or distribute the story of an event. □ *The Tribune broke the story before the Herald could even send a reporter to the scene.*

break against something [for something] to crash against something. □ *The waves broke against the barrier.* □ *The glass broke against the side of the sink.*

break away (from someone**)** and **break free (from** someone**); break loose (from** someone**) 1.** *Lit.* to get free of the physical hold of someone. □ *I tried to break away from him, but he was holding me too tight.* □ *She broke free from him, at last.* □ *I broke free from the intruder.* **2.** *Fig.* to sever a relationship with another person, especially the parent-child relationship. □ *He found it hard to break away from his mother.* □ *She was almost thirty before she finally broke free.*

break bread with someone *Fig.* to eat a meal with someone. □ *Please come by and break bread with us sometime.* □ *I would like to break bread with you.*

break camp to close down a campsite; to pack up and move on. □ *Early this morning we broke camp and moved on northward.* □ *Okay, everyone. It's time to break camp. Take those tents down and fold them neatly.*

break down 1. *Lit.* [for something] to fall apart; [for something] to stop operating. □ *The air-conditioning broke down, and we got very warm.* □ *The car broke down on the long trip.* **2.** *Fig.* [for one] to lose control of one's emotions; [for one] to have an emotional or psychological crisis. □ *He couldn't keep going. He finally broke down.* □ *I was afraid I'd break down.* **3.** Go to next.

break down (and cry) to surrender to demands or emotions and cry. □ *Max finally broke down and confessed.* □ *I was afraid I would break down and cry from the sadness I felt.*

break even for income to equal expenses. (This implies that money was not made or lost.) □ *Unfortunately, my business just managed to break even last year.* □ *I made a bad investment, but I broke even.*

break for something **1.** to stop working for something else, such as lunch, coffee, etc. □ *We should break now for lunch.* □ *I want to break for coffee.* **2.** to run suddenly toward something; to increase dramatically one's speed while running. □ *At the last moment, the deer broke for the woods.* □ *The deer broke for cover at the sound of our approach.*

break free (from someone**)** Go to **break away (from** someone**)**.

break ground (for something**)** to start digging the foundation for a building. □ *The president of the company came to break ground for the new building.* □ *This was the third building this year for which this company has broken ground.* □ *When do they expect to break ground at the new site?*

break in (on someone**) 1.** to burst into a place and violate someone's privacy. □ *The police broke in on him at his home and arrested him.* □ *They needed a warrant to break in.* **2.** to interrupt someone's conversation. (See also **break in (on** something**)**.) □ *If you need to talk to me, just break in on me.* □ *Feel free to break in if it's an emergency.*

break in (on something**)** to interrupt something; to intrude upon something. (See also **break in (on** someone**)**.) □ *I didn't mean to break in on your discussion.* □ *Please don't break in on us just now. This is important.*

break into a gallop [for a horse] to begin to gallop; [for a horse] to speed up to a gallop. □ *The pony broke into a gallop, racing to get home.* □ *Near the stables, the horse broke into a fast gallop.*

break into something to begin to perform or utter suddenly, especially with song, speech, chattering, tears, etc. □ *Suddenly, she broke into song.* □ *As soon as the movie started, the people behind me broke into loud chattering.*

break in(to something or some place**)** to force entry into a place criminally; to enter some place forcibly for the purpose of robbery or other illegal acts. □ *The thugs broke into the liquor store.* □ *They broke in and took all the money.*

break in(to) tears Go to **break out in(to) tears.**

Break it up! Stop fighting!; Stop arguing! (Fixed order.) □ *Tom: I'm going to break your neck! Bill: I'm going to mash in your face first! Bob: All right, you two, break it up!* □

When the police officer saw the boys fighting, he came over and hollered, "Break it up! You want me to arrest you?"

break loose (from someone**)** Go to break away (from someone).

break new ground *Fig.* to begin to do something that no one else has done; to pioneer [in an enterprise]. ☐ *Dr. Anderson was breaking new ground in cancer research.* ☐ *They were breaking new ground in consumer electronics.*

break off (from something**)** [for a piece of something] to become separated from the whole. ☐ *This broke off from the lamp. What shall I do with it?* ☐ *This piece broke off.*

break off (with someone**)** and **break with** someone to end communication with someone; to break up (with someone); to end a relationship with someone, especially a romantic relationship, or to create a break between adult members of a family. ☐ *Terri has broken off with Sam.* ☐ *We thought she would break with him pretty soon.*

break one's **arm patting oneself on the back** Go to have calluses from patting one's own back.

break one's **back (to** do something**)** Go to break one's neck (to do something).

break one's **balls to** do something Go to bust (one's) ass (to do something).

break one's **habit** Go to break a habit.

break one's **neck (to** do something**)** and **break** one's **back (to** do something**)** *Fig.* to work very hard to accomplish something. ☐ *I broke my neck to get here on time.* ☐ *There is no point in breaking your back. Take your time.*

break one's **stride** to deviate from a rhythmic stride while walking, running, or marching. (See also put one off one's stride.) ☐ *After I broke my stride, I never could pick up enough speed to win the race.*

break one's **word** not to do what one said one would do; not to keep one's promise. (Compare this with keep one's word.) ☐ *Don't say you'll visit your grandmother if you can't go. She hates people to break their word.* ☐ *If you break your word, she won't trust you again.*

break out 1. to burst forth suddenly, as with a fire, a riot, giggling, shouting, etc. ☐ *A fire broke out in the belfry.* ☐ *A round of giggling broke out when the teacher tripped.* **2.** *Sl.* to leave. ☐ *It's late, man. Time to break out.* ☐ *We broke out a little after midnight.* **3.** Go to break out (in pimples); break out (of something); break out (with something).

break out in a cold sweat *Lit.* or *Fig.* to become frightened or anxious and begin to sweat. ☐ *I was so frightened, I broke out in a cold sweat.* ☐ *Larry broke out in a cold sweat when he cut his hand.*

break out in a rash [for the skin] to erupt with a rash. (See also break out in a cold sweat; break out (with a rash).) ☐ *I knew Dan had the chicken pox, because he broke out in a rash and had a dry cough.* ☐ *The baby breaks out in a rash all the time.*

break out (in pimples) to erupt with something such as a rash, a cold sweat, or pimples. ☐ *After being in the woods, I broke out in a rash. I think it's poison ivy.* ☐ *I hate to break out like that.* ☐ *Whenever I eat chocolate, I break out in pimples the next day.*

break out in(to) tears and **break in(to) tears** to start crying suddenly. ☐ *I was so sad that I broke out into tears.* ☐ *I always break into tears at a funeral.*

break out (of something**) 1.** *Lit.* to escape from something, often by destructive means, especially from prison. ☐ *The convicts plotted to break out of prison.* ☐ *You don't have the guts to break out of jail!* **2.** *Fig.* to escape from something in one's life that is too confining. ☐ *I was 16 years old when I finally broke out of my rigid upbringing.* ☐ *She just couldn't break out of her old patterns of behavior.*

break out (with a rash**)** [for the skin] to erupt with pimples, hives, or lesions, from a specific disease such as measles, chicken pox, rubella, etc. ☐ *Nick and Dan broke out with chicken pox.* ☐ *They both broke out at the same time.*

break out with something to utter or emit laughter, a shout, or a cry. ☐ *The kids broke out with a cheer.* ☐ *They broke out with laughter every time they saw the lady with the red wig.*

break over something [for waves] to lift high and tumble over a barrier. ☐ *The waves broke over the rocks at the shore.* ☐ *Huge waves broke over the bow of the ship.*

break silence to give information about a topic that no one was mentioning or discussing. ☐ *The press finally broke silence on the question of the plagiarized editorial.*

break someone **down†** to force someone to give up and tell secrets or agree to do something. ☐ *After threats of torture, they broke the spy down.* ☐ *They broke down the agent by threatening violence.*

break someone **in†** to train someone to do a new job; to supervise someone who is learning to do a new job. ☐ *Who will break the new employee in?* ☐ *I have to break in a new receptionist.*

break someone or something **of** something to cause someone or something to stop practicing a habit. ☐ *We worked hard to break the dog of making a mess on the carpet.* ☐ *I don't think I can break her of the habit.* ☐ *Tom broke himself of biting his nails.*

break (someone's**) balls** and **break (**someone's**) stones; bust (**someone's**) balls; bust (**someone's**) stones 1.** *Sl.* to wreck or ruin (someone); to overwork someone; to overwhelm someone. (Potentially offensive. Use only with discretion.) ☐ *The boss acts like he's trying to break everybody's balls all the time.* ☐ *No need to break my balls. I'll do it!* **2.** *Sl.* to kid or tease (someone). ☐ *Don't sweat what I said—I was just bustin' balls.* ☐ *Hey, relax, he didn't mean it. He was just breakin' your stones!*

break someone's **fall** to cushion a falling person; to lessen the impact of a falling person. ☐ *When the little boy fell out of the window, the bushes broke his fall.* ☐ *The old lady slipped on the ice, but a snowbank broke her fall.*

break someone's **heart** *Fig.* to cause someone great emotional pain. ☐ *It just broke my heart when Tom ran away from home.* ☐ *Sally broke John's heart when she refused to marry him.*

break someone's **stones** Go to break (someone's) balls.

break someone **up†** to cause a person to laugh, perhaps at an inappropriate time. ☐ *John told a joke that really broke*

Mary up. ☐ *The comedian's job was to break up the audience by telling jokes.*

B

break something **away† (from** something**)** to break a part or piece of something away from the whole. ☐ *She broke a bit away and popped it into her mouth.* ☐ *Todd broke away a piece from the bar of candy.*

break something **down† 1.** *Lit.* to tear something down; to destroy something. ☐ *They used an ax to break the door down.* ☐ *We broke down the wall with big hammers.* **2.** *Fig.* to destroy a social or legal barrier. ☐ *The court broke a number of legal barriers down this week.* ☐ *They had to break down many social prejudices to manage to succeed.*

break something **down† (for** someone**)** *Fig.* to explain something to someone in simple terms or in an orderly fashion. (Alludes to breaking a complex problem into smaller segments which can be explained more easily. See also **break** something **down (into** something**)**.) ☐ *She doesn't understand. You will have to break it down for her.* ☐ *I can help. This is a confusing question. Let me break down the problem for you.*

break something **down† (into** something**) 1.** to reduce a compound or its structure to its components. ☐ *Heat will break this down into sodium and a few gases.* ☐ *Will heat break down this substance into anything useful?* ☐ *We broke it into little pieces.* **2.** to reduce a large numerical total to its subparts and explain each one. ☐ *She broke the total down into its components.* ☐ *Please break down the total into its parts again.* ☐ *I'll break the total down for you.* **3.** to discuss the details of something by examining its subparts. (See also **break** something **down (for** someone**)**.) ☐ *Let's break this problem down into its parts and deal with each one separately.* ☐ *Breaking down complex problems into their components is almost fun.* ☐ *Let's break this issue down and discuss it.*

break something **free (from** something**)** to force something to detach from something; to get something out of the hold of something else. ☐ *I broke the gun free from her grasp.* ☐ *Someone broke the light fixture free from its mounting.*

break something **in† 1.** *Lit.* to crush or batter something to pieces; to **break** something **down.** ☐ *Why are you breaking the door in? Here's the key!* ☐ *Who broke in the door?* **2.** *Fig.* to use a new device until it runs well and smoothly; to wear shoes, perhaps a little at a time, until they feel comfortable. ☐ *I can't drive at high speed until I break this car in.* ☐ *I want to go out this weekend and break in the car.* ☐ *The new shoes hurt her feet because they were not yet broken in.*

break something **loose from** something to loosen a part of something; to loosen and remove a part of something. ☐ *The mechanic broke the strap loose from the tailpipe.* ☐ *The bracket was broken loose from the wall.*

break something **off (of)** something and **break** something **off†** to fracture or dislodge a piece off something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *He broke a piece of the decorative stone off the side of the church.* ☐ *He didn't mean to break off anything.* ☐ *This fragment was broken off of that.*

break something **on** something to strike and break something against something else. ☐ *She broke the glass on the countertop.* ☐ *He broke his arm on the steps.*

break something **out (of** something**)** to remove something from something else by force. ☐ *Carefully, she broke the gemstone out of the side of the rock face.* ☐ *She broke the gemstone out carefully.*

break something **to pieces** to shatter something. ☐ *I broke my crystal vase to pieces.* ☐ *I dropped a glass and broke it to pieces.*

break something **to** someone to disclose some news or information to someone. (Often said of unpleasant news.) ☐ *I hate to be the one to break this to you, but there is trouble at home.* ☐ *We broke the bad news to Ken gently.*

break something **up† 1.** *Lit.* to destroy something. ☐ *The storm broke the docks up on the lake.* ☐ *The police broke up the gambling ring.* **2.** *Fig.* to put an end to something. ☐ *The police broke the fight up.* ☐ *Walter's parents broke up the party at three in the morning.*

break something **up† (into** something**)** to break something into smaller pieces. ☐ *We broke the crackers up into much smaller pieces.* ☐ *Please break up the crackers into smaller pieces if you want to feed the ducks.*

break something off**† 1.** to end a relationship abruptly. (See also **break off (with** someone**)**.) ☐ *I knew she was getting ready to break it off, but Tom didn't.* ☐ *After a few long and bitter arguments, they broke off their relationship.* **2.** Go to **break** something **off (of)** something.

break the back of something *Fig.* to end the domination of something; to reduce the power of something. ☐ *The government has worked for years to break the back of organized crime.* ☐ *This new medicine should break the back of the epidemic.*

break the bank *Fig.* to use up all one's money. (Alludes to casino gambling, in the rare event when a gambler wins more money than the house has on hand.) ☐ *It will hardly break the bank if we go out to dinner just once.* ☐ *Buying a new dress at a discount price won't break the bank.*

break the habit Go to **break a habit.**

break the ice 1. *Fig.* to attempt to become friends with someone. ☐ *He tried to break the ice, but she was a little cold.* ☐ *A nice smile does a lot to break the ice.* **2.** *Fig.* to initiate social interchanges and conversation; to get something started. ☐ *It's hard to break the ice at formal events.* ☐ *Sally broke the ice at the auction by bidding $20,000 for the painting.*

break the law Go to **break a law.**

break the news (to someone**)** to tell someone some important news, usually bad news. (See also **break** something **to** someone.) ☐ *The doctor had to break the news to Jane about her husband's cancer.* ☐ *I hope that the doctor broke the news gently.*

break the silence to make a noise interrupting a period of silence. ☐ *The wind broke the silence by blowing the door closed.*

break the spell 1. to put an end to a magic spell. ☐ *The wizard looked in his magic book to find out how to break the spell.* **2. to do something that ends a desirable period of figurative enchantment.** ☐ *At the end of the second movement, some idiot broke the spell by applauding.*

break through (something**) 1.** *Lit.* to break something and pass through. ☐ *The firefighters broke through the wall easily.* ☐ *The robbers broke through the glass window of the shop.* **2.** *Fig.* to overcome something. ☐ *Tom was able to break through racial barriers.* ☐ *The scientists broke through the mystery surrounding the disease and found the cause.*

break through (to someone or something**)** to force [one's way] through an obstruction and reach someone or something on the other side. ☐ *The miners broke through to their trapped friends.* ☐ *They broke through the thin wall easily.*

break up 1. *Lit.* [for something] to fall apart; to be broken to pieces. (Typically said of a ship breaking up on rocks.) ☐ *In the greatest storm of the century, the ship broke up on the reef.* ☐ *It broke up and sank.* **2.** Go to **break up (with** someone**)**. **3.** [for married persons] to divorce. ☐ *After many years of bickering, they finally broke up.* **4.** [for a marriage] to dissolve in divorce. ☐ *Their marriage finally broke up.* **5.** to begin laughing very hard. ☐ *The comedian told a particularly good joke, and the audience broke up.* ☐ *I always break up when I hear her sing. She is so bad!*

break (up) (into something**)** to divide into smaller parts. ☐ *The glass broke up into a thousand pieces.* ☐ *It hit the floor and broke up, flinging bits everywhere.*

break up (with someone**)** to end a romantic relationship with someone. ☐ *Tom broke up with Mary and started dating Lisa.* ☐ *We broke up in March, after an argument.*

break wind *Euph.* to expel gas from the anus. ☐ *Someone in the bus broke wind. It smelled terrible.* ☐ *He broke wind with an embarrassing noise.*

break with someone Go to **break off (with** someone**)**.

breaking and entering the crime of forcing one's way into a place. (A criminal charge.) ☐ *Wilbur was charged with four counts of breaking and entering.* ☐ *It was not an act of breaking and entering. The thief just opened the door and walked right in.*

the **breaking point 1.** *Lit.* the point at which something will break. ☐ *The mule's back was strained to the breaking point with masses of bundles and straw.* **2.** *Fig.* the point at which nerves or one's mental state can endure no more. ☐ *My nerves are at the breaking point.*

a **breath of fresh air 1.** *Lit.* an influx of air that is not stale or smelly, especially from outdoors. ☐ *You look ill, John. What you need is a breath of fresh air.* **2.** *Fig.* a portion of air that is not "contaminated" with unpleasant people or situations. (This is a sarcastic version of ①.) ☐ *You people are disgusting. I have to get out of here and get a breath of fresh air.* ☐ *I believe I'll go get a breath of fresh air. The intellectual atmosphere in here is stifling.* **3.** *Fig.* a new, fresh, and imaginative approach (to something). (Usually with *like.*) ☐ *Sally, with all her wonderful ideas, is a breath of fresh air.* ☐ *The decor in this room is like a breath of fresh air.*

breathe a sigh of relief 1. *Lit.* to sigh in a way that signals one's relief that something has come to an end. ☐ *At the end of the contest, we all breathed a sigh of relief.* **2.** *Fig.* to express relief that something has ended. ☐ *With the contract finally signed, we breathed a sigh of relief as we drank a toast in celebration.*

breathe down someone's **neck 1.** *Fig.* to keep close watch on someone; to watch someone's activities intently. (Alludes to someone standing very close behind a person.) ☐ *I can't work with you breathing down my neck all the time. Go away.* ☐ *I will get through my life without your help. Stop breathing down my neck.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone or something] to represent an approaching deadline. ☐ *The project deadline is breathing down my neck.* ☐ *The due date for this paper is breathing down my neck.*

breathe easy to assume a relaxed state after a stressful period. ☐ *After this crisis is over, I'll be able to breathe easy again.* ☐ *He won't be able to breathe easy until he pays off his debts.*

breathe in to inhale; to take air into the lungs. ☐ *Now, relax and breathe in. Breathe out.* ☐ *Breathe in deeply; enjoy the summer air.*

breathe into something to exhale into something; to expel one's breath into something. ☐ *I was told to breathe into a tube that was connected to a machine of some type.*

breathe one's **last** *Euph.* to die. ☐ *She breathed her last at about two o'clock that afternoon.* ☐ *Cradled in his wife's arms, he breathed his last.*

breathe out to exhale. ☐ *Now, breathe out, then breathe in.* ☐ *The doctor told me to breathe out slowly.*

breathe something **in**† to take something into the lungs, such as air, medicinal vapors, gas, etc. ☐ *Breathe the vapor in slowly. It will help your cold.* ☐ *Breathe in that fresh air!*

breathe something **into** something to revive something; to introduce something new or positive into a situation. ☐ *Her positive attitude breathed new life into the company.* ☐ *The project breathed a new spirit into the firm.*

breathe something **(of** something**) (to** someone**)** to tell something to someone. (Usually in the negative.) ☐ *Don't breathe a word of this to anyone!* ☐ *I won't breathe a word!*

breathe something **out**† to exhale something. ☐ *At last, he breathed his last breath out, and that was the end.* ☐ *Breathe out your breath slowly.*

breathe (up)on someone or something to exhale on someone or something. (*Upon* is more formal and less commonly used than *on.*) ☐ *Please don't breathe upon the food.* ☐ *Don't breathe on me!*

Breeding will tell. *Prov.* One's character or lack of it will become known. ☐ *From the beginning, he appeared to be courteous, and now he clearly has proven himself to be so. Breeding will tell.*

breeze along *Fig.* to travel along casually, rapidly, and happily; to go through life in a casual and carefree manner. ☐ *Kristine was just breezing along the road when she ran off onto the shoulder.* ☐ *We just breezed along the highway, barely paying attention to what we were doing.* ☐ *Don't just breeze along through life!*

breeze away to leave quickly or abruptly. ☐ *She said nothing more. She just breezed away.* ☐ *I breezed away without stopping to say good-bye.*

breeze in (from some place**)** Go to **sweep in (from** some place**)**.

breeze in(to some place**)** to enter a place quickly, in a happy and carefree manner. ☐ *She breezed into the con-*

ference room and sat down at the head of the table. ☐ *Jerry breezed in and said hello.*

B

breeze off to leave quickly or abruptly. ☐ *Don't just breeze off! Stay and talk.* ☐ *Lily breezed off in a huffy manner.*

breeze out (of some place**)** to leave a place quickly. ☐ *She was here for a moment and then suddenly breezed out.* ☐ *She breezed out of the room in an instant.*

breeze through (something**) 1.** *Fig.* to complete some task rapidly and easily. ☐ *I breezed through my calculus assignment in no time at all.* ☐ *It was not hard. I just breezed through.* **2.** *Fig.* to travel through a place rapidly. ☐ *They breezed through every little town without stopping.* ☐ *We didn't stop. We just breezed through.*

Brevity is the soul of wit. *Prov.* Jokes and humorous stories are funnier if they are short. ☐ *Dale took ten minutes to tell that joke; he obviously doesn't know that brevity is the soul of wit.* ☐ *The comedian was in the middle of a long, tedious story when someone in the audience shouted, "Brevity is the soul of wit!"*

brew a plot *Fig.* to plot something; to make a plot. ☐ *The children brewed an evil plot to get revenge on their teacher.* ☐ *We brewed a plot so that we would not have to help with dinner.*

brew something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to brew something, as in making coffee or tea. ☐ *Can somebody brew some coffee up?* ☐ *Let me brew up a pot of tea, and then we'll talk.* **2.** *Fig.* to cause something to happen; to foment something. ☐ *I could see that they were brewing some kind of trouble up.* ☐ *Don't brew up any trouble!*

brew up *Fig.* to build up; [for something] to begin to build and grow. (Typically said of a storm.) ☐ *A bad storm is brewing up in the west.* ☐ *Something serious is brewing up in the western sky.*

bribe someone **into** doing something to pay money to get someone to do something. ☐ *You can't bribe me into doing anything!* ☐ *Max bribed Lily into leaving early.*

brick something **up**† to fill up an opening with bricks. ☐ *He bricked the doorway up.* ☐ *Why did he brick up the opening?*

bricks and mortar buildings; the expenditure of money on buildings rather than something else. (The buildings referred to can be constructed out of anything.) ☐ *The new president of the college preferred to invest in new faculty members rather than bricks and mortar.* ☐ *Sometimes people are happy to donate millions of dollars for bricks and mortar, but they never think of the additional cost of annual maintenance.*

brick(s)-and-mortar [of commercial establishements] based in buildings rather than relying on online sales over the Internet. ☐ *Many of the dot-com business owners have never been involved in a brick-and-mortar business.*

bridge over something to make a bridge or passage over something. ☐ *They bridged over each of the streams as they came to them.* ☐ *I think we can bridge over this little river in a few days if we work hard.*

bridge the gap 1. *Lit.* to make a bridge that reaches across a space. ☐ *The engineers decided to bridge the gap with a wooden structure.* **2.** *Fig.* to do or create something that will serve temporarily. ☐ *We can bridge the gap with a few temporary employees.*

bridle at someone or something *Fig.* to show that one is offended by someone or something. ☐ *She bridled at the suggestion that she should go.* ☐ *Tony bridled at Max. Max was going to have to be dealt with.*

brief someone **about** someone or something and **brief** someone **on** someone or something to tell someone a summary with the essential details about someone or something. ☐ *We need to brief the president about the latest event.* ☐ *I have to brief Michael on the new procedures at work.*

bright and breezy cheery and alert. ☐ *You look all bright and breezy this morning.* ☐ *Bright and breezy people on a gloomy day like this make me sick.*

bright and early very early in the morning or the workday. ☐ *Yes, I'll be there bright and early.* ☐ *I want to see you here on time tomorrow, bright and early, or you're fired!*

***bright as a button** intelligent; quick-minded. (Usually used to describe children. *Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *Why, Mrs. Green, your little girl is as bright as a button.* ☐ *You can't fool Jane. She may be only six years old, but she's bright as a button.*

***bright as a new pin** bright and clean; shiny. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *After Joe cleaned the house, it was as bright as a new pin.* ☐ *My kitchen floor is bright as a new pin since I started using this new floor wax.*

*a **bright idea** a clever thought or new idea. (*Typically: **have** ~**; get** ~**; give** someone ~**.**) ☐ *Now and then I get a bright idea.* ☐ *John hardly ever gets a bright idea.*

brighten up to become brighter; to lighten, especially with sunshine. ☐ *The sky is brightening up a little.* ☐ *When the morning sky brightens up just a little, the birds begin to sing.*

bright-eyed and bushy-tailed *Fig.* awake and alert. (Often used ironically, as in the first example. The idea is that one is like a frisky animal, such as a squirrel.) ☐ *Jill: Hi, Jane! How are you on this beautiful morning? Jane: Bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, just as you might expect, since I've only had three hours of sleep.* ☐ *Despite the early hour, Dennis was bright-eyed and bushy-tailed.*

brim over (with something**)** and **brim with** something to overflow with something. ☐ *The basket was brimming over with flowers.* ☐ *I was brimming with confidence after my recent success.*

brim with something Go to previous.

brimming with something *Fig.* full of some kind of happy behavior. ☐ *The volunteer workers were brimming with goodwill.* ☐ *The smiling children were brimming with joy.*

bring a charge against someone or something to file a complaint against someone or a group; to begin a legal process against someone or a group. (*A charge* can also be *charges* even if only one charge is involved.) ☐ *We brought a charge against the town council.* ☐ *Sam brought charges against Jeff.*

bring a dog to heel to make a dog heel; to make a dog stand or follow close to one's heels. ☐ *A quiet command from his owner brought Fido to heel.*

bring a verdict in† [for a jury] to deliver its decision to the court. ☐ *Do you think they will bring a verdict in today?* ☐ *The jury brought in their verdict around midnight.*

bring an amount of money **in†** to earn an amount of money; to draw or attract an amount of money. ☐ *My part-time job brings fifty dollars in every week.* ☐ *She brings in a lot of money from her executive's salary.*

bring down the curtain (on something**)** Go to **ring down the curtain (on** something**)**.

bring home the bacon *Fig.* to earn a salary; to bring home money earned at a job. ☐ *I've got to get to work if I'm going to bring home the bacon.* ☐ *Go out and get a job so you can bring home the bacon.*

bring one **out of** one's **shell** and **get** one **out of** one's **shell; bring** one **out; get** one **out** *Fig.* to make a person become more open and friendly. (Alludes to a shy turtle being coaxed to put its head out of its shell.) ☐ *We tried to bring Greg out of his shell, but he is very shy.* ☐ *He's quiet, and it's hard to get him out of his shell.*

bring one **to** one's **feet** and **bring** something **to its feet** to make someone or an audience rise up applauding or cheering in approval or in salute to someone or something. (Usually refers to an audience.) ☐ *The finale brought the audience to its feet.* ☐ *Liz was brought to her feet by the playing of the national anthem.*

bring one **to** one's **senses** to cause someone to return to normal [after being out of control or irrational]. ☐ *A gentle slap in the face brought him to his senses.* ☐ *Liz was brought to her senses quickly.*

bring one **to** oneself to cause one to become rational; to cause one to act normal. ☐ *A glass of ice water thrown in her face brought Sally to herself.* ☐ *I was brought to myself by some smelling salts.*

bring out the best in someone to cause someone to behave in the best manner. ☐ *This kind of situation doesn't exactly bring out the best in me.* ☐ *Good weather brings out the best in me.*

bring someone **around† 1.** *Lit.* to bring someone for a visit; to bring someone for someone (else) to meet. ☐ *Please bring your wife around sometime. I'd love to meet her.* ☐ *You've just got to bring around your doctor friend for dinner.* **2.** and **bring** someone **around (to consciousness)** *Fig.* to bring someone to consciousness. ☐ *The doctor brought around the unconscious man with smelling salts.* ☐ *The boxer was knocked out, but his manager brought him around.* **3.** and **bring** someone **around (to** one's **way of thinking); bring** someone **around (to** one's **position)** *Fig.* to persuade someone (to accept something); to manage to get someone to agree (to something). ☐ *The last debate brought around a lot of voters to our candidate.* ☐ *I knew I could bring her around if I just had enough time to talk to her.*

bring someone **back out** [for an applauding audience] to succeed in bringing a performer back onto the stage for a curtain call or encore. ☐ *They brought her back out about seven times, cheering and applauding.* ☐ *She was brought back out repeatedly for curtain calls.*

bring someone **back to reality** to force someone to face reality. ☐ *The rain shower brought her back to reality.* ☐ *Liz was brought back to reality by a rude shock.*

bring someone **before** someone or something to bring a person to an authority, such as a judge, for criticism or discipline. ☐ *They brought Terri before the committee for her explanation.* ☐ *I brought you before me to explain your side of the story.*

bring someone **down† 1.** *Lit.* to assist or accompany someone from a higher place to a lower place. ☐ *Please bring your friends down so I can meet them.* ☐ *She brought down her cousin, who had been taking a nap upstairs.* ☐ *Aunt Mattie was brought down for supper.* **2.** *Fig.* to bring someone to a place for a visit. ☐ *Let's bring Tom and Terri down for a visit this weekend.* ☐ *We brought down Tom just last month.* ☐ *They were brought down at our expense for a weekend visit.* **3.** *Fig.* to restore someone to a normal mood or attitude. (After a period of elation or, perhaps, drug use.) ☐ *The bad news brought me down quickly.* ☐ *I was afraid that the sudden change of plans would bring down the entire group.*

bring someone **down to earth** *Fig.* to help someone face reality; to help someone who is euphoric become more realistic. ☐ *The events helped bring us all down to earth.* ☐ *I hate to be the one to bring you down to earth, but things aren't as good as you think.*

bring someone **in† (on** something**)** to include someone in some deed or activity. ☐ *I'm going to have to bring a specialist in on this.* ☐ *Please bring in several specialists to advise on this case.* ☐ *Let's bring an expert in before we go any further.*

bring someone **into the world** *Fig.* to deliver a baby; to attend the birth of someone. ☐ *The doctor who brought me into the world died last week.* ☐ *I was brought into the world by a kindly old doctor.*

bring someone **on† 1.** *Lit.* to bring someone out onto the stage. ☐ *Now, for the next act, I'm going to bring a chorus on, and I'm sure you'll love them.* ☐ *Bring on the clowns!* **2.** *Fig.* to arouse someone romantically or sexually. ☐ *Ted sought to bring Sally on, but she was uninterested.* ☐ *He tried to bring on one of the guests.*

bring someone or an animal **back to life** and **bring** someone or an animal **back†** to make someone or some living creature come back to life. ☐ *There was nothing that would bring Jimmy's cat back. It was truly dead.* ☐ *Not even a magician could bring back the cat.*

bring someone or something **along† (to** something**)** to bring someone or something with one to some event. ☐ *I brought my uncle along to the party.* ☐ *Please bring along your camera to the show.*

bring someone or something **back†** to make someone or something return. (See also **bring** something **back to life.**) ☐ *Would you please bring the child back?* ☐ *Bring back my child!*

bring someone or something **forth†** to present or produce someone or something. ☐ *Bring the roast turkey forth!* ☐ *Bring forth the roast turkey!*

bring someone or something **forward** to introduce someone or something; to move someone or something into a more visible position. ☐ *Please bring him forward so that we can examine him.* ☐ *Please bring your chair forward so I can see you.*

bring someone or something **in†** Go to **bring** someone or something **in(to)** some place.

bring someone or something **into action** to activate someone or something; to cause someone or something to

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function as intended. ☐ *The threats brought the police into action.* ☐ *A kick in the side brought the television set into action.*

bring someone or something **into contact with** someone or something to cause things or people to touch or associate with one another. ☐ *She hasn't been the same since I brought her into contact with the child who had chicken pox.* ☐ *Don't bring your hand in contact with the poison ivy.* ☐ *Don't bring him into contact with Fred.*

bring someone or something **into disrepute** to dishonor or discredit someone or something. ☐ *This embarrassing incident will bring the entire committee into disrepute.* ☐ *My bankruptcy brought me into disrepute.*

bring someone or something **into line (with** someone or something**)** **1.** *Lit.* to make someone or something even with someone or something. ☐ *I brought the books into line with the others on the shelf.* ☐ *I brought Jimmy into line with the other scouts.* **2.** *Fig.* to make someone or something conform to someone or something. ☐ *We brought Ted into line with the guidelines.* ☐ *Sam brought his proposal into line with the company standards.*

bring someone or something **into prominence** to cause someone or something to become famous or renowned. ☐ *The award brought Mike into national prominence.* ☐ *The current national need for engineers brought our school into prominence.* ☐ *A terrible scandal brought Lily into prominence.*

bring someone or something **in(to)** some place and **bring** someone or something **in†** to permit or assist someone or something to enter something or some place. ☐ *Do you mind if I bring my sister in here with me?* ☐ *Please bring in your sister.*

bring someone or something **into view** to cause someone or something to be seen or to be visible. ☐ *A bright light brought the sleeping cattle into view.* ☐ *Please bring your child into view.*

bring someone or something **out†** Go to **bring** someone or something **out of** something.

bring someone or something **out in droves** *Fig.* to lure or draw out people or other animals in great number. ☐ *The availability of free drinks brought people out in droves.* ☐ *The fresh grass sprouts brought the deer out in droves.*

bring someone or something **out of** something and **bring** someone or something **out†** to cause someone or something to emerge from something or some place. ☐ *The explosion brought the people out of their homes.* ☐ *The noise brought out all the people.*

bring someone or something **out of the woodwork** Go to **out of the woodwork.**

bring someone or something **to a halt** to cause someone or something to stop immediately. ☐ *The explosion brought the lecture to a halt.* ☐ *I brought the visitor to a halt at the front gate.*

bring someone or something **to life** *Fig.* to give vigor or vitality to someone or something; to reactivate someone or something. (See also **bring** something **back to life.**) ☐ *A little singing and dancing would have brought the play to life.* ☐ *Some coffee will bring you to life.*

bring someone or something **to light** *Fig.* to present or reveal someone or something to the public. ☐ *The newspaper story brought the problem to light.* ☐ *I have brought some interesting facts to light in my article.*

bring someone or something **to** someone's **attention** to make someone aware of someone or something. ☐ *Thank you for bringing this to my attention.* ☐ *I am grateful for your bringing her to my attention.*

bring someone or something **to trial** to bring a crime or a criminal into court for a trial. ☐ *At last, the thugs were brought to trial.* ☐ *We brought the case to trial a week later.*

bring someone or something **under control** Go to **under control.**

bring someone or something **under** one's **control** to achieve dominion over someone or something. ☐ *The dictator was at last able to bring the army under his control.* ☐ *Harry could not bring Ron under his control.* ☐ *Walter could not be brought under Lily's control.*

bring someone or something **under** someone or something to assign someone or something to someone or something; to put someone or something under the management of someone or something. ☐ *I had David brought under me, so I could keep an eye on his day-to-day work.* ☐ *David was brought under my jurisdiction.*

bring someone or something **up†** **1.** *Lit.* to cause someone or something to go up with one from a lower place to a higher place. ☐ *We brought them up and let them view the city from the balcony.* ☐ *Why did you bring up Tom? Wasn't he comfortable down there?* **2.** *Fig.* to mention someone or something. ☐ *Why did you have to bring that up?* ☐ *Why did you bring up Walter? I hate talking about him!* **3.** *Fig.* to raise someone or something; to care for someone or something up to adulthood. ☐ *We brought the dog up from a pup.* ☐ *We brought up the puppies carefully and sold them for a good profit.*

bring someone or something **up to** something to raise someone or something to a particular standard, level, expectation, etc. ☐ *What do I have to do to bring Billy up to grade level?* ☐ *The lab was brought up to standards quickly.*

bring someone or something **up-to-date** to modernize someone or something. ☐ *We brought the room up-to-date with a little paint and some modern furniture.* ☐ *I can bring you up-to-date with a new hairdo.*

bring someone or something **within range (of** someone or something**)** to cause someone or something to be in someone's or something's [gun] sights. ☐ *Don't bring the hunters within range of the farmer's gun sights.* ☐ *The bait brought the geese within range of Jeff and his friends.*

bring someone **out of the closet** Go to **out of the closet.**

bring someone **out (on** something**)** *Lit.* to make someone come onto the stage from the stage sides or wings. (See also **bring** someone **on.**) ☐ *Let's applaud loudly and bring her out on stage again.* ☐ *Lily was brought out on stage by the applause.*

bring someone **over† from** some place to bring someone from a place, from nearby, or from a great distance. ☐ *They brought over the neighbors from across the street.* ☐ *A soprano was brought over from Moscow.*

bring someone **over† ((to)** some place**)** to bring a person for a visit to some place. ☐ *Why don't you bring her over to our place for a visit?* ☐ *You should bring over your girlfriend for a visit.*

bring someone **over**† **to** something to bring someone for a visit and a meal or other event. ☐ *Please bring your friend over to dinner sometime.* ☐ *I want to bring over my husband sometime.*

bring someone **through** something to help someone endure something, such as a disease, an emotional upset, or a stressful period. ☐ *The doctor brought Tom through the sickness.* ☐ *Liz was brought through the ordeal by her friends.*

bring someone **to** to help someone return to consciousness. ☐ *We worked to bring him to before he went into shock.* ☐ *He was finally brought to by the smelling salts.*

bring someone **to a boil** *Fig.* to make someone very angry. ☐ *This really brought her to a boil. She was fit to be tied.* ☐ *Lily was really brought to a boil by the news.*

bring someone **to account** *Fig.* to confront someone with a record of misdeeds and errors. ☐ *The committee decided to bring Martha to account.* ☐ *Martha was brought to account by the committee.*

bring someone **to** do something to cause someone to do something; to encourage someone to do something. ☐ *What brought you to do this?* ☐ *I was brought to do this by a guilty conscience.*

bring someone **to heel** *Fig.* to cause someone to act in a disciplined fashion; to force someone to act in a more disciplined manner. ☐ *She tried to bring her husband to heel, but he had a mind of his own.* ☐ *He was brought to heel by his demanding wife.*

bring someone **to justice** *Fig.* to punish someone for a crime. ☐ *The police officer swore she would not rest until she had brought the killer to justice.* ☐ *Years later, the rapist was found out and finally brought to justice.*

bring someone **together 1.** *Lit.* to cause people to gather into a group. ☐ *He brought everyone together in the drawing room.* ☐ *They were brought together in a large conference room.* **2.** *Fig.* to attempt to get people to agree with one another. ☐ *I tried to bring them together, but they are too stubborn.* ☐ *They could not be brought together on a price.*

bring someone **up**† **for** something **1.** to suggest someone's name for something. ☐ *I would like to bring Beth up for vice president.* ☐ *I will bring up Beth for this office if you don't.* **2.** to put someone's name up for promotion, review, discipline, etc. ☐ *We brought Tom up for promotion.* ☐ *The boss brought up Tom, too.*

bring someone **up**† **on** something to provide something while raising a child to adulthood. ☐ *She brought her children up on fast food.* ☐ *You shouldn't bring up your children on that kind of entertainment!*

bring someone **up sharply** and **bring** someone **up short** to surprise or shock someone; to make someone face something unpleasant, suddenly. ☐ *The slap in the face brought me up sharply.* ☐ *The loud bang brought me up short.*

bring someone **up short** Go to previous.

bring someone **up to speed on** someone or something Go to **up to speed.**

bring someone **up-to-date (on** someone or something**)** to inform someone of the latest information about something. ☐ *Let me bring you up-to-date on what is happening in the village.* ☐ *Please bring me up-to-date.*

bring something **about**† to make something happen. ☐ *Is she clever enough to bring it about?* ☐ *Oh, yes, she can bring about anything she wants.*

bring something **all together** to organize something; to coordinate something or some event. ☐ *The party was a great success. Janet was the one who brought it all together.* ☐ *It was a difficult conference to organize, but Sam brought it all together.*

bring something **around**† **(to** someone or something**) 1.** to move something, such as a vehicle, from one place to another, especially so it can be used. ☐ *Would you kindly have James bring the car around?* ☐ *Tony will bring around the car to us.* **2.** to distribute something to someone or a group. (Said by a person who intends to receive what is brought.) ☐ *Please bring the snacks around to us.* ☐ *Carl is bringing around the snacks to us.*

bring something **away**† **(from** something**) 1.** to come away from some event with some important insight or information. ☐ *I brought some valuable advice away from the lecture.* ☐ *She brought away some valuable advice from the meeting.* **2.** to move something away from something. (A request to move something away from something and toward the requester.) ☐ *Bring the pitcher of water away from the fireplace.* ☐ *Bring away the pitcher from the fireplace when you get up.*

bring something **back**† to restore an earlier style or practice. ☐ *Please bring the good old days back.* ☐ *Bring back good times for all of us.*

bring something **back to life** *Fig.* to restore vitality to something, such as a performance, a story, etc. (See also **bring** someone or an animal **back to life**.) ☐ *The third act of the play had a clever twist that brought the whole drama back to life.*

bring something **back**† **(to** someone**)** to remind someone of something. ☐ *The funeral brought memories back.* ☐ *The warm winds brought back the old feeling of loneliness that I had experienced so many times in the tropics.*

bring something **before** someone or something to bring a matter to the attention of someone or a group. ☐ *I wanted to bring this matter before you before it got any worse.* ☐ *I will have to bring this matter before the committee.*

bring something **crashing down (around** one**) 1.** *Lit.* to cause a structure to collapse and fall (on oneself). ☐ *He hit the tent pole and brought the tent crashing down.* ☐ *When she removed the last vertical board, she brought the shed crashing down around her.* **2.** *Fig.* to destroy something, such as one's life and well-being, that one has a special interest in; to cause someone's basic orientation to collapse. ☐ *She brought her whole life crashing down around her.*

bring something **down**† **1.** *Lit.* to move something from a higher place to a lower place. ☐ *Bring that box down, please.* ☐ *And while you're up there, please bring down the box marked "winter clothing."* **2.** to lower something, such as prices, profits, taxes, etc. ☐ *The governor pledged to bring taxes down.* ☐ *I hope they bring down taxes.* **3.** *Fig.* to defeat or overcome something, such as an enemy, a government, etc. ☐ *The events of the last week will probably*

bring the government down. ☐ *The scandal will bring down the government, I hope.*

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bring something **down† on** one(**'s head) 1.** *Lit.* to cause something to fall onto one's head. (See also **bring** something **crashing down (around** one**).**) ☐ *He jarred the shelves and all the books were brought down on his head.* ☐ *When he hit the wall of the hut, he brought down the roof on himself.* **2.** *Fig.* to cause the collapse of something or some enterprise onto oneself. ☐ *Your bumbling will bring everything down on your head!* ☐ *Your mistakes have brought down the whole thing on your own head.*

bring something **down to** something to make a concept simpler to understand by bringing it to a simpler level of understanding. ☐ *Why don't you bring all this down to my level?* ☐ *Everything was brought down to the child's level.*

bring something **home to** someone **1.** *Lit.* to return home with a gift for someone. ☐ *I brought a box of candy home to the children.* ☐ *The candy was brought home to Lily by Ken.* **2.** *Fig.* to cause someone to realize something. ☐ *My weakness was brought home to me by the heavy work I had been assigned to do.* ☐ *The hard work really brought my frailty home to me.*

bring something **into being** to cause something to be; to create something. ☐ *How can I bring my new scheme into being?* ☐ *The new scheme was brought into being by a lot of hard work.*

bring something **into blossom** to make a plant or tree bloom. ☐ *The special plant food brought the rosebush into blossom.* ☐ *The roses were brought into blossom by the lovely weather.*

bring something **into focus 1.** *Lit.* to make something seen through lenses sharply visible. ☐ *I adjusted the binoculars until I brought the bird sharply into focus.* ☐ *The flowers were brought into focus by adjusting the controls.* **2.** *Fig.* to make something clear and understandable. ☐ *I think we will have a better discussion of the problem if you will say a few words to bring it more sharply into focus.* ☐ *Please try to bring your major point into focus earlier in the essay.*

bring something **into play 1.** *Lit.* [in a ball game] to put the ball into the action of the game, such as after a time-out. ☐ *Fred brought the ball into play when he bounced it in from the sidelines.* **2.** *Fig.* [for the shares of a company] to become the subject of a takeover bid. ☐ *The recent drop in the value of that stock brought the company into play.* ☐ *The company was brought into play by a news story about their new product line.* **3.** *Fig.* to cause something to become a factor in something. ☐ *Now, this recent development brings some other factors into play.* ☐ *Something else was brought into play by the strange event.*

bring something **into question** to cause something to be doubted; to cause something to be questioned. ☐ *What you have just told me seems to bring the wisdom of the trip into question.* ☐ *Your presence here has been brought into question.*

bring something **into service** to begin to use something; to start something up. ☐ *They are bringing a much larger boat into service next month.* ☐ *A newer machine will be brought into service next year.*

bring something **off†** to cause something to happen; to carry out a plan successfully. ☐ *Do you think you can bring it off?* ☐ *She brought off her plan without a hitch!*

bring something **on† 1.** to cause something to happen; to cause a situation to occur. ☐ *What brought this event on?* ☐ *What brought on this catastrophe?* **2.** to cause a case or an attack of a disease. ☐ *What brought on your coughing fit?* ☐ *Something in the air brought it on.*

bring something **on** someone to cause something to go wrong for someone. ☐ *You brought it on yourself. Don't complain.* ☐ *Max brought this problem on all of us.*

bring something **out† 1.** to issue something; to publish something; to present something [to the public]. ☐ *I am bringing a new book out.* ☐ *I hear you have brought out a new edition of your book.* **2.** Go to **bring** something **out of** someone.

bring something **out† (in** someone**)** to cause a particular quality to be displayed by a person, such as virtue, courage, a mean streak, selfishness, etc. ☐ *You bring the best out in me.* ☐ *This kind of thing brings out the worst in me.*

bring something **out in the open** Go to **out in the open.**

bring something **out of mothballs** *Fig.* to bring something out of storage and into use; to restore something to active service. ☐ *They were going to bring a number of ships out of mothballs, but the war ended before they needed them.*

bring something **out of** someone and **bring** something **out†** to cause something to be said by a person, such as a story, the truth, an answer, etc. ☐ *We threatened her a little and that brought the truth out of her.* ☐ *This warning ought to bring out the truth!*

bring something **to a boil** to heat liquid to its boiling point; to make something boil. ☐ *First, you must bring the soup to a boil.*

bring something **to a climax** Go to next.

bring something **to a close** and **bring** something **to an end; bring** something **to a climax** to end something; to cause something to reach its final point and stop. ☐ *I think it is time to bring this matter to a close.* ☐ *The incident has been brought to a climax.*

bring something **to a dead end** to cause something to reach a point from which it can go no further. ☐ *The accident brought the project to a dead end.* ☐ *The study was brought to a dead end by the loss of federal funding.*

bring something **to a head** to cause something to come to the point when a decision has to be made or action taken. ☐ *The latest disagreement between management and the union has brought matters to a head. There will be an all-out strike now.* ☐ *It's a relief that things have been brought to a head. The disputes have been going on for months.*

bring something **to a standstill** to cause a process or a job to reach a point at which it must stop. ☐ *The accident brought the work to a standstill.* ☐ *The strike brought construction to a standstill.*

bring something **to a successful conclusion** to complete something successfully. ☐ *They brought the battle to*

a successful conclusion. ☐ *The case was brought to a successful conclusion by the prosecutor.*

bring something **to an end** Go to **bring** something **to a close.**

bring something **to fruition** to make something come into being; to achieve a success. ☐ *Do you think you can bring this plan to fruition?* ☐ *The plan was brought to fruition by the efforts of everyone.*

bring something **to its feet** Go to **bring** one **to** one's **feet.**

bring something **to light** *Fig.* to make something known. ☐ *The scientists brought their findings to light.* ☐ *We must bring this new evidence to light.*

bring something **to mind** Go to **call** something **to mind.**

bring something **to rest** to cause a machine, vehicle, or process to stop. ☐ *Jill brought the car to rest against the curb.* ☐ *The car was brought to rest against the curb.*

bring something **to** someone's **aid** to bring something with which to help someone. ☐ *The officer brought medical supplies to our aid.* ☐ *An ambulance was brought to the injured man's aid.*

bring something **to** someone's **attention** to make someone aware of something; to mention or show something to someone. ☐ *I would like to bring this problem to your attention.* ☐ *If there is something I should know about, please bring it to my attention.*

bring something **to the fore** to move something forward; to make something more prominent or noticeable. ☐ *All the talk about costs brought the question of budgets to the fore.* ☐ *The question of budget planning was brought to the fore.*

bring something **together**† to assemble things; to gather things together. ☐ *Thank you for bringing everything together so we can begin work.* ☐ *We brought together all the tools that we needed.*

bring something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to vomit something up; to cough something up. ☐ *See if you can get him to bring the penny up.* ☐ *I did, and he brought up a nickel instead!* **2.** *Fig.* to mention something. ☐ *Why did you have to bring that problem up?* ☐ *Then they brought up the question of money.*

bring something **up to speed** Go to **up to speed.**

bring something **up to the minute** Go to **up to the minute.**

bring something **(up)on** oneself to be the cause of one's own trouble. (*Upon* is more formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *It's your own fault. You brought it upon yourself.* ☐ *You brought it all on yourself.*

bring something **with** (*Inf.* or regional.) to carry something along with [oneself]. ☐ *Are you going to bring your umbrella with?* ☐ *I brought it with. Don't worry.*

bring something **within a range** to adjust something into a particular range; to adjust a parameter. ☐ *Let's try to bring your cholesterol within the normal range with diet.* ☐ *It was brought within the normal range by an expensive drug.*

bring the house down† **1.** *Lit.* to cause a house to collapse. ☐ *The most severe earthquake in years finally brought the house down.* ☐ *The earthquake brought down all the houses on the hillside.* **2.** *Fig.* [for a performance or a performer] to excite the audience into making a great clamor of approval. ☐ *Karen's act brought the house down.* ☐ *She really brought down the house with her comedy.*

bring up the rear to move along behind everyone else; to be at the end of the line. (Originally referred to marching soldiers. Fixed order.) ☐ *Here comes John, bringing up the rear.* ☐ *Hurry up, Tom! Why are you always bringing up the rear?*

bristle at something *Fig.* to show sudden anger or other negative response to something. (Alludes to a dog or cat raising the hair on its back in anger or as a threat.) ☐ *She bristled at the suggestion.* ☐ *I knew Lily would bristle at the appearance of Max.*

bristle with anger Go to next.

bristle with rage and **bristle with anger; bristle with indignation** *Fig.* to demonstrate one's anger, rage, or displeasure with a strong negative response. (Alludes to a dog or cat raising the hair on its back in anger or as a threat.) ☐ *She was just bristling with anger. I don't know what set her off.* ☐ *Walter bristled with rage as he saw the damage to his new car.*

broach something **with** someone and **broach** something **to** someone to mention something to someone; to bring up an idea to someone. ☐ *I hate to be the one to have to broach this to you, but your trousers are torn.* ☐ *This delicate matter must be broached with Mr. Rogers.*

***broad as a barn door** very broad or wide. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Jim's backside is as broad as a barn door.* ☐ *The weight lifter's chest is broad as a barn door.*

broad in the beam 1. *Lit.* [of a ship] wide at amidships. ☐ *This old tub is broad in the beam and sits like a ball in the water, but I love her.* **2.** *Fig. Inf.* with wide hips or large buttocks. ☐ *I am getting a little broad in the beam. It's time to go on a diet.* ☐ *John is just naturally broad in the beam.*

broaden out to become wider; to expand. ☐ *The river broadened out and became deeper.* ☐ *The road broadens out here.*

broaden something **out**† to make something wider; to expand something. ☐ *Now, broaden this part out a little, so it looks like a cloud, not a painted pillow.* ☐ *Broaden out the river in your painting so it looks very wide.* ☐ *The photographic view of the valley can be broadened out by using a different lens.*

broken dreams wishes or desires that cannot be fulfilled. ☐ *We all have our share of broken dreams, but they were never all meant to come true anyway.*

a **broken reed** an unreliable or undependable person. (On the image of a useless, broken reed in a reed instrument.) ☐ *You can't rely on Jim's support. He's a broken reed.* ☐ *Mr. Smith is a broken reed. His deputy has to make all the decisions.*

brood about someone or something and **brood on** someone or something; **brood over** someone or something to fret or be depressed about someone or something. ☐ *Please don't brood about Albert. He is no good for you.* ☐ *There's no need to brood on Jeff. He can take care of himself.*

browbeat someone **into** something *Fig.* to bully or intimidate someone into something. ☐ *It won't do any good to*

try to browbeat me into it. ☐ *I was browbeaten into doing it once. I refuse to do it again.*

B

***brown as a berry** very brown from the sun; quite suntanned. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *She was out in the sun so much that she became as brown as a berry.*

brown out [for the electricity] to diminish in power and dim the lights, causing a brownout. (Something less than a *blackout*, when there is no power.) ☐ *The power kept browning out.* ☐ *The lights started to brown out, and I thought maybe there was a power shortage.*

brown someone **off**† *Sl.* to make someone angry. (See also **browned (off)**.) ☐ *You really brown me off!*

browned (off) *Sl.* angry. ☐ *I am really browned off at you!* ☐ *The boss really got browned—to say the least; he fired me!*

browse among something **1.** [for an animal] to wander about among plants and trees, selecting and eating some. ☐ *The deer were browsing among the vegetables in my garden.* ☐ *The cows were browsing among the grasses in the field.* **2.** [for someone] to look at or survey different items of reading material. ☐ *I browsed among the books on the rack until I found what I wanted.* ☐ *I browsed among the books for something suitable.*

browse on something [for an animal] to feed on some kind of plant material. ☐ *The deer browsed on the tender shoots in my garden.* ☐ *The rabbit browsed on my carrots.*

browse over something and **browse through** something [for someone] to glance through written or printed material quickly or curiously. ☐ *Why don't you browse over this and call me about it in the morning?* ☐ *I want to browse through this magazine quickly.* ☐ *When it has been browsed through by everyone, throw it away.*

browse through something Go to previous.

bruit something **about** to spread a rumor around; to gossip something around. ☐ *You really shouldn't bruit that incident about, you know.* ☐ *The story was bruited about all over the office.*

brush by someone or something and **brush past** someone or something to push quickly past someone or something. ☐ *She brushed by the little group of people standing there talking.* ☐ *I brushed by the plant, knocking it over.*

brush over someone or something *Fig.* to deal lightly with an important person or matter; to just barely mention someone or something. ☐ *I want to hear more. You only brushed over the part I was interested in.* ☐ *You only brushed over the bit about your girlfriend. Tell us more about her.*

brush past someone or something Go to **brush by** someone or something.

brush someone **off**† **1.** *Lit.* to remove something, such as dust or lint, from someone by brushing. ☐ *The bathroom attendant brushed Mr. Harris off and was rewarded with a small tip.* ☐ *The porter had never brushed off such a miserly man before.* **2.** *Fig.* to reject someone; to dismiss someone. (As if someone were mere lint.) ☐ *He brushed her off, telling her she had no appointment.* ☐ *He brushed off Mrs. Franklin, who was only trying to be nice to him.*

brush someone or something **aside**† **1.** *Lit.* to push or shove someone or something out of the way. ☐ *Don't just brush me aside. I almost fell over.* ☐ *I brushed aside the branch, not realizing it was poison ivy.* **2.** *Fig.* to cast someone or something away; to rid oneself of someone or something; to ignore or dismiss someone or something. ☐ *You must not brush this matter aside.* ☐ *The clerk brushed aside the old man and moved on to the next person in line.*

brush something **away**† **(from** something**)** to remove something from something by brushing; to get dirt or crumbs off something by brushing. ☐ *He brushed a bit of lint away from Tom's collar.* ☐ *She brushed away the crumbs from the table.*

brush something **down**† to clean and groom fur or fabric by brushing. ☐ *Why don't you brush your coat down? It's very linty.* ☐ *I brushed down my trousers, and they looked much better.*

brush something **off** someone or something and **brush** something **off**† to remove something from someone or something by brushing. ☐ *I brushed a little lint off her collar.* ☐ *I brushed off the lint that was on her collar.*

brush something **up**† to improve one's knowledge of something or one's ability to do something. (See also **brush up (on** something**)**.) ☐ *I need to brush my French up a little bit.* ☐ *I need to brush up my French.*

brush (up) against someone or something to touch someone or something lightly in passing. ☐ *I brushed up against the freshly painted wall as I passed.* ☐ *I guess I brushed against Walter as I walked by.*

brush up (on something**)** to improve one's knowledge of something or one's ability to do something. ☐ *I need to brush up on my German.* ☐ *My German is weak. I had better brush up.*

a **brush with death** *Fig.* an instance of nearly dying. ☐ *After a brush with death, Claire seemed more friendly and outgoing.*

*the **brush-off** *Fig.* rejection; being cast aside and ignored. (*Typically: **get ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Don't talk to Tom. He'll just give you the brush-off.* ☐ *I went up to her and asked for a date, but I got the brush-off.*

bubble over 1. *Lit.* [for boiling or effervescent liquid] to spill or splatter over the edge of its container. ☐ *The pot bubbled over and put out the flame on the stove.* ☐ *The stew bubbled over.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to be so happy and merry that the joy "spills over" onto other people. ☐ *She was just bubbling over, she was so happy.* ☐ *Lily bubbled over with joy.*

bubble up (through something**)** [for a liquid] to seep up or well up through something, such as from between rocks, through a crack in the floor, or through a hole in the bottom of a boat. ☐ *The water bubbled up through a crack in the basement floor.*

buck for something *Sl.* to work ambitiously for something, such as a promotion. ☐ *I'm just bucking for recognition and, of course, a 20 percent raise.* ☐ *You can tell by her attention to the boss that she's bucking for promotion.*

buck someone **off**† [for a horse or similar animal] to rear up in an attempt to shake off its rider. ☐ *The horse tried to buck Sharon off, but she held on tight.* ☐ *The horse bucked off its rider.*

The **buck stops here.** The need to act or take responsibility, that other people pass on to still other people, ulti-

mately ends up here. (An expression made famous by U.S. President Harry Truman, about the finality of decisions a president must make. See also **pass the buck**.) ☐ *After everyone else has avoided making the decision, I will have to do it. The buck stops here.*

buck up to cheer up; to perk up. ☐ *Come on, now, buck up. Things can't be all that bad.* ☐ *She began to buck up when I showed her the results of the tests.*

buckle down (to something**)** to settle down to something; to begin to work seriously at something. ☐ *If you don't buckle down to your job, you'll be fired.* ☐ *You had better buckle down and get busy.*

buckle someone **in**† to attach someone securely with a vehicle's seat belts. (This includes airplane seat belts.) ☐ *Don't forget to buckle the children in.* ☐ *Did you buckle in the children?*

buckle someone or something **down**† to attach someone or something down with straps that buckle together. ☐ *They stopped to buckle the load down again.* ☐ *Did you buckle down the kids?*

buckle someone or something **up**† to attach someone or something securely with straps that buckle together. (This emphasizes the completeness and secureness of the act.) ☐ *Buckle the children up before we leave.* ☐ *Buckle up your shoes.*

buckle under 1. *Lit.* [for something] to collapse. ☐ *With heavy trucks on it, the bridge buckled under.* ☐ *The table buckled under.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to collapse or give in under the burden of heavy demands or great anxiety. ☐ *With so much to worry about, she buckled under.* ☐ *I was afraid she would buckle under.*

buckle under something to collapse under or from the weight of something. ☐ *The bridge buckled under the weight of the truck and collapsed.* ☐ *The table finally buckled under.*

buckle up and **belt up** to buckle one's seat belt, as in a car or plane. ☐ *Please buckle up so our flight can begin.* ☐ *I wish you would obey the law and belt up.*

bud out [for a flowering plant or tree] to develop buds. ☐ *How early in the spring do the trees bud out around here?* ☐ *The trees bud out in early spring.*

a **budding genius** a very bright and promising young person. ☐ *Harry is a budding genius, but he seems like a fairly normal teenager.*

buddy up (to someone**)** to become overly familiar or friendly with someone. ☐ *Don't try to buddy up to me now. It won't do any good.* ☐ *He always tries to buddy up, no matter how coldly you treat him.*

buddy up (with someone**)** to join with another person to form a pair that will do something together or share something. ☐ *I buddied up with Carl, and we helped each other on the hike.* ☐ *Carl and I buddied up, and we shared a canoe.*

budget something **for** someone or something to set aside a certain amount of money for someone or something. ☐ *Did you budget some money for the holiday party?* ☐ *I budgeted a few hundred a month for Andrew's college expenses.*

buff something **down**† to polish or smooth something by buffing. ☐ *I buffed the newly waxed table down with a cloth.* ☐ *I'm going to go out and buff down the car.*

buff something **up**† to polish something to a shine. ☐ *He buffed his shoes up and went out for the evening.* ☐ *He buffed up the antique silver platter.*

buffet someone or something **from** someone or something **to** someone or something *Fig.* to shift someone or something back and forth between people, things, or places, as if being tossed around by the waves of the sea. ☐ *The state agency buffeted the orphan child from one relative to another.* ☐ *The office staff buffeted the memo from one desk to another.*

bug off 1. *Sl.* to cease bothering [someone]. ☐ *Hey, bug off! Your comments are annoying.* ☐ *I wish you would bug off!* **2.** *Sl.* Get out!; Go away! (Usually **Bug off!**) ☐ *Bug off! Get out of my sight!* ☐ *Bug off and leave me alone!*

bug out 1. *Sl.* to pack up and leave or retreat. ☐ *Orders are to bug out by oh-nine-hundred.* ☐ *Okay, everybody, move it! We're bugging out.* **2.** *Sl.* to get out of somewhere fast. ☐ *I gotta find a way to bug out of here without getting caught.* ☐ *Okay, the downpour has stopped. Let's bug out.*

bug someone to irritate someone; to bother someone. ☐ *Go away! Stop bugging me!* ☐ *Leave me alone. Go bug someone else.*

buggy whip Go to **horse and buggy**.

build a better mousetrap to develop or invent something superior to a device that is widely used. (From the old saying, "If you build a better mousetrap, the world will beat a path to your door.") ☐ *Harry thought he could build a better mousetrap, but everything he "invented" had already been thought of.*

build a case (against someone**)** and **gather a case (against** someone**)** to put together the evidence needed to make a legal or disciplinary case against someone. ☐ *The police easily built a case against the drunken driver.* ☐ *As soon as we gather the case against her, we can obtain a warrant to arrest her.*

build a fire under someone Go to a **fire under** someone.

build castles in Spain Go to next.

build castles in the air and **build castles in Spain** *Fig.* to daydream; to make plans that can never come true. ☐ *Ann spends most of her time building castles in Spain.* ☐ *I really like to sit on the porch in the evening, just building castles in the air.*

build down [for traffic] to reduce in volume or diminish. ☐ *At about six, the going-home traffic begins to build down.* ☐ *When traffic builds down, I leave for home.*

build one's **hopes on** someone or something to make plans or have aspirations based on someone or something. ☐ *I have built my hopes on making a success of this business.* ☐ *I built my hopes on John's presidency.*

build on(to) something and **build on** to add to something by constructing an extension. ☐ *Do you plan to build onto this house?* ☐ *Yes, we are going to build on.*

build out onto something to extend a building onto a particular space. ☐ *We can build out onto the adjacent lot after we purchase it.* ☐ *We built out onto the area over the old patio.*

B

build someone **in**† Go to next.

build someone **into** something and **build** someone **in**† to make a person an integral part of an organization or a plan. ☐ *The mayor built his cronies into the organizational structure of the town.* ☐ *He built in his relatives as part of the administration.*

build someone or something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to make someone or something bigger or stronger. ☐ *Tom is lifting weights to build himself up for basketball.* ☐ *Tom needs to build up his upper body.* **2.** *Fig.* to advertise, praise, or promote someone or something. ☐ *Theatrical agents work very hard to build up their clients.* ☐ *Advertising can build a product up so much that everyone will want it.*

build someone or something **up**† **(from** something**)** to transform someone or something from a lowly start to a higher state. ☐ *I built up this business from nothing.* ☐ *The publicity agent built this politician up from a cheap party hack.*

build someone or something **up**† **(into** someone or something**)** to develop or advance someone or something into a particular [desirable] kind of person or thing. ☐ *The publicity people built her up into a singer whom everyone looked forward to hearing.* ☐ *The agent built up the local band into a top national act.*

build someone **up**† **(for** something**)** *Fig.* to prepare someone for something; to bring a person into a state of mind to accept some information. ☐ *We built them up for the challenge they were to face.* ☐ *We had to build up the woman before breaking the bad news.*

build something **in**† Go to next.

build something **into** something and **build** something **in**† **1.** to integrate a piece of furniture or an appliance into a building's construction. ☐ *We will build this cupboard into the wall about here.* ☐ *We are going to build in a chest of drawers.* ☐ *Then we will build another one in.* **2.** to make a particular quality a basic part of something. ☐ *We build quality into our cars before we put our name on them.* ☐ *We build in quality.* **3.** to make a special restriction or specification a part of the plan of something. ☐ *I built the restriction into our agreement.* ☐ *The lawyer built in the requirement that payments be by certified check.*

build something **on**† Go to next.

build something **on(to)** something and **build** something **on**† to construct an extension onto a building. ☐ *We are going to build a garage onto this side of the house.* ☐ *We will build on a new garage.* ☐ *The people next door are not going to build anything on.*

build something **out of** something to construct something from parts or materials. ☐ *She built a tower out of the blocks.* ☐ *They will build the bridge out of reinforced concrete.*

build (something**) out**† **over** something and **build (**something**) over** something to construct something so that it extends over something else, such as water or some architectural feature. ☐ *We built a deck out over the pond.* ☐ *We built the deck over the pond.*

build (something**) over** something Go to previous.

build something **to order** to build an individual object according to a special set of specifications. ☐ *I am having them build a new house to order—just for us.* ☐ *The car will be built to order.*

build something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to add buildings to an area of land or a neighborhood. ☐ *They are really building this area up. There is no more open space.* ☐ *They built up the area over the years.* **2.** *Fig.* to develop, accumulate, or increase something, such as wealth, business, goodwill, etc. ☐ *I built this business up through hard work and hope.* ☐ *She built up a good business over the years.* **3.** *Fig.* to praise or exalt something; to exaggerate the virtues of something. ☐ *The master of ceremonies built the act up so much that everyone was disappointed when they saw it.* ☐ *He built up the act too much.*

build something **(up)on** something **1.** *Lit.* to construct something on the base of something else. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *The ancients built their houses upon the houses of earlier people.* **2.** *Fig.* to add to and develop something that already exists. ☐ *We have a good reputation and we must build on it.* ☐ *He has to build on his strong friendships with the customers.*

build up to increase; to develop. ☐ *The storm clouds are building up. Better close the windows.*

build up to something **1.** [for a person] to lead up to something or advance to doing or saying something. ☐ *I can tell you are building up to something. What is it?* **2.** [for a situation] to develop into something. ☐ *The argument is building up to something unpleasant.*

build (up)on something **1.** to construct something on a particular space. (*Upon* is more formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Are you going to build upon this land?* ☐ *Yes, we will build on it.* **2.** to start with something and add to it. (*Upon* is more formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Our progress has been good so far. Let's build on it.* ☐ *We will build upon the success of our forebears.*

built like a brick outhouse and **built like a brick shithouse** *Fig.* well-built—either strong or full-sized. (Built more strongly than is typical. The second form is potentially offensive. Use only with discretion.) ☐ *Look at that guy's muscles—he's built like a brick shithouse.* ☐ *This garage is built like a brick outhouse. It'll last for years.*

bulge out to swell outward; to extend out into a lump or mound. ☐ *The puppy's tummy bulged out, full of food.* ☐ *The bag of grass clippings bulged out heavily.*

bulge with something to be swollen with something. ☐ *The bag was bulging with gifts and candy.* ☐ *The chipmunk's cheeks bulged with the nuts it had found.*

***a bull in a china shop** *Prov.* a very clumsy creature in a delicate situation. (*Typically: **as awkward as ~; like ~**.) ☐ *I never know what to say at a funeral. I feel like a bull in a china shop, trampling on feelings without even meaning to.* ☐ *Lester felt like a bull in a china shop; reaching for an orange, he made several elaborate pyramids of fruit tumble down.*

bulldoze into something *Fig.* to move clumsily into something. ☐ *Don't just bulldoze into me! Watch where you are going!* ☐ *Todd bulldozed into the wall, denting it badly.*

bulldoze through something *Fig.* to push clumsily and carelessly through something. ☐ *Don't just bulldoze through your work!* ☐ *I wish you wouldn't bulldoze through the room.*

Bully for you! 1. an expression that praises someone or someone's courage. (Dated, but still heard.) ☐ *The audi-*

ence shouted, "Bravo! Bully for you!" ☐ *Bob: I quit my job today. Sally: Bully for you! Now what are you going to do? Bob: Well, I need a little loan to tide me over.* **2.** a sarcastic phrase belittling someone's statement or accomplishment. ☐ *Bob: I managed to save three dollars last week. Bill: Well, bully for you!* ☐ *Mary: I won a certificate good for a free meal! Sally: Bully for you!*

A **bully is always a coward.** *Prov.* Bullies will only intimidate people who are much weaker than they are, because they are afraid of losing a fight. ☐ *Child: Dad, Joey keeps picking on me. How can I make him stop? Father: Try fighting back. A bully is always a coward.* ☐ *Bill took advantage of the younger children, but he was quiet and docile around the older ones. A bully is always a coward.*

bully someone **into** something to harass or threaten someone into doing something. ☐ *The coach tried to bully them into agreeing to stay late and practice.* ☐ *Don't try to bully me into your way of doing things.*

bum around (with someone**)** to spend or waste a lot of time with a particular person. ☐ *He used to bum around with Ted a lot.* ☐ *They bummed around together all summer.*

bum out *Sl.* to have a bad experience. (Originally referred to a bad experience with drugs.) ☐ *Are you going to bum out again tonight?* ☐ *Man, is he bummed out!*

*****the **bum's rush** hurrying someone out of a place. (As someone might quickly escort a vagrant from a fancy restaurant. *Typically: **get ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *The young customer in the jewelry store was getting the bum's rush until he pulled out an enormous roll of bills.* ☐ *Bill got the bum's rush at the restaurant because he didn't have a tie on.*

bum someone **out**† *Sl.* to disappoint someone. ☐ *This menial job really bums me out.* ☐ *The bad movie bummed out the entire audience.*

bum something **off** someone *Sl.* to beg or borrow something from someone. ☐ *Can I bum a cigarette off you?* ☐ *You can't bum anything off me that I don't have.*

*****a **bum steer** misleading instructions or guidance; a misleading suggestion. (*Bum* = false; phony. *Steer* = guidance, as in the steering of a car. *Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Wilbur gave Ted a bum steer and Ted ended up in the wrong town.* ☐ *I got a bum steer from the salesman, and I paid far more than I needed to for a used car.*

bumble through something to get through something clumsily. ☐ *I guess I will have to bumble through this speech again.* ☐ *Lily bumbled through her song and fled from the stage.*

bummed (out) *Sl.* discouraged; depressed. ☐ *I feel so bummed. I think I need a nice hot bath.* ☐ *When you're feeling bummed out, think how much you've accomplished.*

bump along 1. and **bump along** something *Lit.* to travel along a rough road. ☐ *We bumped along on the dirt road to the lake.* ☐ *We bumped along the road, hanging onto our hats.* **2.** *Fig.* [for some plan or situation] to move along awkwardly and unevenly. ☐ *The whole project bumped along to an uncertain conclusion.* ☐ *The plan bumped along for a while and then we all gave it up.*

bump into someone and **run into** someone **1.** *Lit.* to move inadvertently or crash into someone. ☐ *Excuse me. I didn't mean to bump into you.* ☐ *The child on the bicycle nearly bumped into me.* **2.** *Fig.* to chance on someone; to meet someone by chance. (Not normally with physical contact.) ☐ *Guess who I bumped into downtown today?* ☐ *I ran into Bill Jones yesterday.*

bump someone **off**† and **knock** someone **off**† *Sl.* to kill someone. ☐ *They tried to bump her off, but she was too clever and got away.* ☐ *The crooks threatened to bump off the witness to the crime.*

bump someone or something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to damage or batter someone or something. ☐ *The crash into the wall bumped the race driver up a little.* ☐ *The accident bumped up the passengers a little.* **2.** *Fig.* to raise someone or something to a higher category or level. (As if pushing someone into a higher category.) ☐ *I wanted to fly first class, but they wouldn't bump me up.* ☐ *The ticket agent bumped up both of my friends, but not me.*

Bump that! *Sl.* Forget that! ☐ *Bump that! I was wrong.* ☐ *I gave you the wrong number. Bump that!*

bump (up) against someone or something to strike someone or something accidentally, usually relatively gently. ☐ *The car bumped up against the curb.* ☐ *The door has bumped against the wall and scratched the paint.*

bumper to bumper [of traffic] close together and moving slowly. ☐ *The traffic is bumper to bumper from the accident up ahead.*

a **bunch of fives** *Sl.* a punch from a closed fist. ☐ *How would you like a bunch of fives right in the kisser?* ☐ *He ended up with a bunch of fives in the gut.*

bunch someone or something **up**† to pack or cluster things or people together. ☐ *Bunch them up so you can squeeze them into the sack.* ☐ *Kelly bunched up the roses and put them in a vase.*

bunch up to pack together or cluster. ☐ *Spread out. Don't bunch up!*

bundle from heaven Go to next.

bundle of joy and **bundle from heaven** *Fig.* a baby. ☐ *We are expecting a bundle of joy next September.* ☐ *When your little bundle from heaven arrives, things will be a little hectic for a while.*

a **bundle of nerves** a very nervous person. ☐ *I was a bundle of nerves before my dental appointment.*

bundle off to leave in a hurry; to take all one's parcels or baggage and leave in a hurry. ☐ *She got ready and bundled off after her bus.* ☐ *Her arms full, Lily bundled off in a rush.*

bundle (oneself**) up (against** something**)** to wrap oneself up in protective clothing or bedding as protection against the cold. ☐ *Please bundle yourself up against the frigid wind.* ☐ *Bundle up before you go outside.*

bundle someone **into** something **1.** to put someone, usually a child, into heavy outdoor clothing. ☐ *Bill bundled Billy into his parka.* ☐ *Tom bundled himself into his parka and opened the door to go out.* **2.** and **bundle** someone **in** to put someone, usually a child, into bed. ☐ *She bundled Sarah into bed after reading her a story.* ☐ *June pulled the sheets back and bundled Sarah in.*

B

bundle someone **off† (to** some place**)** *Fig.* to send someone, usually a child, somewhere. □ *Robert bundled the children off to school.* □ *They bundled off the kids and were able to relax.*

bundle someone **up† (against** something**)** to wrap someone up in protective clothing or bedding against the cold. □ *Wally bundled Billy up against the winter storm.* □ *You had better bundle up the children against the bitter wind.*

bundle someone **up† (in** something**)** to wrap someone up in protective clothing or bedding. □ *Bill bundled Billy up in his parka.* □ *Bill bundled up Mary in her parka.*

bundle something **off† (to** someone or some place**)** to send something off in a bundle to someone. □ *He bundled his laundry off to his mother, who would wash it for him.* □ *Mary bundled off the package to her brother.*

bung something **in†** to cram or bang something into something. □ *He bunged the cork into the barrel.* □ *With a heavy blow, he bunged in the cork.*

bung something **up†** to damage someone or something by blows. □ *Don't let the watermelon roll around in the trunk of your car. You don't want to bung it up.* □ *Last time I put up the storm windows, I really bunged up my hands.*

bunged up battered or bruised. □ *It used to be a nice table, but it got all bunged up.* □ *What happened to Jane? Her face was bunged up.*

bungle something **up†** to botch something; to mess something up. □ *Please don't bungle this job up.* □ *Tom was careless and he bungled up the job.*

bunk down (for the night) to bed down for the night; to go to bed. □ *Where are you going to bunk down for the night?* □ *I'm tired and ready to bunk down.*

bunk (up) together [for two or more people] to share a bed, a bedroom, or a tent. □ *Shall we bunk together?* □ *My tent is big and you can bunk up with me.*

bunk (up) with someone to share a bed, a bedroom, or a tent with someone. □ *Are you going to bunk up with Fred?* □ *I'll bunk with Todd.*

buoy someone or something **up†** to keep someone or something afloat. □ *Use this cushion to buoy yourself up.* □ *The log buoyed up the swimmer until help came.* □ *The air trapped in the hull buoyed the boat up.*

buoy someone **up†** *Fig.* to support, encourage, or sustain someone. □ *The good news buoyed her up considerably.* □ *Her good humor buoyed up the entire party.*

burden someone or something **with** someone or something to bother or weigh down someone or something with someone or something. □ *Please don't burden us with the bad news at this time.* □ *I don't want to burden the school with a troublesome child.*

burden someone **with** something to give unpleasant information to someone; to give someone some bad news. □ *I hate to burden you with this, but your cat ran away.* □ *I wish I had not been burdened with all the facts.*

burgeon out to develop and grow rapidly; to burst forth. □ *The flowers burgeoned out and made the garden beautiful again.* □ *When the trees have burgeoned out, spring is really here.*

burn something **to a crisp** to burn something totally or very badly. □ *The cook burned the meat to a crisp.*

burn away 1. [for something] to burn until there is no more of it. □ *All the oil burned away.* □ *The logs burned away and the fireplace was cooling down.* **2.** for something to keep on burning. □ *The little fire burned away brightly, warming the tiny room.* □ *The candle burned away, giving a tiny bit of light to the huge room.*

burn down 1. [for a building] to be destroyed by fire. □ *The barn burned down.* □ *There was a fire, and the old factory was burned down.* **2.** [for a fire] to burn and dwindle away. □ *The flame burned down and then went out.* □ *As the fire burned down, it began to get cold.*

burn for someone or something to desire someone or something very much. □ *Jim said he was burning for Sally.* □ *I was just burning for another look at her.*

burn (itself) out 1. [for a flame or fire] to run out of fuel and go out. □ *Finally, the fires burned themselves out.* □ *The fire finally burned out.* **2.** [for an electrical or mechanical part] to fail and cease working. □ *The motor finally burned itself out.* □ *The light bulb burned out.*

Burn not your house to fright the mouse away. *Prov.* Do not do something drastic when it is not necessary. □ *Ellen: I don't like the shape of my nose; I think I'll have surgery to make it look better. Jane: But you can make your nose look better just by using different makeup. Don't burn your house to fright the mouse away.* □ *When someone pointed out a small flaw in Bob's latest painting, Bob wanted to tear the whole painting to shreds. "Now, now, Bob," his friends said, "burn not your house to fright the mouse away."*

burn off [for some excess volatile or flammable substance] to burn away or burn up. □ *A film of oil on the surface of the water was burning off, making dense black smoke.* □ *The alcohol burned off and left a delicious flavor in the cherries jubilee.*

burn one's **bridges (behind** one**) 1.** *Lit.* to cut off the way back to where you came from, making it impossible to retreat. □ *The army, which had burned its bridges behind it, couldn't go back.* □ *By blowing up the road, the spies had burned their bridges behind them.* **2.** *Fig.* to act unpleasantly in a situation that you are leaving, ensuring that you'll never be welcome to return. □ *If you get mad and quit your job, you'll be burning your bridges behind you.* □ *No sense burning your bridges. Be polite and leave quietly.* **3.** *Fig.* to make decisions that cannot be changed in the future. □ *If you drop out of school now, you'll be burning your bridges behind you.* □ *You're too young to burn your bridges that way.*

burn one's **bridges in front of** one *Fig.* to create future problems for oneself. (A play on **burn** one's **bridges (behind** one**)**.) □ *I made a mistake again. I always seem to burn my bridges in front of me.* □ *I accidentally insulted a math teacher whom I will have to take a course from next semester. I am burning my bridges in front of me.*

burn (oneself**) out** *Fig.* to do something so long and so intensely that one gets sick and tired of doing it. (See also **burn** someone **out**.) □ *I burned myself out as a competitive swimmer. I just cannot stand to practice anymore.* □ *Tom burned himself out in that boring job.*

burn someone **at the stake 1.** *Lit.* to set fire to a person tied to a post (as a form of execution). □ *They used to burn witches at the stake.* **2.** *Fig.* to chastise or denounce some-

one severely or excessively. □ *Stop yelling. I made a simple mistake, and you're burning me at the stake for it.* □ *Sally only spilled her milk. There is no need to shout. Don't burn her at the stake for it.*

burn someone **down**† *Sl.* to humiliate someone. □ *Man, don't you ever burn me down like that again!* □ *You just want to burn down everybody to make yourself seem better.*

burn someone **in effigy** to burn a dummy or other figure that represents a hated person. □ *For the third day in a row, they burned the king in effigy.* □ *Until they have burned you in effigy, you can't really be considered a famous leader.*

burn someone **out**† *Fig.* to wear someone out; to make someone ineffective through overuse. (See also **use** someone **up**.) □ *Facing all these problems at once will burn Tom out.* □ *The continuous problems burned out the office staff in a few months.*

burn someone **out of** something and **burn** someone **out**† to burn down a home(stead) or place of business. □ *Lightning struck and burned the farmer out of his home.*

burn someone **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to destroy someone by fire. □ *The house fire burned the victims up.* □ *The fire burned up both of them.* **2.** *Fig.* to make someone very angry; to make someone endure the "heat" of rage. □ *You really burn me up! I'm very angry at you!* □ *The whole mess burned up everyone.*

burn something **away**† to remove or destroy something by burning. □ *The doctor burned the wart away.* □ *The doctor burned away the wart.*

burn something **down**† [for a fire] to destroy a building completely. □ *The fire burned the barn down.* □ *It burned down the barn.*

burn something **in**† *Fig.* to run a piece of new electronic equipment for a while to make certain that all the electrical parts will last a long time. □ *Please burn this computer in for a couple of hours before you deliver it.* □ *The technician burned in the computer.*

burn something **into** something and **burn** something **in**† **1.** *Lit.* to engrave, brand, or etch marks or letters into something by the use of great heat. □ *She burned her initials into the handle of the umbrella.* □ *She burned in her initials.* **2.** *Fig.* to implant something firmly in someone's head, brain, memory, etc. □ *She burned the information into her head.* □ *The events of the day burned in sad memories.*

burn something **off**† Go to next.

burn something **off** something and **burn** something **off**† to cause excess volatile or flammable substance to burn until there is no more of it. □ *We burnt the gasoline off the water's surface.* □ *Why did you burn off the gasoline?*

burn something **out**† **1.** to burn away the inside of something, getting rid of excess deposits. □ *The mechanic burned the carbon out of the manifold.* □ *He burned out all of the carbon deposits.* **2.** to wear out an electrical or electronic device through overuse. □ *Turn it off. You're going to burn the motor out!* □ *He burned out the motor.*

burn something **up**† to destroy something by fire; [for fire] to consume something. □ *Take this cardboard and burn it up.* □ *The fire burned up the papers and left no trace.*

burn the candle at both ends *Fig.* to work very hard and stay up very late at night. (One end of the candle is work done in the daylight, and the other end is work done at night.) □ *No wonder Mary is ill. She has been burning the candle at both ends for a long time.* □ *You'll wear out if you keep burning the candle at both ends.*

burn the midnight oil *Fig.* to stay up working, especially studying, late at night. (Alludes to working by the light of an oil lamp late in the night.) □ *I have a big exam tomorrow so I'll be burning the midnight oil tonight.* □ *If you burn the midnight oil night after night, you'll probably become ill.*

burn up to become destroyed or consumed by fire. □ *The wood burned up and left only ashes.* □ *The deed burned up in the fire.*

burn with a low blue flame 1. *Lit.* [of a properly adjusted gas burner] to burn and put off heat. □ *Each burner on the stove burns with a low blue flame giving the maximum amount of heat per BTU.* **2.** *Fig.* to be quietly and intensely angry. □ *She just sat there with her steak in her lap, burning with a low blue flame.* □ *She was quiet, but everyone knew she would soon burn with a low blue flame.* **3.** *Fig.* to be heavily intoxicated with alcohol. (Alludes to the irritability of a person who is very drunk.) □ *Yeah, he's burning with a low blue flame.* □ *He's not just drunk, he's burning with a low blue flame.*

burn with something **1.** [for a fire] to burn with a particular quality. □ *The building burned with great ferocity.* □ *The fire burned with a lot of crackling and popping.* **2.** [for someone] to experience intense and consuming feelings of a particular quality. □ *Fred is just burning with anger.* □ *Why is he burning with envy?*

burned to a cinder burned very badly. [Very often used figuratively.] □ *I stayed out in the sun too long, and I am burned to a cinder.* □ *This toast is burnt to a cinder.*

burned up *Fig.* very angry. (From the heat of anger. See also **burn** someone **up**.) □ *My new assistant's mistakes are so maddening! I've never been so burned up in my life.* □ *I'm really burned up at Bob's behavior.*

a **burning question** and the **burning question** *Fig.* a question whose answer is of great interest to everyone; a question that needs very much to be answered, as a fire needs to be extinguished. □ *There's a burning question that needs to be answered: Why did you leave your wife of only one month?*

A **burnt child dreads the fire.** *Prov.* If something has hurt you once, you avoid it after that. (See also **once bitten, twice shy**.) □ *Jill: Let's go ride the roller coaster! Jane: No, thanks. I got sick on one of those once, and a burnt child dreads the fire.* □ *Ever since Cynthia rebuffed me so rudely, I've avoided asking her for anything; a burnt child dreads the fire.*

burst See also entries at **bust**.

burst at the seams 1. *Fig.* to be very full and burst, perhaps at the seams. (Alludes to something that would burst at the seams if overfilled.) □ *I am so full from dinner! I'm ready to burst at the seams.* □ *The room was so full it was bursting at the seams.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to strain from holding in pride or laughter as if one might burst. □ *Tom*

nearly burst at the seams with pride. ☐ *We laughed so hard we just about burst at the seams.*

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burst forth to come forth explosively. ☐ *The words burst forth and frightened everyone.* ☐ *The blossoms burst forth in the first warm days of the year.*

burst in (on someone or something**)** to enter a room, interrupting someone or some activity. (Often without knocking or seeking permission to enter.) ☐ *Tom burst in on his sister and her boyfriend while they were kissing.* ☐ *I must ask you not to burst into my office again. Whatever it is can wait.*

burst in ((up)on someone or something**)** *Fig.* to intrude or come in thoughtlessly and suddenly and interrupt someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *I didn't mean to burst in on you.* ☐ *She feared that someone would burst in upon her.*

burst in (with something**)** to interrupt with some comment. ☐ *Ted burst in with the good news.* ☐ *He burst in to tell us about his new car.*

burst into flame(s) [for something] to catch fire and become a large fire quickly. ☐ *As soon as the flame reached the curtains, the entire wall seemed to burst into flames.* ☐ *The two cars burst into flames soon after the collision.*

burst into sight *Fig.* to come into view suddenly. (As if the sight appeared as suddenly as an explosion.) ☐ *The sun finally burst into sight at the horizon.* ☐ *Suddenly, a tiger burst into sight and caught the hunter off guard.*

burst in(to some place**)** *Fig.* to intrude or come in thoughtlessly and suddenly. ☐ *Ted burst into the room and sat down right in the middle of the meeting.* ☐ *Wasn't it very annoying of him to just burst in?*

burst into something Go to **burst out into** something.

burst into tears and **burst out crying** *Fig.* to begin to cry suddenly. ☐ *After the last notes of her song, the audience burst into tears, such was its beauty and tenderness.* ☐ *The children burst into tears on hearing of the death of their dog.*

burst onto the scene *Fig.* to appear suddenly in a location. ☐ *When Charles burst onto the scene, no one was prepared for the news he brought.* ☐ *The police suddenly burst onto the scene and arrested everyone in the room.*

burst out to explode outward; to break open under force. ☐ *The door burst out and released the trapped people.* ☐ *When the glass burst out, Gerald was cut by some splinters.*

burst out crying Go to **burst into tears**.

burst out doing something to begin to do something suddenly, such as cry, laugh, shout, etc. ☐ *Suddenly, she burst out singing.* ☐ *Ted burst out laughing when he read the joke.*

burst out into something and **burst into** something **1.** *Fig.* [for plants or trees] to open their flowers seemingly suddenly and simultaneously. (*Burst* indicates suddenness.) ☐ *The flowers burst out into blossom very early.* ☐ *They burst into blossom during the first warm day.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to begin suddenly doing a particular activity, such as crying, laughing, chattering; to begin an activity such as laughter, chatter, tears, etc. ☐ *Suddenly, she burst out into laughter.* ☐ *The child burst into tears.*

burst out laughing to begin to laugh suddenly. ☐ *The entire audience burst out laughing when the clown took a fall.* ☐ *Every time I think of you sitting there with a lap full of spaghetti, I burst out laughing.*

burst out (of some place**)** to come out of a place very rapidly, like an explosion. ☐ *Everyone burst out of the burning building.* ☐ *Suddenly, the windows all burst out.*

burst out (of something**)** *Fig.* to seem to explode out of something; to become [suddenly] too big for something, such as clothes, a house, etc. ☐ *She is practically bursting out of her dress.* ☐ *The butterfly burst out of the chrysalis.*

burst out with something *Fig.* to utter something loudly and suddenly. (Compare this with **burst in (with** something**)**.) ☐ *The child burst out with a scream.* ☐ *Lily burst out with song.*

burst someone's **bubble** *Fig.* to destroy someone's illusion or delusion; to destroy someone's fantasy. ☐ *I hate to burst your bubble, but Columbus did not discover Canada.* ☐ *Even if you think I am being foolish, please don't burst my bubble.*

burst through something to break through or penetrate something with force. ☐ *The tank burst through the barrier easily.* ☐ *The workers burst through the wall after a lot of hard work.*

burst (up)on someone *Fig.* [for an idea] to strike someone suddenly. (As if an idea had burst forth. *Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *After thinking all morning long, this really tremendous idea burst upon me.* ☐ *It burst on me like a bolt of lightning.*

burst (up)on the scene to appear suddenly somewhere; to enter or arrive suddenly some place. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *The police suddenly burst upon the scene.* ☐ *They burst on the scene and took control.*

burst with excitement *Fig.* to have a strong feeling of excitement. ☐ *Joe was just bursting with excitement because of his triumph.* ☐ *The new toys had the children all bursting with excitement.*

burst with joy *Fig.* [for someone] to be full to the bursting point with happiness. (To be so filled with joy as if to burst.) ☐ *When I got my grades, I could have burst with joy.* ☐ *Bill was not exactly bursting with joy when he got the news.*

burst with pride to be full as if to the bursting point with pride. ☐ *My parents were bursting with pride when I graduated from college.* ☐ *I almost burst with pride when I was chosen for the first prize.*

bury one's **head in the sand** and **hide** one's **head in the sand; have** one's **head in the sand** *Fig.* to ignore or hide from obvious signs of danger. (Alludes to an ostrich, which is believed incorrectly to hide its head in a hole in the ground when it sees danger.) ☐ *Stop burying your head in the sand. Look at the statistics on smoking and cancer.*

bury oneself **in** something **1.** *Fig.* to become very busy with something. ☐ *She stopped taking phone calls and buried herself in her work.* ☐ *He tended to bury himself in his work.* **2.** *Fig.* to hide oneself some place. (Alludes to burying oneself in a cave or something similar.) ☐ *He buried himself in the back of the little shop and worked quietly.* ☐ *The lizard buried itself in the sand.*

bury someone or something **away (**some place**)** to bury or hide someone or something some place. ☐ *The dog buried the bone away under a bush.* ☐ *The ex-dictator was buried away in an unmarked grave.*

bury someone or something **in** something **1.** *Lit.* to inter someone or something in a grave, the ground, a vault, a tomb, etc. ☐ *They buried the old man in the family vault.* ☐ *Thousands of war veterans are buried in the national cemetery.* **2.** *Fig.* to hide or conceal someone or something from view in some place. ☐ *The office manager buried Tom at a small desk in the back room.* ☐ *Someone buried the manual typewriter in a room full of old junk.*

bury someone or something **under** something to bury someone or something beneath something, sometimes to hide or conceal it. ☐ *Joe buried the money under a stone in the forest.* ☐ *They buried Aunt Mary under a pine tree.*

bury the hatchet *Fig.* to make peace. ☐ *Let's stop arguing and bury the hatchet.* ☐ *Tom and I buried the hatchet and we are good friends now.*

bush out [for a plant, bush, beard, head of hair] to develop many small branches or hairs. ☐ *His beard bushed out and really needed trimming.* ☐ *I hope the hedge bushes out nicely this year.*

a **bushel and a peck (and some in a gourd)** *Rur.* a great deal or amount. (Usually used to answer the question, "How much do you love me?") ☐ *Mary: How much do you love me? Tom: A bushel and a peck and some in a gourd.* ☐ *We knew that Grandpa loved us a bushel and a peck.*

The **busiest men have the most leisure.** and The **busiest men find the most time.** *Prov.* Industrious people get their work done efficiently and therefore have time to do what they want. ☐ *Fred: How does Phil do it? He produces more than the rest of us, but he also manages to pursue all his hobbies. Alan: The busiest men have the most leisure.* ☐ *As the town's only doctor, Bert worked extremely hard, yet he always had time to play with his children and go out with his wife. The busiest men find the most time.*

***the business 1.** harassment; a scolding; general bad treatment. (*Typically: **get ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *The guys have been giving me the business about my new hairstyle.* ☐ *Sam was giving Tom the business about being late all the time.* **2.** *Sl.* an execution. (Underworld. *Typically: **get ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *The mob wanted to give him the business for confessing to the federal prosecutor.*

business as usual having things go along as usual. ☐ *Even right after the flood, it was business as usual in all the stores.* ☐ *Please, everyone, business as usual. Let's get back to work.*

Business before pleasure. *Prov.* You should finish your work before starting to relax and enjoy yourself. ☐ *Alan: Hi, Ted. Shall we get something to drink? Ted: Business before pleasure, Alan. Do you have the reports I asked you to bring?* ☐ *I'd love to go water-skiing with you now, but I have a few things to do in the office first. Business before pleasure, I'm afraid.*

the **business end of** something the part or end of something that actually does the work or carries out the procedure. ☐ *Keep away from the business end of the electric drill so you won't get hurt.* ☐ *Don't point the business end of that gun at anyone. It might go off.*

a **busman's holiday** leisure time spent doing something similar to what one does at work. (Alludes to a bus driver going on a bus tour for his vacation or on a day off.) ☐ *Tutoring students in the evening is a busman's holiday for our English teacher.* ☐ *It's a bit of a busman's holiday to ask her to be wardrobe mistress for our amateur production in the summer. She's a professional dressmaker.*

bust a bronco to ride and thus tame a wild horse so that it can be ridden. (*Bust* is a nonstandard form of *burst*.) ☐ *In them days, I made my living busting broncos.* ☐ *That was the meanest bronco I ever seen. Nobody could bust 'im.*

bust a gut Go to **split a gut**.

bust a gut (to do something**)** *Fig.* to work very hard; to strain oneself to accomplish something. (The word *gut* is considered impolite in some circumstances. *Bust* is a nonstandard form of *burst*.) ☐ *I don't intend to bust a gut to get there on time.* ☐ *I busted a gut to get there the last time, and I was the first one there.*

bust a move *Sl.* to leave (a place.) ☐ *Let's go. Time to bust a move.* ☐ *Let's bust a move. Lots to do tomorrow.*

bust ass out of some place *Sl.* to get out of some place in a hurry. (Potentially offensive. Use only with discretion.) ☐ *I had to bust ass out of the house and run all the way to school.* ☐ *Bob busted ass out of the classroom and headed for home.*

bust (one's**) ass (to** do something**)** and **break** one's **balls to** do something; **bust** one's **butt to** do something; **bust** one's **nuts to** do something *Sl.* to work very hard to do something. (The expressions with *balls* and *nuts* are said typically, but not necessarily, of a male. Potentially offensive. Use only with discretion.) ☐ *I've been busting my nuts to get this thing done on time, and now they don't want it!* ☐ *The new boss expects you to bust your nuts every minute you are at work at the warehouse.*

bust one's **butt to** do something Go to previous.

bust out laughing *Fig.* to start laughing suddenly. (See also **burst out laughing**. *Bust* is a nonstandard form of *burst*.) ☐ *I busted out laughing when I saw him in that getup.* ☐ *The bridegroom was so nervous, it was all he could do not to bust out laughing.*

bust out (of some place**)** *Sl.* to break out of some place, especially a prison. (*Bust* is a nonstandard form of *burst* meaning 'break' here.) ☐ *Somehow the gangsters busted out of prison and left the country.* ☐ *They busted out together.*

bust (some) suds 1. *Sl.* to drink some beer. (*Bust* is a nonstandard form of *burst*. See also **crack some suds**.) ☐ *Let's go out and bust some suds.* ☐ *I'm tired of busting suds. Let's play cards.* **2.** *Sl.* to wash dishes. (*Bust* is a nonstandard form of *burst*.) ☐ *I don't want to spend the rest of my life busting suds.* ☐ *You get into that kitchen and bust some suds to earn your allowance.*

bust someone **one** *Sl.* to punch someone; to give someone a punch, probably in the face. (*Bust* is a nonstandard form of *burst* meaning 'hit' here.) ☐ *You better shut up, or I'll bust you one!* ☐ *You want me to bust you one? I will if you do that again.*

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bust someone **out of** some place and **bust** someone **out**† **1.** *Sl.* to help someone escape from prison. (*Bust* is a nonstandard form of *burst* meaning 'break' here.) □ *Lefty did not manage to bust Max out of prison.* □ *Lefty wanted to bust out some of his friends.* **2.** *Sl.* to expel or force someone to withdraw from school. (*Bust* is a nonstandard form of *burst* meaning 'break' here.) □ *The dean finally busted Bill out of school.* □ *The dean busted out the students with very low grades.*

bust (someone's**) balls** Go to **break (**someone's**) balls.**

bust (someone's**) stones** Go to **break (**someone's**) balls.**

bust someone **up**† **1.** *Sl.* to cause lovers to separate; to break up a pair of lovers, including married persons. (See also **bust** something **up.** *Bust* is a nonstandard form of *burst* meaning 'break (apart)' here.) □ *Mary busted Terri and John up.* □ *Mary busted up Terri and John.* **2.** *Sl.* to beat someone up; to batter someone. (*Bust* is a nonstandard form of *burst* meaning 'hit' here.) □ *You want me to bust you up?* □ *Max busted up Lefty pretty badly.*

bust someone **wide open** *Sl.* to beat someone severely. (An exaggeration. *Bust* is a nonstandard form of *burst.*) □ *If you ever take a step onto my property, I'll bust you wide open.* □ *Jim threatened to bust Bill wide open.*

bust something **up**† **1.** *Inf.* to break or ruin something; to break something into smaller pieces. (*Bust* is a nonstandard form of *burst* meaning 'break' here.) □ *Who busted this plate up?* □ *Don't bust up the plates! Be careful!* **2.** *Sl.* to ruin a marriage by coming between the married people. (See also **bust** someone **up.** *Bust* is a nonstandard form of *burst* meaning 'break' here.) □ *He busted their marriage up by starting rumors about Maggie.* □ *He busted up their marriage.*

bust something **wide open** Go to **blow** something **wide open.**

bust up 1. *Sl.* [for lovers] to separate or break up. (*Bust* is a nonstandard form of *burst* meaning 'break' here.) □ *Tom and Alice busted up for good.* □ *They busted up last week.* **2.** *Sl.* [for something] to break up due to natural causes. (*Bust* is a nonstandard form of *burst* meaning 'break (apart)' here.) □ *The rocket busted up in midair.* □ *I saw it bust up.*

bustle about doing something to go about doing something busily and energetically. □ *Greg bustled about all day, doing the chores.* □ *Lily bustled about, getting dinner ready.*

bustle about some place to move about some place very busily, or as if busy. □ *They were all bustling about the kitchen, getting the feast ready.* □ *Veronica was bustling about outside, cleaning up the yard.*

bustle around to move about very busily. □ *The people were bustling around, trying to get things ready for the picnic.* □ *I wish you would stop bustling around.*

bustle off to leave in haste. □ *Well, I have to bustle off or I'll miss my flight.* □ *I hate to bustle off so soon.*

bustle someone **off**† to help someone leave; to send someone out or away. □ *The cops bustled the crook off.* □ *They bustled off the three men who were fighting.*

***busy as a beaver (building a new dam)** and ***busy as a bee; *busy as a one-armed paperhanger; *busy as Grand Central Station; *busy as a cat on a hot tin roof; *busy as a fish peddler in Lent; *busy as a cranberry merchant (at Thanksgiving); *busy as popcorn on a skillet** very busy. (*Also: **as ~.**) □ *My boss keeps me as busy as a one-armed paperhanger.* □ *I don't have time to talk to you. I'm as busy as a beaver.* □ *When the tourist season starts, this store is busy as Grand Central Station.* □ *Sorry I can't go to lunch with you. I'm as busy as a beaver building a new dam.* □ *Prying into other folks' business kept him busy as popcorn on a skillet.*

busy as a cranberry merchant (at Thanksgiving) Go to previous.

busy as a fish peddler in Lent Go to **busy as a beaver (building a new dam).**

***busy as a hibernating bear** not busy at all. (*Also: **as ~.**) □ *Tom: I can't go with you. I'm busy. Jane: Yeah. You're as busy as a hibernating bear.* □ *He lounged on the sofa all day, busy as a hibernating bear.*

busy as a one-armed paperhanger Go to **busy as a beaver (building a new dam).**

busy as Grand Central Station Go to **busy as a beaver (building a new dam).**

busy as popcorn on a skillet Go to **busy as a beaver (building a new dam).**

busy oneself **with** someone or something to occupy one's time by dealing with someone or something. □ *Tony busied himself with helping Sam.* □ *Mrs. Wilson busied herself with little Jimmy.*

busy someone **with** someone or something to keep someone busy dealing with someone or something. □ *You should busy the children with some activity.* □ *We will busy Randy with cleaning up the garage.*

but for someone or something if it were not for someone or something. □ *But for the railing, I'd have fallen down the stairs.* □ *But for the children, Mrs. Smith would have left her husband years ago.*

but good severely; thoroughly. □ *She told him off but good.* □ *Joe beat up Bill but good.*

butt in (on someone or something**)** to interrupt someone or something. □ *Pardon me for butting in on your conversation, but this is important.* □ *John butted in on Tom and Jane to tell them that the mail had come.*

butt into something to intrude upon something; to break into a conversation. □ *Please don't butt into my conversation; I'm on the phone.* □ *I don't like my conversations being butted into by perfect strangers!*

the **butt of a joke** the reason for or aim of a joke, especially when it is a person. □ *Poor Fred was the butt of every joke told that evening.*

butt out to exit [as abruptly as one has intruded]. (Compare this with **butt in (on** someone or something**).** Usually a command.) □ *Butt out! Leave me alone!* □ *Please butt out of my life!*

butt (up) against someone or something to press against someone or something firmly. □ *This board is supposed to butt up against the one over there.* □ *The goat butted against Fred, but didn't hurt him.*

butter someone **up**† and **butter up to** someone to flatter someone; to treat someone especially nicely in hopes of receiving special favors. (See also **spread** something **on**

thick; soft soap.) ☐ *A student tried to butter the teacher up.* ☐ *She buttered up the teacher again.*

Butter wouldn't melt (in someone's **mouth).** *Prov.* Someone is acting as if innocent. ☐ *By the time her parents came home, Emily had cleaned up all evidence of having broken the valuable figurine, and she looked as though butter wouldn't melt in her mouth.* ☐ *Jane: How can you suspect George of playing that practical joke on you? He looks so innocent. Jill: Yes, butter wouldn't melt, I'm sure.*

***butterflies in** one's **stomach** a nervous feeling in one's stomach. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Whenever I have to speak in public, I get butterflies in my stomach.* ☐ *She always has butterflies in her stomach before a test.* ☐ *It was not frightening enough to give me butterflies in my stomach, but it made me a little apprehensive.*

button something **down**† to fasten something down with buttons. ☐ *Button your collar down. You look too casually dressed.* ☐ *Please button down your collar.*

button something **up**† to fasten something with buttons. ☐ *Button your shirt up, please.* ☐ *I will button up my shirt.*

button up 1. *Lit.* to fasten one's buttons. ☐ *Your jacket's open. You'd better button up. It's cold.* ☐ *I'll button up in the car.* **2.** *Fig.* to get silent and stay silent. (See also button (up) one's lip.) ☐ *Hey, button up! That's enough out of you.* ☐ *I wish you would button up and stop gossiping.*

button (up) one's **lip** *Fig.* to stop talking. (Fixed order.) ☐ *Please button up your lip!* ☐ *Will you button your lip? I don't want the news to get out.*

buttress something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to brace something; to provide architectural support for something. ☐ *We have to buttress up this part of the wall while we work on it.* ☐ *The workers buttressed the wall up with heavy timbers.* **2.** *Fig.* to provide extra support, often financial support, for something. ☐ *We rounded up some money to buttress the company up through the sales slump.* ☐ *The loan buttressed up the company for a few months.*

buy a pig in a poke *Fig.* to buy something without looking inside first. ☐ *If you don't get a good look at the engine of a used car before you buy it, you'll wind up buying a pig in a poke.* ☐ *I just took the salesman's word that this camera worked. I guess I bought a pig in a poke.*

buy a round (of drinks) and **buy the next round (of drinks)** to buy a drink for each person present, with the expectation that one or more of those persons will later do likewise. ☐ *Which one of you guys is going to buy the next round?*

buy in(to something**) 1.** *Lit.* to purchase shares of something; to buy a part of something the ownership of which is shared with other owners. ☐ *I bought into a company that makes dog food.* ☐ *Sounds like a good company. I would like to buy in.* **2.** *Fig.* to agree with; to accept an idea as worthwhile. ☐ *The committee liked my proposal and decided to buy into my plan.* ☐ *Do you think you can get the whole board to buy in?*

buy it Go to buy the farm.

buy one's **way in(to** something**)** to achieve entry or membership in something often by paying money. ☐ *Do you think you can buy your way into this fraternity?* ☐ *I'm sure I can buy my way in with my family connections.*

buy one's **way out (of** something**)** to get out of trouble by bribing or influencing someone to ignore what one has done wrong. ☐ *You can't buy your way out of this mess, buster!* ☐ *You made this mess and you can't buy your way out!*

buy some food **to go** Go to to go.

buy someone **off**† to bribe someone to ignore what one is doing wrong. ☐ *Do you think you can buy her off?* ☐ *The mobster tried to buy off the jury.*

buy someone or something **out**† to purchase full ownership of something from someone or a group. ☐ *We liked the company, so we borrowed a lot of money and bought it out.* ☐ *Carl bought out the owners of the company.*

buy someone's **wolf ticket** *Sl.* to challenge someone's boast or taunt. ☐ *He wants me to buy his wolf ticket bad.* ☐ *He's such a fighter. He'll buy anybody's wolf ticket.*

buy something *Fig.* to believe something someone says; to accept something to be a fact. ☐ *It may be true, but I don't buy it.* ☐ *I just don't buy the idea that you can swim that far.*

buy something **at** something **1.** to purchase something at a particular place or at a particular type of sale, such as a store, an auction, a clearance sale, etc. ☐ *I bought this table at an auction.* ☐ *This was bought at an auction.* **2.** to purchase something at a particular price or for a particular level of price. ☐ *I bought shares in General Motors at forty and a half.* ☐ *The shares were bought at a good price.*

buy something **back**† **(from** someone**)** to repurchase something that one has previously sold from the person who bought it. ☐ *Can I buy it back from you? I have decided I need it.* ☐ *He bought back his book from George.*

buy something **for a song** Go to for a song.

buy something **(from** someone**) (for** something**)** to purchase something from someone at a particular price, or for a particular type of payment, such as for cash, for practically nothing, etc. ☐ *I bought the car from Mark for a reasonable price.* ☐ *I bought it for a reasonable price from Mark.*

buy something **on credit** to purchase something now and pay for it later (normally plus interest). ☐ *Almost everyone who buys a house buys it on credit.* ☐ *I didn't have any cash with me, so I used my credit card and bought a new coat on credit.*

buy something **on time** to buy something on credit. ☐ *Tom: That's an awful fancy TV. Are you sure you can afford it? Jane: I'm buying it on time.* ☐ *I bought the sofa on time, but I paid cash for the chairs.*

buy something **out**† to buy all that is available of a particular item. ☐ *The kids came in and bought all our bubble gum out.* ☐ *They bought out the bubble gum in a single hour.*

buy something **sight unseen** to buy something without seeing it first. ☐ *I bought this land sight unseen. I didn't know it was so rocky.* ☐ *It isn't usually safe to buy something sight unseen.*

buy something **up**† to buy all of something; to buy the entire supply of something. ☐ *He bought the oranges up from all the groves.* ☐ *He bought up all the oranges and drove up the price.*

B

buy the big one *Euph.* to die. ☐ *I don't plan to buy the big one for at least another thirty years.* ☐ *She conked out for good—you know, bought the big one.*

buy the farm and **buy it** *Sl.* to die; to get killed. (The farm is a burial plot.) ☐ *I'll pass through this illness; I'm too young to buy the farm.* ☐ *He lived for a few hours after his collapse, but then he bought it.*

buy the next round (of drinks) Go to buy a round (of drinks).

buy time to postpone an event hoping that the situation will improve. ☐ *You are just stalling to buy time.* ☐ *Maybe I can buy some time by asking the judge for a continuance.*

buy trouble *Fig.* to encourage trouble; to bring on trouble. (As if certain acts would pay for or cause difficulties that would have to be suffered through.) ☐ *I don't want to buy trouble. I have enough already.* ☐ *Saying something insulting to him is just buying trouble.*

buzz along to move or drive along fast. ☐ *The cars were buzzing along at a great rate.* ☐ *Traffic is sure buzzing along.*

buzz for someone to sound a signal for someone. ☐ *Please buzz for the bell captain.* ☐ *I buzzed for my secretary and waited for a reply.*

buzz in(to some place) *Fig.* to come into a place rapidly or unexpectedly. ☐ *The child buzzed into the shop and bought a nickel's worth of candy.* ☐ *I just buzzed in to say hello.*

buzz off *Fig.* to leave quickly. ☐ *I've got to buzz off. Bye.* ☐ *It's time for me to buzz off.*

buzz someone into a place and **buzz someone in**† *Fig.* to push a button that opens a door latch electrically, allowing someone to use the door and enter. (The process creates a buzz while the latch is open.) ☐ *My secretary will buzz you in.* ☐ *Please buzz in our guest.* ☐ *Oh, hello. I will buzz you into the lobby. Then take the elevator to apartment 310.*

buzz with something *Fig.* [for a place] to be busy or filled with something. ☐ *The room buzzed with excitement.* ☐ *The office had better be buzzing with moneymaking activity when I get there.*

by a hair('s breadth) and **by a whisker** *Fig.* just barely; by a very small distance. ☐ *I just missed getting on the plane by a hair's breadth.* ☐ *I made it onto the last flight by a hair!*

by a mile *Fig.* by a great distance. (Usually an exaggeration.) ☐ *You missed the target by a mile.* ☐ *Your estimate of the budget deficit was off by a mile.*

by a show of hands [of a vote taken] expressed by people raising their hands. ☐ *We were asked to vote for the candidates for captain by a show of hands.* ☐ *Bob wanted us to vote on paper, not by a show of hands, so that we could have a secret ballot.*

by a whisker Go to by a hair('s breadth).

by all accounts Go to according to all accounts.

by all appearances apparently; according to what one sees or how things seem. ☐ *She is, by all appearances, ready to resume work.* ☐ *By all appearances, we ought to be approaching the airport.*

by all means certainly; yes; absolutely. ☐ *I will attempt to get there by all means.* ☐ *Bob: Can you come to dinner tomorrow? Jane: By all means. I'd love to.*

by all means of something trying to do something by the use of every possible manner of something. ☐ *People will be arriving by all means of transportation.* ☐ *The surgeon performed the operation by all means of instruments.*

by and by at some time in the future; as time passes. ☐ *The weather's sure to clear up by and by.* ☐ *You may think your heart is broken, but you'll feel better by and by.*

by and large generally; usually. (Originally a nautical expression.) ☐ *I find that, by and large, people tend to do what they are told to do.* ☐ *By and large, rosebushes need lots of care.*

by ankle express *Fig.* on foot. ☐ *After my horse was stolen, I had to go by ankle express.* ☐ *It's a five-minute drive, forty minutes by ankle express.*

by any means by any way possible. ☐ *I need to get there soon by any means.* ☐ *I must win this contest by any means, fair or unfair.*

by any stretch of the imagination as much as anyone could imagine; as much as is imaginable. (Often negative.) ☐ *I don't see how anyone by any stretch of the imagination could fail to understand what my last sentence meant.*

by brute strength by great muscular strength. ☐ *The men moved the heavy door by brute strength.*

by chance accidentally; randomly; without planning. ☐ *I found this book by chance at a book sale.* ☐ *We met by chance in a class in college.*

by check by using a check for payment. ☐ *He paid for the book by check.* ☐ *You will be paid by check.*

by choice due to conscious choice; on purpose. ☐ *I do this kind of thing by choice. No one makes me do it.* ☐ *I didn't go to this college by choice. It was the closest one to home.*

by coincidence by an accidental and strange similarity; by an unplanned pairing of events or occurrences. ☐ *We just happened to be in the same place at the same time by coincidence.* ☐ *By coincidence, the circus was in town when I was there. I'm glad because I love circuses.*

By cracky! *Rur.* By God! (A mild oath, often used to express surprise or approval.) ☐ *Jim said he'd get the whole house painted this weekend, and by cracky, that's just what he did.* ☐ *By cracky! That thunder sure was loud.*

by day and **by night** during the day; during the night. (Often used in simultaneous clauses for contrast.) ☐ *By day, Mary worked in an office; by night, she took classes.* ☐ *Dave slept by day and worked by night.*

by dint of something because of something; due to the efforts of something. (*Dint* is an old word meaning 'force,' and it is never used except in this phrase.) ☐ *They got the building finished on time by dint of hard work and good organization.* ☐ *By dint of much studying, John got through college.*

by fits and starts Go to fits and starts.

by force of habit owing to a tendency to do something that has become a habit. ☐ *After I retired, I kept getting up and getting dressed each morning by force of habit.*

B

By godfrey! By God! (A mild oath.) ☐ *By godfrey, Jim's brother is a big man!* ☐ *Those cats sure do make a lot of noise, by godfrey.*

by guess and by golly Go to next.

by guess and by gosh and **by guess and by golly** *Rur.* by estimating; without careful planning. ☐ *Jane: Did you have a plan for putting up that toolshed? Tom: Nope, we just sort of did it by guess and by gosh.* ☐ *Grandma always made dresses by guess and by golly, without using a pattern, and they always turned out just fine.*

by hand made by human hands and handheld tools as opposed to a machine. ☐ *This fine wooden cabinet was made by hand.* ☐ *I carved this figurine by hand.*

by herself and **by himself 1.** with no one else present; alone. ☐ *She hates to go to strange places by herself.* ☐ *He sat by himself at a table big enough for six people.* **2.** with the help of no one else. ☐ *The two-year-old boy can get dressed by himself.* ☐ *Susan is unable to get there by herself.*

by hook or (by) crook by any means, legal or illegal. ☐ *I'll get the job done by hook or by crook.* ☐ *I must have that house. I intend to get it by hook or crook.*

by itself with the help of nothing else; without the addition of anything else. ☐ *Will this food be enough by itself for all of us?* ☐ *Can the dog get out of the house by itself?*

by leaps and bounds *Fig.* rapidly; by large movements forward. ☐ *The brush we cut back last fall is growing by leaps and bounds.* ☐ *The profits of my company are increasing by leaps and bounds.* ☐ *He is gaining by leaps and bounds.*

by main strength and awkwardness *Rur.* by force or brute strength. ☐ *Tom: How did you get that piano up the stairs? Mary: By main strength and awkwardness.* ☐ *By main strength and awkwardness, we got all the luggage crammed into the car.*

by means of something using something; with the use of something. ☐ *I opened the bottle by means of a bottle opener.* ☐ *I was able to afford a car by means of a loan.*

by mistake in error; accidentally. ☐ *I'm sorry. I came into the wrong room by mistake.* ☐ *I chose the wrong road by mistake. Now we are lost.*

by myself 1. with no one else present; alone. ☐ *I sat at the table by myself.* ☐ *I will not be at the party. I will be at home by myself tonight.* **2.** without the help of anyone else. ☐ *I did it all by myself.* ☐ *Can you eat that whole pie by yourself?*

by night Go to by day.

by no means absolutely not; certainly not. ☐ *I'm by no means angry with you.* ☐ *Bob: Did you put this box here? Tom: By no means. I didn't do it, I'm sure.*

by oneself 1. with no one else present; alone (of two or more people). ☐ *Must one sit by oneself or may one join another group?* ☐ *One just hates eating by oneself, doesn't one?* **2.** with the help of no one else. ☐ *One is expected to do it by oneself.* ☐ *Can one do this by oneself?*

by ourselves 1. with no one else present; alone. ☐ *Do we have to sit here by ourselves? Can't we sit with Mary and Max?* ☐ *We like to eat by ourselves, so we can talk about private matters.* **2.** with the help of no one else. ☐ *We can do it by ourselves.* ☐ *Can we lift this by ourselves, or do we need some help?*

by return mail and **by return post** by a subsequent mailing (back to the sender). (A phrase indicating that an answer is expected very soon, by mail.) ☐ *Since this bill is overdue, would you kindly send us your check by return mail?* ☐ *I answered your request by return post over a year ago. Please check your records.*

by return post Go to previous.

by rote [of learning or memorizing] done as habit and without thinking. ☐ *I simply memorized the speech by rote. I don't know what it means.* ☐ *The student learns everything by rote and doesn't really understand the concepts.*

by shank's mare *Fig.* by foot; by walking. (*Shank* refers to the shank of the leg.) ☐ *My car isn't working, so I'll have to travel by shank's mare.* ☐ *I'm sore because I've been getting around by shank's mare.*

***by the book** and ***by the numbers** following the rules exactly. (Alludes to a (numbered) book of rules. *Typically: **go ~; do** something **~; play ~; run** something **~**.) ☐ *The judge of the contest ran things strictly by the rules and disqualified us on a small technicality.* ☐ *Everyone insisted that we go by the numbers and not accept the proposal.*

by the by Go to by the way.

by the day one day at a time. ☐ *I don't know when I'll have to leave town, so I rent this room by the day.*

by the dozen in groups of 12. (Compare this with by the dozens.) ☐ *Eggs are normally sold by the dozen.*

by the dozens *Fig.* many; by some fairly large, indefinite number. (Similar to but implying less than *hundreds.* Compare this with by the dozen.) ☐ *Just then people began showing up by the dozens.* ☐ *I baked cookies and pies by the dozens for the charity bake sale.*

by the end of the day by the time when the workday is over; by the time that the sun goes down. ☐ *Will this task be completed by the end of the day?* ☐ *We have to do all these things by the end of the day.*

by the handful in amounts equal to a handful; in quantity. ☐ *Billy is eating candy by the handful.* ☐ *People began leaving by the handful at midnight.*

by the hour at each hour; once each hour. ☐ *It kept growing darker by the hour.* ☐ *I have to take this medicine by the hour.*

by the month one month at a time. ☐ *Not many apartments are rented by the month.* ☐ *I needed a car for a short while, so I rented one by the month.*

by the nape of the neck by the back of the neck. (Mostly said in threats.) ☐ *He grabbed me by the nape of the neck and told me not to turn around if I valued my life. I stood very still.* ☐ *If you do that again, I'll pick you up by the nape of the neck and throw you out the door.*

by the numbers Go to by the book.

by the same token *Cliché* a phrase indicating that the speaker is introducing parallel or closely contrasting information. ☐ *Tom: I really got cheated! Bob: You think they've cheated you, but, by the same token, they believe that you've cheated them.* ☐ *Some say he is a real charmer, but by the same token others are put off by his manner.*

***by the seat of** one's **pants** *Fig.* by sheer luck and use of intuition. (*Typically: **fly ~; make it ~**.) ☐ *I got through school by the seat of my pants.* ☐ *Pilots who are in fog and using only instruments are flying by the seat of their pants.*

by the skin of one's **teeth** *Fig.* just barely. (By an amount equal to the thickness of the (imaginary) skin on one's teeth.) ☐ *I got through calculus class by the skin of my teeth.* ☐ *I got to the airport a few minutes late and missed the plane by the skin of my teeth.* ☐ *Lloyd escaped from the burning building by the skin of his teeth.*

by the sweat of one's **brow** *Fig.* by one's efforts; by one's hard work. ☐ *Tom raised these vegetables by the sweat of his brow.* ☐ *Sally polished the car by the sweat of her brow.*

by the unit *Fig.* each; per. (Used to designate the unit of measure, but not the rate of a measure.) ☐ *Lettuce is sold by the head.* ☐ *Gas is sold by the gallon.*

by the way and **by the by 1.** a phrase indicating that the speaker is adding information. (*By the by* is not as frequent.) ☐ *Tom: Is this one any good? Clerk: This is the largest and, by the way, the most expensive one we have in stock.* ☐ *Bill: I'm a realtor. Is your house for sale? Alice: My house is not for sale, and, by the way, I too am a realtor.* **2.** a phrase indicating that the speaker is casually opening a new subject. ☐ *Bill: Oh, by the way, Fred, do you still have that hammer you borrowed from me? Fred: I'll check. I thought I gave it back.* ☐ *Jane: By the by, don't you owe me some money? Sue: Who, me?*

by the week one week at a time. ☐ *I plan my schedules by the week.* ☐ *Where can I rent a room by the week?*

by the year one year at a time. ☐ *Most apartments are available by the year.* ☐ *We budget by the year.*

by themselves 1. with help from no one else. ☐ *Do you think they can do it by themselves?* ☐ *Mike and Max cannot lift the piano by themselves.* **2.** with no one else present; alone (of two or more people). ☐ *They are sitting there by themselves. Let's sit with them.* ☐ *They enjoy spending the evening at home by themselves.*

by virtue of something because of something; due to something. ☐ *She's permitted to vote by virtue of her age.* ☐ *They are members of the club by virtue of their great wealth.*

by way of something **1.** passing through something (as a place); via something. ☐ *He came home by way of Toledo.* ☐ *She went to the bank by way of the drugstore.* **2.** in illustration; as an example. ☐ *By way of illustration, the professor drew a picture on the board.* ☐ *He read them a passage from Shakespeare by way of example.*

by word of mouth by speaking rather than writing. ☐ *I learned about it by word of mouth.* ☐ *I need it in writing. I don't trust things I hear about by word of mouth.*

by yourself 1. with no one else present; alone. ☐ *Do you want to sit here by yourself, or can I sit here too?* ☐ *Don't sit at home by yourself. Come to the movie with me.* **2.** with the help of no one else. ☐ *Can you really do all this cooking by yourself?* ☐ *Bill, can you lift this box by yourself?*

by yourselves 1. with no one else present; alone (of two or more people). ☐ *Are you two going to stand here by yourselves all evening?* ☐ *Don't sit home by yourselves. Come to the party.* **2.** with the help of no one else. ☐ *Can you three do this by yourselves?* ☐ *I expect you guys to get there by yourselves.*

Bye for now. Go to Good-bye for now.

Cc

cadge something **from** someone and **cadge** something **off** someone *Sl.* to beg or borrow something from someone. ☐ *Go cadge some sugar from the lady next door.* ☐ *I cadged this jacket off a friendly guy I met.*

Caesar's wife must be above suspicion. *Prov.* The associates of public figures must not even be suspected of wrongdoing. (The ancient Roman Julius Caesar is supposed to have said this when asked why he divorced his wife, Pompeia. Because she was suspected of some wrongdoing, he could not associate with her anymore.) ☐ *Jill: I don't think the mayor is trustworthy; his brother was charged with embezzlement. Jane: But the charges were never proved. Jill: That doesn't matter. Caesar's wife must be above suspicion.* ☐ *When the newspapers reported the rumor that the lieutenant governor had failed to pay his taxes, the governor forced him to resign, saying, "Caesar's wife must be above suspicion."*

cage someone or something **in**† **1.** *Lit.* to enclose someone or something in a cage. ☐ *We caged the monkey in, but it threw a fit.* ☐ *We are going to have to cage in the dogs.* **2.** *Fig.* to confine someone or something. ☐ *Please don't cage me in this tiny room!* ☐ *The health authorities virtually caged in the quarantined population until they could all be tested.*

cage someone or something **up**† **(in** something**)** to enclose or confine someone or something in something or someplace. ☐ *They caged the lions up in strong containers for the trip across country.* ☐ *How long did it take to cage up the lions securely?*

cajole someone **into** something to coax or persuade someone to do something. ☐ *They tried to cajole us into helping them move.* ☐ *You can't cajole me into doing that!*

cajole someone **out of** something **1.** to coax or persuade someone not to do something. ☐ *Try and cajole her out of going there.* ☐ *I cajoled her out of leaving so soon.* **2.** to coax or persuade someone to give up something or give away something. ☐ *She tried to cajole him out of his inheritance.*

cake someone or something **with** something to cover someone or something with a thicker layer of clumps of a substance such as mud, dirt, blood, etc. ☐ *The attendant caked her with hot mud at the beginning of the arthritis treatment.* ☐ *All the motocross racers were heavily caked with mud.* ☐ *She caked herself with green mud to remove her wrinkles.*

calculate on something *Rur.* to think about or plan on something. ☐ *Let me calculate on this a little bit.* ☐ *He's busy calculating on a serious problem.*

calculate something **into** something and **calculate** something **in**† to include something in one's calculations. ☐ *Did you calculate the cost of the cake into the total?* ☐ *Yes, I calculated in all the costs.*

call a halt to something to demand that something be stopped. ☐ *We must call a halt to this childish behavior.* ☐ *The manager called a halt to all overtime.*

call a meeting to ask that people assemble for a meeting; to request that a meeting be held. ☐ *The mayor called a meeting to discuss the problem.* ☐ *I'll be calling a meeting of the library board to discuss the new building project.*

call a meeting to order and **call the meeting to order** to announce that a meeting is about to begin. ☐ *The chair called the meeting to order.* ☐ *The meeting will be called to order at noon.*

call a spade a spade *Fig.* to call something by its right name; to speak frankly about something, even if it is unpleasant. (Considered offensive by some. Use only with discretion.) ☐ *Well, I believe it's time to call a spade a spade. We are just avoiding the issue.* ☐ *Let's call a spade a spade. The man is a liar.*

Call again. Please visit this shop again sometime. (Said by shopkeepers and store clerks.) ☐ *"Thank you," said the clerk, smiling, "Call again."* ☐ *Clerk: Is that everything? John: Yes. Clerk: That's ten dollars even. John: Here you are. Clerk: Thanks. Call again.*

call (all) the shots to decide on the course of action; to be in charge. ☐ *Why do you have to call all the shots?* ☐ *Do what you're told. I'll call the shots.*

call around (about someone or something**)** to telephone a number of different people in succession about something. ☐ *I'll call around about Tom and see if I can find out anything.*

call at some place to visit some place; [for a ship] to put into port at a place. ☐ *I called at the druggist's for some medicine.* ☐ *Our ship will call at seven ports during the voyage.*

call attention to someone or something to cause someone, including oneself, or something to be noticed or observed. ☐ *I think he dresses like that simply to call attention to himself.*

call back 1. to call [someone] again on the telephone at a later time. ☐ *Call back later, please.* ☐ *I will call back when you are not so busy.* **2.** to return a telephone call received earlier. ☐ *The note says I am to call back. What did you want?* ☐ *This is Bill Wilson calling back.*

call for someone or something **1.** to need, require, or demand something or the services of someone. ☐ *The recipe calls for two cups of flour.* ☐ *This job calls for someone with experience.* **2.** to arrive to collect or pick up a person or a thing. (Used especially when you are to pick someone up and are acting as an escort.) ☐ *I will call for you about eight this evening.* ☐ *The messenger will call for your reply in the morning.* **3.** to shout for or request someone or something. ☐ *I called for Ted, but he didn't hear me.* ☐ *I stood on the porch and called for the dog.*

C

call hogs *Rur.* to snore. ☐ *I couldn't sleep at all last night, with Cousin Joe calling hogs in the next room.* ☐ *Joe calls hogs so loud the windows rattle.*

call in sick to call one's place of work to say that one is ill and cannot come to work. (See also **report in sick**.) ☐ *Four of our office staff called in sick today.* ☐ *I have to call in sick today.*

call in (to some place**)** to telephone to some central place, such as one's place of work, as to check for messages. ☐ *I have to call in to the office at noon.* ☐ *I will call in whenever I have a chance.*

call it a day to quit work and go home; to say that a day's work has been completed. ☐ *I'm tired. Let's call it a day.* ☐ *The boss was mad because Tom called it a day at noon and went home.*

call it a night to end what one is doing at night and go [home] to bed. ☐ *At midnight, I called it a night and went to bed.* ☐ *Guest after guest called it a night, and at last we were alone.*

call it quits to quit; to resign from something; to announce that one is quitting. ☐ *Okay! I've had enough! I'm calling it quits.* ☐ *Time to go home, John. Let's call it quits.*

Call my service. Please don't call me directly, but through my answering service. (Not a friendly or encouraging invitation.) ☐ *Good to talk to you, but I gotta go now. Call my service.* ☐ *I can't talk now. Call my service.*

Call no man happy till he dies. and **Count no man happy till he dies.** *Prov.* You cannot tell if a person's life has been happy on the whole until that person's life is over; no matter how happy someone is now, something bad may happen to destroy his or her happiness. ☐ *Alan: You must be very happy with your new wife. Bill: Call no man happy till he dies.* ☐ *Jill: That movie star must be the happiest person in the world. He's rich, people love him, and he likes his work. Jane: Count no man happy till he dies.*

the **call of nature** *Euph.* the need to go to the lavatory. ☐ *Stop the car here! I have to answer the call of nature.* ☐ *There was no break in the agenda, not even for the call of nature.*

call on someone to court someone. ☐ *Jim's calling on the new cook over at the Browns'.* ☐ *In the old days, a boy had to ask a girl's father for permission to come call on her.*

call on something *Fig.* to draw on something, such as a particular quality or talent. ☐ *This project calls on all the creative skills you can gather together.* ☐ *It calls on everything you've got.*

call out (to someone**)** to speak loudly to get someone's attention. ☐ *Mike called out to Tom that there was a telephone call for him.* ☐ *I heard someone call out, but I could see no one.*

call someone **about** something to call someone on the telephone, seeking information about someone or something. ☐ *I'll call Maggie about Ted and see what she knows.* ☐ *Let me call the manager about this.*

call someone **away**† **(from** something**)** to ask someone to come away from some place or from doing something. ☐ *The boss called Kathy away from her office.* ☐ *The principal called away the teacher from the classroom.* ☐ *Why did you call Kathy away?*

call someone **back**† **1.** to call someone again on the telephone. ☐ *Since she is not there, I will call her back in half an hour.* ☐ *Carl called back Mary after his meeting was over.* **2.** to return a telephone call to a person who had called earlier. ☐ *I got his message; I will call him back tomorrow.* ☐ *I have to call back my friend now.* **3.** Go to **call** someone or something **back.**

call someone **by a name** to address someone by a particular kind of name. ☐ *They call me by my first name.* ☐ *Don't call me by my nickname!*

call someone **down**† to reprimand a person; to **bawl** someone **out.** ☐ *The teacher had to call down Sally in front of everybody.* ☐ *"I wish you wouldn't call me down in public," cried Sally.*

call someone **forth**† to call to someone to come out or come forward. ☐ *The principal called Wally forth.* ☐ *Please call forth Wally again.*

call someone **forward** to call to someone to the front, and to the attention of everyone present. ☐ *The teacher called the student forward to recite.* ☐ *Don't call me forward. I am not prepared.*

call someone **in**† **(for** something**) 1.** to request that someone come to have a talk. ☐ *The manager called Karen in for a private meeting.* ☐ *The police called in Gary for questioning.* **2.** to request a consultation with a specialist in some field. (The person called probably will not "come in," but will work at another place.) ☐ *We will have to call a heart specialist in for a consultation.* ☐ *We called in another specialist for an opinion.*

call someone **names** to call someone by an abusive or insulting name. ☐ *Billy cried when the other kids called him names.* ☐ *John was punished for calling his teacher names.*

call someone **on the carpet** and **haul** someone **on the carpet** *Fig.* to reprimand a person. (*When done by someone of clear superiority. Haul* is stronger than *call.*) ☐ *One more error like that and the big boss will call you on the carpet.* ☐ *I'm sorry it went wrong. I really hope the regional manager doesn't call me on the carpet again.*

call someone or an animal **off** someone or something and **call** someone or an animal **off**† to request that someone or an animal stop bothering or pursuing someone or something; to call a halt to an attack by someone or an animal. ☐ *Please call your dogs off my brother.* ☐ *Call off your spying on me, or else!*

call someone or something **back**† to call out that someone or something should come back. ☐ *As she left, the clerk called her back.* ☐ *The clerk called back the customer.*

call someone or something **in**† **1.** to call on the special talents, abilities, or power of someone or something. ☐ *They had to call a new doctor in.* ☐ *Yes, they had to call in a specialist.* **2.** Go to **call** someone or something **into** something.

call someone or something **into question** to cause someone or something to be evaluated; to examine or reexamine the qualifications or value of someone or something. ☐ *Because of her poor record, we were forced to call Dr. Jones into question.* ☐ *We called Dr. Jones's qualifications into question.*

call someone or something **into** something and **call** someone or something **in**† to call to a person or a pet to come into

something or some place. ☐ *Would you please call Jeff into the house?* ☐ *Please call in Jeff.*

call someone or something **out†** to request the services of someone or a group. (See also **call** someone **up; call** someone **out.**) ☐ *Things got bad enough that the governor called the militia out.* ☐ *The governor called out the militia.*

call someone or something **up†** to call someone, a group, or a company on the telephone. ☐ *I will call them up and see what they have to say.* ☐ *Please call up the supplier.*

call someone **out†** to challenge someone to a fight. ☐ *Wilbur wanted to call him out, but thought better of it.* ☐ *Why did you call out that guy? He used to be a prizefighter!*

call someone **over (to** some place**)** to request that someone come to where one is. ☐ *I will call her over to us, and you can ask her what you want to know.* ☐ *Call over the waitress so we can order.* ☐ *I called Ted over.*

call someone's **attention to** something and **call** something **to** someone's **attention** to bring something to someone's notice; to make someone recognize some fact. ☐ *May I call your attention to the sign on the door?* ☐ *He called to our attention the notice on the wall.*

call someone's **bluff** to demand that someone prove a claim or is not being deceptive. ☐ *All right, I'll call your bluff. Show me you can do it!* ☐ *Tom said, "You've made me really angry, and I'll punch you if you come any closer!" "Go ahead," said Bill, calling his bluff.*

call someone **to account** to ask one to explain and justify one's behavior, policy, performance, etc. ☐ *The sergeant called the police officer to account.* ☐ *I called my workers to account for the accident.*

call someone **to attention** to demand that someone assume the formal military stance of attention. ☐ *The officer called the platoon to attention.* ☐ *The sergeant called us to attention.*

call someone **together** to request that people come together for a meeting. ☐ *Please call everyone together and we'll discuss this.* ☐ *I called all the players together.*

call someone **up†** to request that someone or a group report for active military service. (See also **call** someone or something **out.**) ☐ *The government called the reserve units up for active service.* ☐ *They called up another battalion.*

call something **(back) in** and **call** something **in†** to formally request (usually by mail) that something be returned. ☐ *The car company called many cars back in for repairs.* ☐ *They called in a lot of cars.*

call something **down† (on** someone**)** *Fig.* to invoke some sort of divine punishment onto someone. ☐ *The preacher sounded as though he was calling down the wrath of God on us.* ☐ *Moses called down a plague on the Pharoah.*

call something **down† (to** someone**)** to shout something to a person on a lower level. ☐ *The worker called a warning down to the people below.* ☐ *She called down a warning to them.*

call something **forth†** [for an event] to draw a particular quality or induce a particular behavior. ☐ *The battle called extraordinary courage forth from the soldiers.* ☐ *It called forth great courage.*

call something **in†** Go to **call** something **(back) in.**

call something **off†** to cancel an event. ☐ *It's too late to call the party off. The first guests have already arrived.* ☐ *Because of rain, they called off the baseball game.*

call something **out† 1.** to draw on something, such as a particular quality or talent. ☐ *It's times like these that call the best out in us.* ☐ *These times call out our best effort.* **2.** to shout out something. ☐ *Who called the warning out?* ☐ *You should call out a warning to those behind you on the trail.*

call something **square** to pronounce a debt or obligation to have been paid, balanced, or ended. ☐ *Thanks for the hundred bucks. I think we can call it square now.*

call something **to mind** and **bring** something **to mind** to bring something into someone's mind; to cause something to be remembered. ☐ *Your comment calls something unpleasant to mind.* ☐ *This photo album calls our vacation to mind.*

call something **to** someone's **attention** Go to **call** someone's **attention to** something.

call something **up†** to summon information from a computer. ☐ *John used his laptop to call the information up.* ☐ *With a few strokes on the computer keyboard, Sally called up the figures she was looking for.*

call the dogs off† 1. *Lit.* to order hunting or watch dogs to abandon their quarry. ☐ *They robber gave up and the guard called the dogs off.* ☐ *Call off the dogs!* **2.** *Fig.* to stop threatening, chasing, or hounding [a person]. ☐ *Tell the sheriff to call off the dogs. We caught the robber.* ☐ *Okay, you've caught me! Please call your dogs off!*

call the meeting to order Go to **call a meeting to order.**

call (the) roll and **take (the) roll** to call the names of people from a list of those enrolled, expecting them to reply if they are present. ☐ *After I call the roll, please open your books to page 12.* ☐ *I will take roll, and then we will do arithmetic.*

call the shots and **call the tune** *Fig.* to make the decisions; to decide what is to be done. ☐ *Sally always wants to call the shots, and Mary doesn't like to be bossed around. They don't get along well.* ☐ *Sally always wants to call the tune.*

call the tune Go to previous.

call to someone to shout to get someone's attention. ☐ *I called to Fred, but he didn't hear me.* ☐ *Did you hear me call to you?*

call (up)on someone **1.** to visit someone. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on.*) ☐ *My mother's friends call upon her every Wednesday.* ☐ *Let's call on Mrs. Franklin this afternoon.* **2.** to choose someone to respond, as in a classroom. ☐ *The teacher called upon me, but I was not ready to recite.* ☐ *Please don't call on me. I can't remember a thing.*

call (up)on someone **(for** something**)** to choose someone to do or to help with some particular task. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on.*) ☐ *Can I call upon you for help?* ☐ *You can call on me at any time.*

call (up)on someone **(to** do something**)** to choose someone to do something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on.*) ☐ *I call upon all of you to make your feelings*

known to your elected representatives. ☐ *I called on George for his help, but he refused.*

called to straw *Rur.* about to begin labor and childbirth. ☐ *Susan was called to straw when she was only seven months along.* ☐ *Nancy's nine months pregnant and could be called to straw any day now.*

C

the **calm before the storm** Go to the lull before the storm.

calm down to relax; to become less busy or active. ☐ *Now, now, calm down. You look so nervous.* ☐ *Please calm down. Nothing bad is going to happen.*

calm someone or an animal **down**† to cause someone or an animal to be less active, upset, or unsettled. ☐ *Please try to calm yourself down!* ☐ *Can you calm down your yapping dog?*

camp in the boondocks Go to in the boondocks.

camp in the boonies Go to in the boondocks.

camp it up [for performers] to overact or behave in an affected manner. ☐ *The cast began to camp it up in the second act, and the critics walked out. (Fixed order.)* ☐ *There is no need to camp it up. Play it the way it was written.*

camp out to live out of doors temporarily in a tent or camping vehicle, as on a vacation or special camping trip. ☐ *I love to camp out in the winter.*

campaign against someone or something **1.** to crusade or battle against someone or something. ☐ *Currently, I am campaigning against littering.* ☐ *Sarah is campaigning against crooked politicians.* **2.** to run one's political campaign against someone or something. ☐ *I campaigned against the incumbent and won.* ☐ *John spent a lot of time campaigning against Sarah for class president.*

campaign for someone or something to support actively someone or someone's candidacy for political office. ☐ *I would be very happy to campaign for you.* ☐ *I want to campaign for the winning candidate.*

Can do. I can definitely do it. (The opposite of No can do.) ☐ *Jane: Will you be able to get this finished by quitting time today? Alice: Can do. Leave it to me.* ☐ *Bob: Can you get this pack of papers over to the lawyer's office by noon? Bill: Can do. I'm leaving now. Bye.*

Can I help you? Go to Could I help you?

Can I leave a message? Go to Could I leave a message?

Can I see you again? Go to Could I see you again?

Can I see you in my office? Go to Could I see you in my office?

Can I speak to someone? Go to Could I speak to someone?

Can I take a message? Go to Could I take a message?

Can I take your order (now)? Go to Could I take your order (now)?

Can I tell her who's calling? Go to Could I tell him who's calling?

Can I use your powder room? Go to Could I use your powder room?

Can it! Shut up! ☐ *I've heard enough of your arguing. Can it!* ☐ *That's enough complaining from you! Can it!*

can (just) whistle for something *Fig.* can just forget about having something. ☐ *The last time Mary came over for dinner, she was downright rude. If she wants dinner at my house again, she can just whistle for it!* ☐ *I asked the boss for a promotion. He told me I could whistle for it.*

*a **can of worms** *Fig.* a very difficult issue or set of problems; an array of difficulties. (*Typically: **be ~; open ~**.) ☐ *This political scandal is a real can of worms.* ☐ *Let's not open that can of worms!*

can take it to the bank *Fig.* able to depend on the truthfulness of my statement: it is not counterfeit or bogus; to be able to bank on something. ☐ *Believe me. What I am telling you is the truth. You can take it to the bank.* ☐ *This information is as good as gold. You can take it to the bank.*

Can we continue this later? Go to Could we continue this later?

Can you excuse us, please? Go to Could you excuse us, please?

Can you hold? Go to Could you hold?

Can you imagine? Can you believe that?; Imagine that! ☐ *She wore jeans to the wedding. Can you imagine?* ☐ *Billy was eating the houseplant! Can you imagine?*

Can you keep a secret? Go to Could you keep a secret?

cancel each other out† [for the opposite effects of two things] to balance each other. ☐ *The cost of the meal you bought and what I owed you cancel each other out, so we're even.* ☐ *They canceled out each other.*

cancel out (of something**)** to withdraw from something. ☐ *I hate to cancel out of the event at the last minute, but this is an emergency.* ☐ *It's too late to cancel out.*

cancel someone **out**† Go to next.

cancel someone **out of** something and **cancel** someone **out**† **1.** to eliminate someone from something (as from a list of names). ☐ *We had to cancel them out.* ☐ *We canceled out all the people who did not show up.* **2.** *Sl.* to eliminate someone; to kill someone. ☐ *The drug lord threatened to cancel out his former partner for testifying against him.*

cancel someone's **Christmas** *Sl.* to kill someone; to destroy someone. (Underworld or jocular; the idea is that the dead person will not live until Christmas.) ☐ *If he keeps bugging me, I'm gonna cancel his Christmas.* ☐ *Willie threatened to cancel Richard's Christmas if Richard didn't pay up.*

cancel something **out**† to balance the effects of something. ☐ *Sending flowers might cancel the bad feelings out.* ☐ *The last payment canceled out the debt.*

*a **candidate for a pair of wings** *Euph.* someone who is likely to die; someone who is close to death. (Jocular. *Typically: **be ~; look like ~**.) ☐ *Whenever Jane wants to cross the street, she just walks out into traffic without looking. She's a candidate for a pair of wings, I say.* ☐ *Tom: How's Bill doing? I heard he was sick. Jane: Not good, I'm afraid. He looks like a candidate for a pair of wings.*

cannot See the expressions listed at can't and also those at not able.

cannot carry a tune Go to can't carry a tune.

cannot help doing something not able to refrain from doing something; not able not to do something. ☐ *Anne is such a good cook, I can't help eating everything she serves.* ☐ *Since John loves to shop, he can't help spending money.*

cannot see (any) further than the end of one's **nose** Go to see no further than the end of one's nose.

cannot see the forest for the trees Go to next.

cannot see the wood for the trees and **cannot see the forest for the trees** *Prov.* Cannot perceive the overview or important things because of concentrating too much on details. ☐ *The information presented in this textbook is so disorganized that I can't see the wood for the trees.* ☐ *The politician's opponents claimed that she couldn't see the forest for the trees, because she spent so much time trying to solve minor problems.*

cannot stomach someone or something Go to not able to stomach someone or something.

[can't] See the expressions listed at not able, as well as those listed below.

can't call one's **soul** one's **own** *Fig.* working for other people all the time. ☐ *Jane has to work two jobs and take care of both her aging parents. She can't call her soul her own.* ☐ *Between supporting his family and working off his brother's bad debts, Bob really can't call his soul his own.*

can't carry a tune and **cannot carry a tune; can't carry a tune in a bushel basket; can't carry a tune in a bucket; can't carry a tune in a paper sack** *Fig.* [to be] unable to sing a simple melody; lacking musical ability. ☐ *I wish that Tom wouldn't try to sing. He can't carry a tune.* ☐ *I don't know why Mary's in the choir. She can't carry a tune in a bushel basket.* ☐ *Joe likes to sing in the shower, though he can't carry a tune in a bucket.* ☐ *I'd try to hum the song for you, but I can't carry a tune in a paper sack.*

can't carry a tune in a bucket Go to previous.

can't carry a tune in a bushel basket Go to can't carry a tune.

can't carry a tune in a paper sack Go to can't carry a tune.

can't do anything with someone or something not [to be] able to manage or control someone or something. (Also with *cannot.*) ☐ *Bill is such a discipline problem. I can't do anything with him.* ☐ *My hair is such a mess. I just can't do anything with it.*

can't find one's **butt with both hands (in broad daylight)** *Sl.* is stupid or incompetent. (Use caution with *butt*, which is often considered crude.) ☐ *Why did they put Jim in charge? He can't find his butt with both hands!* ☐ *Tom: Jane seems like a bright girl. Bill: You've got to be kidding! She couldn't find her butt with both hands in broad daylight!*

can't hack it unable to do the job. ☐ *I thought delivering papers would be an easy job, but I just can't hack it.* ☐ *If you can't hack it, let me know, and I'll help you out.*

can't help but do something [to be] unable to choose any but one course of action. (Also with *cannot.*) ☐ *Her parents live nearby, so she can't help but go there on holidays.* ☐ *Bob is a tennis fan and can't help but travel to Wimbledon each year.*

can't hit the (broad) side of a barn *Rur.* cannot aim something accurately. ☐ *You're way off. You couldn't hit the broad side of a barn.* ☐ *Please don't try to throw the paper into the wastebasket. You can't hit the side of a barn.*

C

can't hold a candle to someone *Fig.* not [to be] equal to someone; unable to measure up to someone. (Also with *cannot.*) ☐ *Mary can't hold a candle to Ann when it comes to athletics.* ☐ *As for singing, John can't hold a candle to Jane.*

can't make heads or tails (out) of someone or something *Fig.* [to be] unable to understand someone or something. (Also with *cannot.*) ☐ *John is so strange. I can't make heads or tails of him.* ☐ *Do this report again. I can't make heads or tails out of it.*

Can't say (a)s I do(, can't say (a)s I don't). *Rur.* I am not sure. ☐ *Tom: Do you know Mr. Smith? Mary: Well, I can't say as I do, can't say as I don't.* ☐ *Jane: What do you think of my cousin? Do you like him? Mary: Can't say's I do, can't say's I don't.*

can't say boo to a goose *Rur.* shy and not talkative. ☐ *I was surprised to see Joe so talkative at the party. Usually he can't say boo to a goose.* ☐ *She's a quiet little kid. Can't say boo to a goose.*

can't see a hole in a ladder stupid or drunk. ☐ *No use asking her questions. She can't see a hole in a ladder.* ☐ *After the big party, Joe needed someone to drive him home. He couldn't see a hole in a ladder.*

can't see beyond the end of one's **nose** Go to see no further than the end of one's nose.

can't see one's **hand in front of** one's **face** *Fig.* [to be] unable to see very far, usually due to darkness or fog. (Also with *cannot.*) ☐ *It was so dark that I couldn't see my hand in front of my face.* ☐ *Bob said that the fog was so thick he couldn't see his hand in front of his face.*

can't see straight *Fig.* cannot function (often because of strong emotion). ☐ *I am so mad I can't see straight.* ☐ *She left me so frustrated that I couldn't see straight.*

can't stand (the sight of) someone or something and **can't stomach** someone or something *Fig.* [to be] unable to tolerate someone or something; disliking someone or something extremely. (Also with *cannot.*) ☐ *I can't stand the sight of cooked carrots.* ☐ *Mr. Jones can't stomach the sight of blood.* ☐ *None of us can stand this place.* ☐ *Nobody can stand Tom when he smokes a cigar.*

can't stomach someone or something Go to previous.

can't wait (for something **(to** happen**))** to be very eager, as if to be unable to endure the wait for something to happen. ☐ *I am so eager for my birthday to come. I just can't wait.*

can't wait (to do something**)** to be very eager, as if to be unable to endure the wait until it is possible to do something. ☐ *I'm glad it's almost summertime—I just can't wait to go swimming!*

cap and gown the academic cap or mortarboard and the robe worn in formal academic ceremonies. ☐ *We all had to rent cap and gown for graduation.* ☐ *I appeared wearing my cap and gown, but I had shorts on underneath because it gets so hot at that time of year.*

C

capable of doing something having the ability to do something. ☐ *Do you think Tom is capable of lifting 200 pounds?* ☐ *No one I know is capable of such a crime!*

capitalize on something *Fig.* to build on something; to exploit something, such as an opportunity of talent, to one's own benefit. ☐ *Let's try to capitalize on the strength of the economy and invest for the future.* ☐ *Capitalize on your experience in the field and you'll do well in the interview.*

capitulate to someone or something to surrender or submit to someone or something. ☐ *The general finally capitulated to the enemy.* ☐ *I won't capitulate in this argument.*

captain of industry *Fig.* a high-ranking corporation officer; a wealthy and successful capitalist. ☐ *The captains of industry manage to hang on to their money no matter what.* ☐ *It's fun to see those captains of industry drive up in their limousines.*

capture someone's **imagination** *Fig.* to intrigue someone; to interest someone in a lasting way; to stimulate someone's imagination. ☐ *The story of the young wizard has captured the imagination of the world's children.*

***a card** *Fig.* an entertaining and clever person who says or does funny things. (*Typically: **act like ~; be ~**.) ☐ *He is such a card. Always making jokes.* ☐ *Mary is a card, and she has to learn to take things seriously sometimes.*

card-carrying member *Fig.* an official member of some group, originally, the communist party. ☐ *Bill is a card-carrying member of the electricians union.*

the **cards are stacked against** one [informal] luck is against one. (See also **stack the deck (against** someone or something**)**.) ☐ *I have the worst luck. The cards are stacked against me all the time.* ☐ *How can I accomplish anything when the cards are stacked against me?*

care about someone or something **1.** to hold someone or something dear; to prize someone or something. ☐ *I really care about you.* ☐ *I care very much about my family.* **2.** to have even minimal regard for someone or something. (Does not imply any of the tender feelings expressed in ①.) ☐ *Don't you care about animals?* ☐ *I care about what happens in Washington.*

care for someone to feel tenderly toward someone; to love someone. ☐ *I care for you a great deal, Walter.* ☐ *I care for you too, Alice.*

care for someone or something to take care of someone or something. ☐ *Will you care for my cat while I am away?* ☐ *I would be happy to care for your child.*

care for something to like the taste of some kind of food or drink. (Usually used with a negative.) ☐ *I don't care for sweet potatoes.* ☐ *I don't care for sweet desserts.*

care nothing about someone or something to have no regard or respect for someone or something. ☐ *You have hurt me with your insults. I care nothing about you!* ☐ *She cares nothing about your money!*

care nothing for someone or something not to like someone or something. ☐ *She cares nothing for your suggestion.* ☐ *Sarah cares nothing for Jeff.*

care to do something to want to do something; to be willing to do something. ☐ *I really don't care to see that movie.* ☐ *Would you care to go out for dinner?*

careful not to do something using care to avoid some difficulty or difficulties. ☐ *Please be careful not to discuss politics with Mr. Brown.* ☐ *Please be careful not to leave the house unlocked.*

careful (with something**)** treating or handling something with caution. ☐ *Please be careful with the vase. It's old and valuable.* ☐ *That's too big a load. Be careful!*

carp about someone or something to complain about someone or something. ☐ *You are always carping about all your petty problems at work.* ☐ *Stop carping about Randy!*

carp at someone **(about** someone or something**)** to complain to someone about someone or something. ☐ *Why are you always carping at me about your family?* ☐ *You are always carping at Joan about her brother.*

carp at someone or something to criticize someone or something. ☐ *Poor Clara is carping at Bill's carelessness again.* ☐ *Please stop carping at me.*

carry (a lot of) weight (with someone or something**)** *Fig.* to be very influential with someone or some group of people. ☐ *Your argument does not carry a lot of weight with me.* ☐ *The senator's testimony carried a lot of weight with the council.*

carry a secret to the grave and **carry a secret to** one's **grave** *Fig.* to never reveal a secret, even to the day of one's death. ☐ *John carried our secret to his grave.* ☐ *Trust me, I will carry your secret to the grave!*

carry a torch (for someone**)** and **carry the torch (for** someone**)** *Fig.* to be in love with someone who is not in love with you; to brood over a hopeless love affair. ☐ *John is carrying a torch for Jane.* ☐ *Is John still carrying a torch after all this time?*

carry coals to Newcastle *Prov.* to do something unnecessary; to do something that is redundant or duplicative. (Newcastle is an English town from which coal was shipped to other parts of England.) ☐ *Mr. Smith is so rich he doesn't need any more money. To give him a gift certificate is like carrying coals to Newcastle.*

carry on to behave badly or mischievously. ☐ *The children always carry on when the teacher's out of the room.* ☐ *Stop carrying on and go to sleep!*

carry on (about someone or something**)** to make a great fuss over someone or something; to cry (especially for a long time or uncontrollably) about someone or something. (Note the variation in the examples.) ☐ *Billy, stop carrying on about your tummy ache like that.* ☐ *The child carried on endlessly when his mother scolded him.* ☐ *When the soldier finally came home, his wife cried and carried on for hours.* ☐ *Calm down. There's no need to carry on so.*

carry on somehow to manage to continue or endure, in spite of problems. ☐ *Even though we did not have a lot of money, we managed to carry on somehow.* ☐ *Don't worry about us. We will carry on somehow.*

carry on (to something**)** to continue on to some place or some time. ☐ *Please keep reading. Carry on to the next page.* ☐ *Please carry on with your report.*

carry on (with someone**)** to flirt with someone; to have a love affair with someone. ☐ *It looks like Linda is carrying on with James.*

carry on (with something**)** to continue doing something. (Compare this with **carry** something **on.**) ☐ *Please carry on with your singing.* ☐ *Tom carried on with his boring speech for twenty minutes.*

carry on without someone or something to manage to continue without someone or something. ☐ *I don't know how we will be able to carry on without you.* ☐ *We can't carry on without a leader!*

carry one's **cross** Go to **bear** one's **cross.**

carry one's **(own) weight** and **pull** one's **(own) weight** *Fig.* to do one's share; to earn one's keep. (The *weight* is the burden that is the responsibility of someone.) ☐ *Tom, you must be more helpful around the house. We each have to carry our own weight.* ☐ *Bill, I'm afraid that you can't work here anymore. You just haven't been carrying your weight.*

carry over to extend into another time period or location. ☐ *I don't like for bills to carry over into the next month.* ☐ *Please do not let the paragraph carry over.*

carry over (to something**) 1.** [for a sum or other figure] to be taken to another column of figures. ☐ *This amount carries over into the next column.* ☐ *Yes, this number carries over.* **2.** to last or continue until another time. ☐ *Will this enthusiasm carry over to the following week?* ☐ *Of course, it will carry over.*

carry someone **along† (with** someone**)** [for someone's enthusiasm or power] to affect other people and persuade them. ☐ *The excitement of the play carried the audience along with the actors.* ☐ *She carried along the audience with her all the way.*

carry someone **along† (with** something**)** [for something] to transport someone as it moves along. ☐ *The flood carried us along with the debris.* ☐ *The rushing water carried along everything with it.*

carry someone **around† (with** oneself**) 1.** *Lit.* to be the source of transport for someone, usually a child. ☐ *I'm tired of carrying this baby around with me everywhere. Can't I buy a baby carriage?* ☐ *I always carry around my child with me.* **2.** *Fig.* to have in mind the memory or a sense of presence of another person with oneself. ☐ *I have been carrying my dead grandfather around with me for years.* ☐ *She carries around her brother with her in her memories.*

carry someone **away†** [for someone or something] to cause a person to lose control. ☐ *The excitement of the parade carried us all away.* ☐ *The fervor of the speech carried away the whole crowd.*

carry someone **back (to** some time**)** to return someone, mentally, to a former time; to remind someone of an earlier time. ☐ *This carries me back to the times of knights and jousting.* ☐ *This article about the Sixties really carries me back.*

carry someone or something **about** and **carry** someone or something **around** to carry someone or something with one; to carry someone or something from place to place. ☐ *Do I have to carry these books about all over campus?* ☐ *You are too heavy, sweetie. I don't want to carry you around all day.*

carry someone or something **away†** to take or steal someone or something. ☐ *Someone carried our lawn furniture away while we were on vacation.* ☐ *The kidnappers carried away the child when no one was looking.*

carry someone or something **into** some place and **carry** someone or something **in†** to lift and move someone or something to some place. ☐ *Will you carry the baby into the bedroom?* ☐ *Let me carry in the packages.*

carry someone or something **off†** to take or steal someone or something. ☐ *The kidnappers carried the child off.* ☐ *They carried off the child.*

carry someone or something **out†** to lift up and move someone or something out. ☐ *Help me carry the baby and her things out.* ☐ *Let's carry out the dishes and set the table.*

carry someone or something **over† from** something to transport someone or something from somewhere, usually a great distance or another country. ☐ *The ship carried the travel club over from Spain.* ☐ *They carried over all my furniture from Paris.*

carry someone or something **over to** something to lift and move someone or something to another place. ☐ *Please carry this over to the window.* ☐ *Could you carry Timmy over to his bed, please? He's asleep.*

carry someone or something **through** something to lift up and move someone or something through something. ☐ *We will have to carry him through the crowd to the ambulance.* ☐ *Jane carried the groceries through the doorway.*

carry someone somewhere *Rur.* to take or escort someone somewhere. ☐ *Friday nights, Joe always carries his wife to town.* ☐ *"May I carry you home?" the young man asked Jane.*

carry someone **through (**something**)** to sustain someone (as someone's expenses or needs) during something. ☐ *Can this amount carry you through the week?* ☐ *Yes, this will carry me through.*

carry something **along† (with** someone**)** to bring or take something with one; to have something with one and have it handy at all times. ☐ *You should carry this emergency phone list along with you whenever you travel.* ☐ *Please carry along this package when you go.*

carry something **around† (with** one**)** to have something on one's person at all times. ☐ *He carries a backpack around with him.* ☐ *Max carries around his checkbook with him.*

carry something **back†** to take something back to where it came from. ☐ *Did you bring this here? If so, carry it back.* ☐ *Please carry back the empty box after you take out all the books.*

carry something **down†** to take something from a higher to a lower place. ☐ *Would you go up to the attic and carry the trunk down?* ☐ *Why should I carry down the trunk?*

carry something **forward** to take a figure from one column or category to another. ☐ *Now, carry this figure forward into the tens column.*

carry something **off† 1.** *Lit.* to take something away with oneself; to steal something. ☐ *Someone carried off my books!* ☐ *I think someone carried off the lawn chairs last night.* **2.** *Fig.* to make a planned event work out successfully. ☐ *It was a huge party, but the hostess carried it off beautifully.* ☐ *The magician carried off the trick with great skill.*

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carry something **on**† **1.** to do something over a period of time. (Compare this with **carry on (with** something.) □ *Do you think you can carry this on for a year?* □ *I will carry on this activity for three years if you want.* **2.** to continue to do something as a tradition. □ *We intend to carry this celebration on as long as the family can gather for the holidays.* □ *We will carry on this tradition for decades, in fact.* **3.** Go to **carry** something **onto** something.

carry something **on** someone's **shoulders** Go to **on** someone's **shoulders.**

carry something **onto** something and **carry** something **on**† to take something onto a vehicle. □ *Do you plan to carry this bag onto the plane?* □ *I'd like to carry on two bags.* □ *Can I carry them both on?*

carry something **out**† to perform a task; to perform an assignment. □ *"This is a very important job," said Jane. "Do you think you can carry it out?"* □ *The students didn't carry out their assignments.*

carry something **over**† to let something like a bill extend into another period of time. □ *We'll carry the amount of money due over into the next month.* □ *Yes, please carry over the balance.*

carry something **over**† **(until** some time**)** and **carry** something **over**† **(to** some time**)** to defer something until a particular time. □ *Can we carry this discussion over until later?* □ *We will carry over our discussion to tomorrow.*

carry something **with*** Go to next.

carry something **with** one and **carry** something **with*** to have something with one or on one's person. (*The second form is informal.) □ *Do you always carry that bag with you?* □ *I always carry a pen with.*

carry the ball 1. *Lit.* to be the player who is relied on to gain yardage, especially in football. □ *It was the fullback carrying the ball.* □ *Yes, Tom always carries the ball.* **2.** *Fig.* to be in charge; to be considered reliable enough to make sure that a job gets done. □ *We need someone who knows how to get the job done. Hey, Sally! Why don't you carry the ball for us?* □ *John can't carry the ball. He isn't organized enough.*

carry the day and **win the day** to be successful; to win a competition, argument, etc. (Originally meaning to win a battle.) □ *Our team didn't play well at first, but we won the day in the end.* □ *Preparation won the day and James passed his exams.*

carry the torch 1. *Fig.* to lead or participate in a (figurative) crusade. □ *The battle was over, but John continued to carry the torch.* □ *If Jane hadn't carried the torch, no one would have followed, and the whole thing would have failed.* **2.** Go to **carry a torch (for** someone**).**

carry the weight of the world on one's **shoulders** *Fig.* to appear or behave as if burdened by all the problems in the whole world. □ *Look at Tom. He appears to be carrying the weight of the world on his shoulders.* □ *Cheer up, Tom! You don't need to carry the weight of the world on your shoulders.*

carry through (on something**)** Go to **follow through (on** something**).**

carry weight (with someone**)** *Fig.* to have influence with someone; [for an explanation] to amount to a good argument to use with someone. □ *That carries a lot of weight with the older folks.* □ *What you say carries no weight with me.*

cart someone or something **off**† to take or haul someone or something away. (When used with *someone* the person is treated like an object.) □ *The police came and carted her off.* □ *Let's cart off these boxes.*

***carte blanche** *Fig.* freedom or permission to act as one wishes or thinks necessary. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~.**) □ *He's been given carte blanche with the reorganization of the workforce.* □ *The manager has been given no instructions about how to train the staff. He has carte blanche from the owner.*

carve someone or something **up**† to damage someone or something by careless or purposeful cutting (of a person, can be figurative). □ *Someone carved the tabletop up. Who did it and why?* □ *The boxer wanted to carve up his opponent.*

carve something **from** something to shape by cutting something off or out of something with a knife. □ *Can you carve an elephant from a bar of soap?*

carve something **in**† Go to **carve** something **into** something.

carve something **in stone** *Fig.* to fix some idea permanently. (See also **carved in stone.**) □ *No one has carved this one approach in stone; we have several options.*

carve something **into** something **1.** and **carve** something **in**† to cut letters or symbols into something. □ *He carved his initials into a tree.* □ *He carved in the letters one by one.* **2** to create a carved object by sculpturing raw material. □ *Ken carved the apple into a tiny snowman.*

carve something **out**† to hollow something out by carving; to make something hollow by carving. □ *Can he carve a bowl out of such soft wood?* □ *He carved out the bowl of the pipe and then began to sand it.*

carve something **out**† **(of** something**)** to remove something from the inside of something else by carving or cutting. □ *She carved the insides out.* □ *She carved out the insides of the pumpkin.*

carve something **up**† to divide something up, perhaps carelessly. □ *The peace treaty carved the former empire up into several countries.* □ *You can't just carve up one country and give the pieces away.*

carved in stone and **engraved in stone; written in stone** *Fig.* permanent or not subject to change. (Often in the negative.) □ *Now, this isn't carved in stone yet, but this looks like the way it's going to be.* □ *Is this policy carved in stone, or can it still be modified?*

the **case** the [current] instance; an actual situation. □ *I think Bill is a vegetarian, and if that is the case, we should not serve him meat.* □ *Susie believes trees can talk, but that is not the case.*

a **case in point** a specific example of what one is talking about. □ *Now, as a case in point, let's look at nineteenth-century England.* □ *Fireworks can be dangerous. For a case in point, look at what happened to Bob Smith last Fourth of July.*

a **case of mistaken identity** the incorrect identification of someone. □ *I am not the criminal you want to arrest. This is a case of mistaken identity.*

***a case of something 1.** an instance of something. (*Typically: **be ~; have ~**.) ☐ *This is a case of police brutality. They should not have injured the suspect.* **2.** an occurrence of a disease. (*Typically: **be ~; look like ~; treat ~**.) ☐ *I am suffering from a case of the flu.*

a **case of the blind leading the blind** *Fig.* a situation where people who don't know how to do something try to teach other people. ☐ *Tom doesn't know anything about cars, but he's trying to teach Sally how to change the oil. It's a case of the blind leading the blind.* ☐ *When I tried to show Mary how to use a computer, it was a case of the blind leading the blind.*

case someone or something out† *Sl.* to look someone or something over carefully, with a view to additional activity at a later time. ☐ *He came into the room and cased all the lighting fixtures out.* ☐ *He cased out the fixtures to see which ones to replace.* ☐ *John cased the girls out.*

case the joint 1. *Sl.* to look over some place to figure out how to break in, what to steal, etc. (Underworld.) ☐ *First of all you gotta case the joint to see where things are.* ☐ *You could see he was casing the joint the way he hung around.* **2.** *Sl.* to look a place over. ☐ *The dog came in and cased the joint, sniffing out friends and foes.* ☐ *The old lady entered slowly, casing the joint for someone of her own age, and finally took a seat.*

cash flow problem a lack of hard currency. ☐ *My real estate business has a temporary cash flow problem.* ☐ *Due to his cash flow problem, he was unable to pay his employees that month.*

cash in (on something) *Fig.* to earn a lot of money at something; to make a profit at something. ☐ *This is a good year for drug stocks, and you can cash in on it if you're smart.* ☐ *It's too late to cash in on that particular clothing fad.*

Cash is king. *Prov.* It is best to keep one's investment money in cash. (Said when the prices in the securities markets are too high. It is better to build up cash and wait for a break in the market.) ☐ *Things look a little pricey now. I'd say that cash is king for the moment.* ☐ *I'm holding a little cash for a little bottom fishing, but I wouldn't say that cash is king.*

Cash is trash. *Prov.* It is unwise to keep one's investment money in cash. (Said when there are good opportunities in securities and it is foolish not to invest cash.) ☐ *If you've got money sitting around in savings while the market is steaming ahead, you are losing dollars. Right now cash is trash.* ☐ *Cash is trash. Get into the market or you stand to lose a bundle.*

cash money *Rur.* money in bills and coins. ☐ *You could make cash money selling your quilts, you really could.* ☐ *Joe wants cash money for his old TV set. He won't let me have it on credit.*

cash on the barrelhead and **cash on the line** *Rur.* cash at the time of purchase. ☐ *Jonson's store doesn't give credit. Everything is cash on the barrelhead.* ☐ *They offered me fifty thousand dollars cash on the line for Aunt Nancy's old house.*

cash on the line Go to previous.

cash (one's chips) in† 1. *Lit.* to turn in one's gaming tokens or poker chips when one quits playing. ☐ *When you leave the game, you should cash your chips in.* ☐ *Cash in your chips before you go.* ☐ *I'm going to cash in.* **2.** *Fig.* to quit [anything], as if one were cashing in gaming tokens; to leave or go to bed. ☐ *I guess I'll cash my chips in and go home.* ☐ *Well, it's time to cash in my chips and go home.* ☐ *I'm really tired. I'm going to cash in.* **3.** and **cash one's checks in†** *Euph.* to die; to finish the "game of life." ☐ *There's a funeral procession. Who cashed his chips in?* ☐ *Poor Fred cashed in his chips last week.*

cash or credit [a purchase made] either by paying cash or by putting the charges on a credit account. ☐ *When Fred had all his purchases assembled on the counter, the clerk asked, "Cash or credit?"* ☐ *That store does not give you a choice of cash or credit. They want cash only.*

cash something in† to exchange something with cash value for the amount of money it is worth. ☐ *I should have cashed my insurance policy in years ago.* ☐ *It's time to cash in your U. S. savings bonds.*

cash something in† (for something) to exchange a security for money; to convert a foreign currency to one's own currency; to turn gaming tokens or poker chips in for money. (See also **cash (one's chips) in**.) ☐ *I cashed the bonds in for a cashier's check.* ☐ *I cashed in my bonds for their face value.*

cash-and-carry a method of buying and selling goods at the retail level where the buyer pays cash for the goods and carries the goods away. (As opposed to paying on credit or with the cost of delivery included.) ☐ *Sorry, we don't accept credit cards. This is strictly cash-and-carry.* ☐ *I bought the chair cash-and-carry before I realized that I had no way to get it home.*

cast a spell (on someone) 1. *Lit.* to enchant someone with a magic spell. ☐ *The wizard cast a spell on the frog, turning it into a prince with bad skin.* **2.** *Fig.* to intrigue and delight someone. ☐ *She is a real beauty. She cast a spell on every man she met.*

cast around for someone or something and **cast about for someone or something** to seek someone or something; to seek a thought or an idea. (Alludes to a type of person or thing rather than a specific one.) ☐ *John is casting around for a new cook. The old one quit.* ☐ *Bob is casting about for a new car.*

cast aspersions on someone to make a rude and insulting remark. ☐ *I resent your casting aspersions on my brother and his ability!* ☐ *It is rude to cast aspersions on people in general.*

cast doubt(s) (on someone or something) to cause someone or something to be doubted. ☐ *The police cast doubt on my story.* ☐ *How can they cast doubt? They haven't looked into it yet.* ☐ *The city council cast doubt on John and his plan.*

cast in the same mold *Fig.* [of two or more people or things] very similar. ☐ *The two sisters are cast in the same mold—equally mean.* ☐ *All the members of the family are cast in the same mold and they all had success as entertainers.*

cast off (from something) [for the crew of a boat or ship] to push away from the dock or pier; to begin the process of navigating a boat or ship. ☐ *The crew cast off from the dock.* ☐ *It's time to cast off.*

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Cast one's **bread upon the waters.** *Prov.* Act generous because you feel it is right and not because you expect a reward. (Biblical.) ☐ *Joseph is casting his bread upon the waters, supporting Bob while he works on his novel.* ☐ *Cast your bread upon the waters; make a generous contribution to our cause.*

cast one's **eyes down**† *Fig.* to tilt one's head or gaze downward. (Usually a sign of shame or to appear not to have seen someone.) ☐ *She cast her eyes down as they saw each other again.* ☐ *He cast down his eyes in shame.*

cast one's **lot in**† **(with** someone or something**)** to join in with someone or a group. ☐ *He cast his lot in with the others.* ☐ *She cast in her lot with the others.* ☐ *She cast in with a questionable crowd.*

cast (one's**) pearls before swine** *Fig.* to waste something good on someone who doesn't care about it. (From a biblical quotation.) ☐ *To sing for them is to cast pearls before swine.* ☐ *To serve them French cuisine is like casting one's pearls before swine.*

cast one's **vote** to vote; to place one's ballot in the ballot box. ☐ *The citizens cast their votes for president.* ☐ *The wait in line to cast one's vote was almost an hour.*

cast someone **as** something **1.** *Lit.* to choose someone to play a particular role in a play, opera, film, etc. ☐ *The director cast her as the young singer.* ☐ *They cast me as a villain.* **2.** *Fig.* to decide or fantasize that someone is going to follow a particular pattern of behavior in real life. ☐ *I'm afraid my teachers cast me as a dummy when I was very young.* ☐ *They cast me as someone who would not succeed.*

cast someone **aside**† and **cast** someone **off**†**; cast** someone **away**† *Fig.* to dispose of someone; to reject or discard someone. ☐ *He simply cast his wife aside, and that was it.*

cast someone or something **up**† [for the waves] to bring up and deposit someone or something on the shore. ☐ *The waves cast the wreckage up, and it was found on the shore.* ☐ *The waves cast up the wreckage of a boat.*

cast something **aside**† and **cast** something **off**†**; cast** something **away**† to throw something away. ☐ *You can't just cast aside a new coat that you've only worn once.*

cast something **back (**some place**)** to throw something back somewhere. ☐ *I cast the fish back in the water.* ☐ *Cast back those stones and all the others you took from the pile.*

cast something **down**† to hurl or throw something down. ☐ *She cast the glass down, breaking it into a thousand pieces.* ☐ *She cast down the tray and all that was on it.*

cast something **off**† Go to **cast** someone or something **aside**†**.**

cast the first stone *Fig.* to make the first criticism; to be the first to attack. (From a biblical quotation.) ☐ *Well, I don't want to be the one to cast the first stone, but she sang horribly.* ☐ *John always casts the first stone. Does he think he's perfect?*

cast-iron stomach *Fig.* a very strong stomach that can withstand bad food or anything nauseating. ☐ *If I didn't have a cast-iron stomach, I couldn't eat this stuff.* ☐ *Fred—known for his cast-iron stomach—ate ten whole hot peppers.*

A **cat can look at a king.** *Prov.* No one is so important that an ordinary person cannot look at him or her; everyone has the right to be curious about important people. ☐ *Jane: I get so angry at those people who read tabloid magazines. The private lives of television stars are none of their business. Alan: Don't be so hard on them. A cat can look at a king.* ☐ *Fred: You shouldn't stare at me like that. I'm your boss. Jill: A cat can look at a king.*

A **cat has nine lives.** *Prov.* Cats can survive things that are severe enough to kill them. (You can also refer to a particular cat's *nine lives.*) ☐ *Jill: My cat fell off a third-floor balcony and just walked away. How can he do that? Jane: A cat has nine lives.* ☐ *I think my cat used up one of her nine lives when she survived being hit by that car.*

A **cat in gloves catches no mice.** *Prov.* Sometimes you cannot get what you want by being careful and polite. ☐ *Jill: I've hinted to Mary several times that I need her to pay me the money she owes, but she just ignores me. Jane: A cat in gloves catches no mice, Jill. Tell her bluntly that you need the money.*

the **cat is out of the bag** *Fig.* the secret has been made known. (See also **let the cat out of the bag.**) ☐ *Now that the cat is out of the bag, there is no sense in pretending we don't know what's really happening.*

catapult someone or something **into** something **1.** *Lit.* to throw someone or something into a place using a catapult. ☐ *The soldiers catapulted the huge stone into the fortress.* **2.** *Fig.* to thrust or force someone or something into something, such as fame, glory, front-page news, etc. ☐ *The success catapulted her into the spotlight.* ☐ *The scandal catapulted the contractual arrangements into public scrutiny.*

catch a glimpse of someone or something Go to **catch sight of** someone or something.

catch a whiff of something Go to a **whiff of** something.

catch (a)hold of someone or something to grasp or seize someone or something. ☐ *See if you can catch hold of the rope as it swings back and forth.* ☐ *I couldn't catch ahold of her.*

catch cold and **take cold** *Fig.* to contract a cold (a common respiratory infection.) (Use with *catch* is more frequent.) ☐ *Please close the window, or we'll all catch cold.* ☐ *I take cold every year at this time.*

catch forty winks and **take forty winks; have forty winks** *Fig.* to take a nap; to get some sleep. ☐ *I'll just catch forty winks before getting ready for the party.* ☐ *I think I'll go to bed and take forty winks. See you in the morning.*

catch hell Go to **hell.**

catch hell (about someone or something**)** and **get hell (about** someone or something**); catch hell (for** something**)** to be scolded (about someone or something). ☐ *This isn't the first time Bill's caught hell about his drinking.* ☐ *We knew we were gonna catch hell when Ma saw how we'd ruined her garden.* ☐ *Somebody is going to catch hell for this!*

catch it to get into trouble and receive punishment. ☐ *I know I'm going to catch it for denting mom's car when I get home.* ☐ *Bob hit Billy in the face. He really caught it from the teacher for that.*

Catch me later. and **Catch me some other time.** Please try to talk to me later. ☐ *Bill (angry): Tom, look at this phone bill! Tom: Catch me later.* ☐ *"Catch me some other time," hollered Mr. Franklin over his shoulder. "I've got to go to the airport."*

Catch me some other time. Go to previous.

catch (on) fire to ignite and burn with flames. ☐ *Keep your coat away from the flames, or it will catch fire.* ☐ *The curtains blew against the flame of the candle and caught on fire.*

catch on (to something**)** *Fig.* to figure something out. (See also **get onto** someone.) ☐ *I finally caught on to what she was talking about.* ☐ *It takes a while for me to catch on.*

catch on (with someone**)** *Fig.* [for something] to become popular with someone. ☐ *I hope our new product catches on with children.* ☐ *I'm sure it will catch on.*

catch one **off (**one's**) guard** Go to **catch** someone **off guard.**

catch one's **breath** *Fig.* to struggle for normal breathing after strenuous activity. ☐ *The jogger stopped to catch her breath.* ☐ *It took Jimmy a minute to catch his breath after being punched in the stomach.*

catch one's **death (of cold)** and **take** one's **death (of cold)** *Fig.* to contract a cold, a common respiratory infection; to catch a serious cold. (See also **catch cold.**) ☐ *If I go out in this weather, I'll catch my death of cold.* ☐ *Dress up warm or you'll take your death.*

catch one **with** one's **pants down** *Fig.* to discover someone in the act of doing something that is normally private or hidden. (Literal uses are possible.) ☐ *Some council members were using tax money as their own. But the press caught them with their pants down and now the district attorney will press charges.*

catch onto someone or something Go to **onto** someone or something.

catch onto something [for something] to snag on or get grabbed by something else. (See also **onto** something.) ☐ *This little piece has to catch onto this gear each time it comes around.* ☐ *A few threads of my shirt caught onto the cactus needles and ruined the whole thing.*

catch sight of someone or something and **catch a glimpse of** someone or something to see someone or something briefly; to get a quick look at someone or something. ☐ *I caught sight of the plane just before it flew out of sight.* ☐ *Ann caught a glimpse of the robber as he ran out of the bank.*

catch some rays and **bag some rays** *Fig.* to get some sunshine; to tan in the sun. ☐ *We wanted to catch some rays, but the sun never came out the whole time we were there.* ☐ *I went to Hawaii to bag some rays.*

catch some Zs and **cop some Zs; cut some Zs** to get some sleep. (In comic strips, Zs are used to show that someone is sleeping or snoring.) ☐ *I gotta catch some Zs before I drop.* ☐ *Why don't you stop a little bit and try to cop some Zs?*

catch someone **at a bad time** to attempt to speak or deal with someone at a time inconvenient for that person. ☐ *I'm sorry. You look busy. Did I catch you at a bad time?*

catch someone **at** something and **catch** someone doing something to discover someone doing something, especially something bad or shameful. ☐ *We caught her at her evil deeds.* ☐ *Don't let me catch you doing that again!*

catch someone **by surprise** Go to **take** someone **by surprise.**

catch someone doing something Go to **catch** someone **at** something.

catch someone **flat-footed** Go to **catch** someone **red-handed.**

catch someone **in the act (of** doing something**)** to discover someone doing a [bad] deed at the very moment when the deed is being done. (See also **caught in the act.**) ☐ *I caught her in the act of stealing the coat.* ☐ *He was caught in the act of taking money from the cash box.*

catch someone **napping** and **catch** someone **off balance; catch** someone **up short** to come upon someone who is unprepared; to surprise someone. (See also **asleep at the switch.**) ☐ *The enemy soldiers caught our army napping.* ☐ *The thieves caught the security guard napping.* ☐ *I didn't expect you so soon. You caught me off balance.* ☐ *The teacher asked a trick question and caught me up short.* ☐ *The robbers caught Ann off balance and stole her purse.*

catch someone **off guard** and **catch** one **off (**one's**) guard** *Fig.* to catch a person at a time of carelessness. ☐ *Tom caught Ann off guard and frightened her.* ☐ *She caught me off my guard, and my hesitation told her I was lying.*

catch someone or something **in** something to trap someone or something in something. ☐ *We caught David in the snare by accident.* ☐ *My platoon was caught in an enemy ambush.*

catch someone **out**† to discover the truth about someone's deception. ☐ *The investigator tried to catch me out, but I stuck to my story.* ☐ *The teacher caught out the student and punished him immediately.*

catch someone **red-handed** and **catch** someone **flat-footed** to catch a person in the act of doing something wrong. (See also **caught red-handed.**) ☐ *Tom was stealing the car when the police drove by and caught him red-handed.* ☐ *Mary tried to cash a forged check at the bank, and the teller caught her red-handed.*

catch someone's **eye** and **get** someone's **eye 1.** *Fig.* to establish eye contact with someone; to attract someone's attention. ☐ *The shiny red car caught Mary's eye.* ☐ *When Tom had her eye, he smiled at her.* **2.** *Fig.* to appear and attract someone's interest. ☐ *A small red car passing by caught my eye.* ☐ *One of the books on the top shelf caught my eye, and I took it down to look at it.*

catch someone **up in** something [for excitement or interest] to extend to and engross someone. ☐ *The fireworks caught everyone up in the excitement.* ☐ *The accident caught us all up in the resultant confusion.*

catch someone **up (on** someone or something**)** to tell someone the news of someone or something. (Fixed order.) ☐ *Oh, please catch me up on what your family is doing.* ☐ *Yes, do catch us up!* ☐ *I have to take some time to catch myself up on the news.*

catch someone **up short** Go to **catch** someone **napping.**

catch someone **with** something **1.** to discover or apprehend someone with something—usually something stolen or illicit. ☐ *They caught Elizabeth with the earrings she shoplifted.* ☐ *Don't let them catch you with the money!* **2.** to apprehend someone with the aid of something. ☐ *The state trooper caught the speeder with radar.* ☐ *The cops caught Lefty with the help of an informer.*

C

catch something *Fig.* to see or listen to something. ☐ *I will try to catch that new movie this weekend.* ☐ *Did you catch that radio program about cancer last night?*

catch something **from** someone to get a disease from someone. ☐ *I hope my children catch the chicken pox in kindergarten. Better to have it while you are young.* ☐ *I don't want to catch a cold from you.*

catch something **on** something to snag something on something. ☐ *I caught the pocket of my trousers on the drawer pull and almost ripped it off.* ☐ *He caught the sleeve of his uniform on a branch.*

catch something **up† in** something to ensnare and capture something in something. ☐ *We caught a large number of fish up in the net.* ☐ *We caught up many fish in the net.*

catch the devil Go to the devil.

catch the next wave and **wait for the next wave** *Fig.* to follow the next fad. ☐ *He has no purpose in life. He sits around strumming his guitar and waiting to catch the next wave.*

a **catch to it** a hidden problem associated with it. ☐ *It sounds good at first, but there's a catch to it. You have to pay all costs up front.*

catch up (on someone or something**)** to learn the news of someone or something. ☐ *I need a little time to catch up on the news.* ☐ *We all need to catch up on what Tony has been doing.* ☐ *I need some time to catch up.*

catch up (on something**)** to bring one's efforts with something up-to-date; to do the work that one should have done. ☐ *I need a quiet time so I can catch up on my work.* ☐ *He started school late and now has to catch up.*

catch up (to someone or something**)** and **catch up (with** someone or something**)** to move faster in order to reach someone or something who is moving in the same direction. ☐ *The red car caught up with the blue one.* ☐ *Bill caught up with Ann, and they walked to the bank together.*

catch up with someone Go to up with someone.

catch up (with someone or something**)** Go to catch up (to someone or something).

catch wind of something Go to get wind of something.

catch-as-catch-can the best one can do with whatever is available. ☐ *We went hitchhiking for a week and lived catch-as-catch-can.* ☐ *There were ten children in our family, and every meal was catch-as-catch-can.*

cater to someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to provide for or care for someone or something. ☐ *I believe that we can cater to you in this matter.* ☐ *Our company caters to larger firms that do not wish to maintain a service department.* **2.** *Fig.* to provide special or favorable treatment for someone or something. ☐ *I'm sorry, but I cannot cater to you and not to the others.* ☐ *We do not have the time to cater to special requests.*

caught in the act and **caught red-handed** *Fig.* seen doing something illegal or private. (See also catch someone in the act (of doing something) and catch someone red-handed.) ☐ *Tom was caught in the act and cannot deny what he did.* ☐ *Many car thieves are caught red-handed.*

caught in the crossfire 1. *Lit.* trapped between two lines of enemy fire. ☐ *I was caught in the crossfire and dove into a ditch to keep from getting killed.* **2.** and **caught in the middle** *Fig.* caught between two arguing people or groups, making it difficult to remain neutral. ☐ *Bill and Ann were arguing, and poor Bobby, their son, was caught in the middle.*

caught short 1. left without any money temporarily. ☐ *I'm caught a little short. Can I borrow a few bucks?* **2.** pregnant and unmarried. ☐ *Both of Jane's sisters got caught short before they graduated high school.*

caught unaware(s) surprised and unprepared. ☐ *Sorry. You startled me when you came up behind me. I was caught unaware.* ☐ *The clerk was caught unawares, and the robber emptied out the cash register before the clerk could sound the alarm.*

caught up in something and **caught up with** something deeply involved with something; participating actively or closely in something. ☐ *Wallace is caught up in his work and has little time for his son, Buxton.*

cause a commotion Go to cause (quite a) stir.

cause hard feelings Go to hard feelings.

cause lean times (ahead) Go to lean times (ahead).

cause qualms (about someone or something**)** Go to qualms (about someone or something).

cause (quite) a stir and **cause a commotion** to cause people to become agitated; to cause trouble in a group of people; to shock or alarm people. ☐ *When Bob appeared without jacket and tie, it caused a stir at the state dinner.* ☐ *The dog ran through the church and caused quite a commotion.*

cause (some) eyebrows to raise and **cause some raised eyebrows** *Fig.* to shock people; to surprise and dismay people. (The same as raise some eyebrows.) ☐ *John caused eyebrows to raise when he married a woman half his age.* ☐ *If you want to cause some eyebrows to raise, just start singing as you walk down the street.*

cause some raised eyebrows Go to previous.

cause (some) tongues to wag *Fig.* to cause people to gossip; to give people something to gossip about. ☐ *The way John was looking at Mary will surely cause some tongues to wag.* ☐ *The way Mary was so scantily dressed will also cause tongues to wag.*

caution someone **about** someone or something and **caution** someone **against** someone or something to warn someone against someone or something. ☐ *Haven't I cautioned you about that before?* ☐ *Hasn't someone cautioned you about Daniel?*

cave in [for a roof or ceiling] to collapse. ☐ *The roof of the mine caved in when no one was there.* ☐ *The tunnel caved in on the train.*

cave in (to someone or something**)** *Fig.* to give in to someone or something. ☐ *Finally, the manager caved in to the customer's demands.* ☐ *I refuse to cave in under pressure from my opponent.*

cavil at someone to find fault with someone; to complain about someone constantly. ☐ *Will you never cease caviling at all of us?* ☐ *There is no need to cavil at me day and night!*

cease and desist to completely stop doing something. (A legal phrase.) ☐ *The judge ordered the merchant to cease*

and desist the deceptive practices. ☐ *When they were ordered to cease and desist, they finally stopped.*

cede something **to** someone to grant a parcel of land to someone. ☐ *We refuse to cede that land to you.* ☐ *They ceded the land to the city for a park.*

celebrate someone **for** an accomplishment to honor someone for having done something. ☐ *The people celebrated the astronaut for a successful journey.* ☐ *She was celebrated widely for her discovery.*

cement something **on**† Go to next.

cement something **on(to)** something and **cement** something **on**† to fasten something onto something with glue or household cement. ☐ *Cement this handle back onto the cup.* ☐ *Now, cement on the other handle.* ☐ *I will cement it on for you.*

cement something **together** to fasten something together with glue or household cement. ☐ *Use this stuff to cement the vase together.* ☐ *Will you cement these parts together?*

censure someone **(for** something**)** to criticize someone formally for having done something. ☐ *Please don't censure us for doing our duty.* ☐ *The legislature proposed to censure one of its members.*

center around someone or something to make someone or something the central point in something; to be based on someone or something. ☐ *Your salary increases center around your ability to succeed at your job.* ☐ *The success of the picnic centers around the weather next week.*

the **center of attention** the focus of people's attention; the thing or person who monopolizes people's attention. ☐ *She had a way of making herself the center of attention wherever she went.*

center on someone or something to focus on someone or something in particular. ☐ *Let us center on the basic problem and try to solve it.* ☐ *I want to center on Liz and her contributions to the firm.*

center something **on** someone or something to base something on someone or something. ☐ *Let us center the discussion on Walter.* ☐ *Our whole meeting was centered on the conservation question.*

a **certain party** someone you know but whom I do not wish to name. ☐ *I spoke to a certain party about the matter you mentioned.* ☐ *If a certain party finds out about you-know-what, what on earth will you do?*

certain sure *Rur.* very sure. ☐ *Tom: Are you sure you saw Bill at work today? Mary: Certain sure.* ☐ *If you keep hanging around with them no-good kids, you'll get in a heap of trouble for certain sure.*

Certainly not! Go to **Definitely not!**

chafe at something *Fig.* to be irritated or annoyed at something. ☐ *Jane chafed at the criticism for a long time afterward.* ☐ *Jerry chafed for a while at what Ken had said.*

A **chain is no stronger than its weakest link.** *Prov.* A successful group or team relies on each member doing well. ☐ *George is completely out of shape. I don't want him on our ball team; a chain is only as strong as its weakest link.*

the **chain of command** *Fig.* the series or sequence of holders of responsibility in a hierarchy. ☐ *The only way to get things done in the military is to follow the chain of command. Never try to go straight to the top.*

chain someone or an animal **up**† to bind someone or an animal in chains. ☐ *We will have to chain him up until the police get here.* ☐ *Please chain up your dog.*

chain someone or something **down**† to fasten someone or something down with chains. ☐ *They chained down the bicycle rack so no one could steal it.* ☐ *We chained the toolshed down so a strong wind would not blow it over.*

chain something **to** something to connect things together with chains. ☐ *We chained all the bicycles to one another so no one could steal them.* ☐ *We will have to chain the lawn furniture to a tree if we leave it out while we are on vacation.*

chain something **up**† to lock or secure a door or gate with chains. ☐ *Please chain the gate up again when you come through.* ☐ *Yes, chain up the gate.*

chalk something **out**† **1.** *Lit.* to draw a picture of something in chalk, especially to illustrate a plan of some type. ☐ *The coach chalked the play out so the players could understand what they were to do.* ☐ *Our team captain chalked out the play.* **2.** *Fig.* to explain something carefully to someone, as if one were talking about a chalk drawing. ☐ *She chalked out the details of the plan over the phone.*

chalk something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to write something on a chalkboard. ☐ *Let me chalk this formula up so you all can see it.* ☐ *I'll chalk up the formula.* **2.** *Fig.* to add a mark or point to one's score. See also **chalk** something **up (against** someone**)**.) ☐ *Chalk another goal for Sarah.* ☐ *Chalk up another basket for the other side.*

chalk something **up**† **(against** someone**)** *Fig.* to blame someone for something; to register something against someone. ☐ *I will have to chalk another fault up against Fred.* ☐ *She chalked up a mark against Dave.*

chalk something **up**† **(to** something**)** *Fig.* to recognize something as the cause of something else. ☐ *We chalked her bad behavior up to her recent illness.* ☐ *I had to chalk up the loss to inexperience.*

challenge someone **on** something to dispute someone's statement, remarks, or position. ☐ *I think Fred is wrong, but I won't challenge him on his estimate.*

challenge someone **to** something to dare someone to do something; to invite someone to compete at something. ☐ *I challenge you to a round of golf.* ☐ *Jerry challenged us to a debate of the issues.*

champ at the bit and **chomp at the bit 1.** *Lit.* [for a horse] to bite at its bit, eager to move along. ☐ *Dobbin was champing at the bit, eager to go.* **2.** *Fig.* to be ready and anxious to do something. ☐ *The kids were champing at the bit to get into the swimming pool.* ☐ *The dogs were champing at the bit to begin the hunt.*

chance something to risk doing something; to try doing something while being aware of the risk involved. ☐ *I don't usually ride horses, but this time I will chance it.* ☐ *Bob didn't have a ticket, but he went to the airport anyway, chancing a cancellation.*

chance (up)on someone or something to find someone or something by accident; to happen on someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *I chanced upon a nice little restaurant on my walk today.* ☐ *I chanced on an old friend of yours in town today.*

chances are the likelihood is (followed by a clause stating what is likely). ☐ *Chances are that she would have been late even if she had left on time.*

change back (from something**)** to return to the original form, state, or selection, from some other form, state, or selection. ☐ *We are going to change back from our position of last month.* ☐ *We didn't like our new plumber, so we changed back.*

change back ((in)to someone or something**)** to return to the original form. ☐ *The crisis in Congress changed back to a minor matter within a week.* ☐ *Then Superman changed back into mild-mannered Clark Kent.*

change hands [for something] to be sold or passed from owner to owner. (From the "point of view" of the object that is passed on.) ☐ *How many times has this lot changed hands in the last ten years?* ☐ *We built this house in 1970, and it has never changed hands.*

change horses in midstream and **change horses in the middle of the stream** *Fig.* to make major changes in an activity that has already begun; to choose someone or something else after it is too late. (Alludes to someone trying to move from one horse to another while crossing a stream.) ☐ *I'm already baking a cherry pie. I can't bake an apple pie. It's too late to change horses in the middle of the stream.* ☐ *The house is half-built. It's too late to hire a different architect. You can't change horses in midstream.* ☐ *Jane: I've written a rough draft of my research paper, but the topic doesn't interest me as much as I thought. Maybe I ought to pick a different one. Jill: Don't change horses in midstream.*

change horses in the middle of the stream Go to previous.

change into someone or something to alter one's or its state to another state. ☐ *The ugly witch changed into a lovely maiden.* ☐ *An insect larva changes into a cocoon.*

the **change (of life)** menopause. ☐ *The change of life affects each woman differently.* ☐ *Jill started the change when she was forty-seven.*

a **change of pace** an addition of some variety in one's life, routine, or abode. ☐ *Going to the beach on the weekend will be a change of pace.* ☐ *The doctor says I need a change of pace from this cold climate.*

a **change of scenery** a move to a different place, where the surroundings are different. ☐ *I thought I would go to the country for a change of scenery.* ☐ *A change of scenery would help me relax and organize my life.*

change off [for people] to alternate in doing something. ☐ *Tom and I changed off so neither of us had to answer the phone all the time.* ☐ *Let's change off every 30 minutes.*

change out of something to take off a set of clothing and put on another. ☐ *I have to change out of these wet clothes.* ☐ *You should change out of your casual clothes and put on something more formal for dinner.*

change over (from someone or something**) (to** someone or something**)** to convert from something to something else; to convert from someone to someone else. ☐ *We decided to change over from oil to gas heat.* ☐ *We changed over to gas from oil.*

change places with someone to trade or exchange situations or locations with someone. ☐ *He has a much higher salary, but I wouldn't change places with him for the world.* ☐ *Juan decided to change places with Ken in the bus.*

change someone or something **into** someone or something to make someone or something change form or state. ☐ *The wizard claimed he could change a horse into a unicorn.* ☐ *He suddenly changed himself into a smiling friend rather than the gruff old man we had long known.*

change someone's **mind** to cause a person to think differently (about someone or something). ☐ *Tom thought Mary was unkind, but an evening out with her changed his mind.* ☐ *I can change my mind if you convince me that you are right.*

change someone's **tune** to change the manner of a person, usually from bad to good, or from rude to pleasant. ☐ *The teller was most unpleasant until she learned that I'm a bank director. Then she changed her tune.* ☐ *"I will help change your tune by fining you $150," said the judge to the rude defendant.*

change something **back**† to cause something to return to the original or a previous form. ☐ *Whoever changed the television channel should change it back.* ☐ *Change back the channel to the game!*

change something **with** someone to trade or exchange something with someone. ☐ *I changed coats with Fred and his is much warmer.* ☐ *Will you change seats with me?*

change the channel *Sl.* to switch to some other topic of conversation. ☐ *Just a minute. I think you changed the channel. Let's go back to the part about you owing me money.* ☐ *Let's change the channel here before there is a fight.*

change the subject to begin talking about something different. ☐ *They changed the subject suddenly when the person whom they had been discussing entered the room.* ☐ *We'll change the subject if we are embarrassing you.*

change to something to convert to something; to give up one and choose another. ☐ *We will change to standard time in the fall.* ☐ *I decided to change to gas for heating and cooking.*

channel something **in(to** something**)** **1.** *Lit.* to divert water or other liquid through a channel into something. ☐ *The farmer channeled the irrigation water into the field.* **2.** *Fig.* to divert something, such as energy, money, effort, into something. ☐ *The government channeled a great deal of money into rebuilding the inner part of the city.* ☐ *I can't channel any more of our workforce into this project.*

channel something **off**† **1.** *Lit.* to drain off water or some other liquid through a channel. ☐ *The front yard is flooded, and we will have to channel the water off.* ☐ *Let's channel off the water before it gets too deep.* **2.** *Fig.* to drain off or waste energy, money, effort, etc. ☐ *Unemployment channeled their resources off.* ☐ *The war channeled off most of the resources of the country.*

chapter and verse *Fig.* very specifically detailed, in reference to sources of information. (A reference to the method of referring to biblical text.) ☐ *He gave chapter and verse for his reasons for disputing that Shakespeare had written the play.* ☐ *The suspect gave chapter and verse of his associate's activities.*

character assassination *Fig.* seriously harming someone's reputation. ☐ *The review was more than a negative*

appraisal of his performance. It was total character assassination.

charge at someone or something to move quickly forward to attack someone or something. ☐ *The elephant charged at the hunter.* ☐ *I was afraid that the water buffalo was going to charge our vehicle.*

charge down on someone or something [for an animal or vehicle] to race or move quickly against someone or something. ☐ *The angry elephant charged down on the hunters.* ☐ *The speeding truck charged down on the small shed.*

charge in(to some place**)** to move quickly or run wildly into a place. ☐ *The people charged into the store on the day of the sale.* ☐ *They all charged in trying to be first in line.*

Charge it to the dust and let the rain settle it. *Rur.* Do not expect to be paid for this. (A humorous answer to a question like, "Who is going to pay for this?") ☐ *Tom: Who's going to pay me all that money you owe? Mary: Charge it to the dust and let the rain settle it!*

***charge (of** someone or something**)** control of someone or something; the responsibility for caring for someone or something. (*Typically: **take ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *How long have you had charge of this office?* ☐ *He took charge of the entire company.*

charge off to move quickly or run away. ☐ *He got angry and charged off.* ☐ *Juan charged off to talk to the boss.*

charge out (of some place**)** to move quickly or stomp out of some place. ☐ *Carol charged out of the house, trying to catch Sally before she got on the bus.* ☐ *Juan got mad and suddenly charged out.*

charge someone or something **(with)** something to make someone or a group pay the cost of something. ☐ *I will have to charge Bill with the cost of repairs.* ☐ *The manager will charge your account with about forty dollars.*

charge someone **up**† to excite someone; to make a person enthusiastic about something. (See also **charged up**.) ☐ *The speaker charged up the crowd.* ☐ *He reread the report, hoping to charge himself up enough to make some positive comments.*

charge someone **with** something **1.** to place criminal charges against someone. ☐ *The police charged Max with robbery.* **2.** to order someone to do a particular task. ☐ *The president charged him with organizing the meeting.* ☐ *We charged her with locating new office space.*

charge something **against** something to debit or assign the cost of something against something. ☐ *Can I charge this item against the entertainment account?* ☐ *Don't even try to charge it against your business expenses.*

charge (something**) for** someone to demand an amount of money to pay for someone's ticket, fare, admission, treatment, etc. ☐ *Tickets are expensive. They charged sixty dollars for each seat.* ☐ *I didn't realize they charged for children.*

charge (something**) for** something to set a price in payment for something. ☐ *You are charging too much for this.* ☐ *You really shouldn't charge for it at all.*

charge something **off as** something to consider something a legitimate expense and deduct it from one's taxes; to assign something to the tax loss category in accounting. ☐ *I will have to charge this off as a loss.* ☐ *Try to charge it off as a business expense.*

charge something **on** something **1.** to put the cost of something on a credit card or credit account. ☐ *I would like to charge this purchase on my credit card.* ☐ *What card do you want to charge it on?* **2.** to demand the payment of interest or a penalty on something. ☐ *They charged an enormous amount of interest on the loan.* ☐ *The bank charged a penalty on the late payment.*

charge something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to apply an electrical charge to a battery. ☐ *How long will it take to charge this battery up?* ☐ *It takes an hour to charge up your battery.* **2.** *Lit.* to load or fill something under pressure or with special contents, such as a fire extinguisher. ☐ *We had to send the extinguishers back to the factory, where they charged them up.* ☐ *How much does it cost to charge up an extinguisher?* **3.** *Fig.* to reinvigorate something. ☐ *What can we do to charge this story up?* ☐ *A murder in the first act would charge up the play.* **4.** Go to next.

charge something **up to** someone or something and **charge** something **up**† to place the cost of something on the account of someone or a group. (Also without *up*.) ☐ *I will have to charge this up to your account.* ☐ *Do you have to charge this to my account?* ☐ *Are you ready to charge up the total to my bill?*

charged up 1. *Lit.* [of something such as a battery] full of electrical power. ☐ *The battery is completely charged up.* ☐ *If the battery isn't charged, the car won't start.* **2.** *Fig.* [of someone] excited; enthusiastic. ☐ *The crowd was really charged up.* ☐ *Tom is so tired that he cannot get charged up about anything.*

Charity begins at home. *Prov.* You should take care of family and people close to you before you worry about helping others. ☐ *I don't think our church should worry so much about a foreign relief fund when there are people in need right here in our city. Charity begins at home.* ☐ *If you really want to make the world a better place, start by being polite to your sister. Charity begins at home.*

*a **charley horse** a painful, persistent cramp in the arm or leg, usually from strain. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Don't hike too far or you'll get a charley horse.*

charm someone **with** something to enchant or fascinate someone with something. ☐ *He charmed her with stories of his house on the beach.* ☐ *She charmed him with her bright smile.*

charm the pants off someone *Fig.* to use very charming behavior to persuade someone to do something. (Use with caution.) ☐ *She is so nice. She just charms the pants off you.* ☐ *He will try to charm the pants off you, but you can still refuse to take the job if you don't want to do it.*

chart something **out**† **(for** someone or something**)** to lay out a plan or course for someone or something. ☐ *The navigator charted the course out for the captain.* ☐ *The captain charted out the course for us.*

chase after someone or something Go to **after** someone or something.

chase around after someone or something to look here and there for something; to seek someone or something in many different places. ☐ *I don't want to have to spend*

a whole day chasing around after exotic ingredients for this recipe of yours. ☐ *I chased around after Roger and never found him.*

chase someone or an animal **in**† Go to next.

C

chase someone or an animal **in(to)** some place and **chase** someone or an animal **in**† to drive someone or an animal into a place of confinement. ☐ *They chased all the cattle into the corral.* ☐ *The cowboys chased in the cattle.*

chase someone or something **around**† to follow someone or something around in pursuit. (There is an implication that the person or thing pursued is attempting to elude whatever is in pursuit.) ☐ *The dog chased us around in play.* ☐ *It chased around all the children.*

chase someone or something **(away†) from** some place and **chase** someone or something **out of** some place to drive someone or something away from or out of a place. ☐ *The police sirens chased the thief from the building.* ☐ *We chased away all the children from the pond.*

chase someone or something **down**† to track down and seize someone or something. ☐ *Larry set out to chase the pickpocket down.* ☐ *The police chased down the suspect.*

chase someone or something **out of** some place Go to **chase** someone or something **(away†) from** some place.

chase someone or something **up**† to seek someone or something out; to look high and low for someone or something. ☐ *I will chase Tom up for you.* ☐ *I will try to chase up a buyer for your car.*

chase someone or something **up** something to drive someone or an animal up something, such as a tree, a hill, a cliff, etc. ☐ *The ranchers chased the mountain lion up a tree.* ☐ *The bull chased the rodeo clown up into the stands.*

chat about someone or something to talk idly or informally about someone or something. ☐ *We need to chat about Molly.* ☐ *I want to chat about your expenditures a little.*

chatter about someone or something to talk idly and actively about someone or something. ☐ *All the guests were chattering about something or other.* ☐ *People are chattering about you and Claire. Do you want to know what they are saying?*

chatter (away) (at someone or something**) 1.** *Lit.* to talk incessantly or noisily to or at someone or something. ☐ *The parrot was chattering away at its reflection in the mirror.* ☐ *The kids were chattering away.* ☐ *Stop chattering at me!* **2.** *Fig.* [for a small animal, such as a squirrel] to try to scare off someone or something. ☐ *The little squirrel chattered away at the crow.* ☐ *The crow came close and the squirrel chattered away again.*

chatter from something [for one's teeth] to shake noisily with a chill from the cold, the dampness, a fever, etc. ☐ *My teeth were chattering from the extreme cold.* ☐ *It was a terrible illness. My teeth chattered from the chills that followed the fever.*

cheat at something to use deception while competing [against someone]. ☐ *They say she cheats at cards.* ☐ *The mob is likely to cheat at getting the contracts.*

cheat on someone to commit adultery; to be unfaithful to one's spouse or lover. ☐ *"Have you been cheating on me?" cried Mrs. Franklin.* ☐ *He was caught cheating on his wife.*

cheat someone **out of** something to get something from someone by deception. ☐ *Are you trying to cheat me out of what is rightfully mine?* ☐ *She cheated herself out of an invitation because she lied about her affiliation.*

Cheats never prosper. and **Cheaters never prosper.** *Prov.* If you cheat people, they will not continue to do business with you, and so your business will fail. ☐ *Customer: You charged me for ten artichokes, but you only gave me nine. Grocer: Too bad. You should have counted them before you paid for them. Customer: Cheats never prosper, you know.*

check back (on someone or something**)** to look into the state of someone or something again at a later time. ☐ *I'll have to check back on you later.*

check back (with someone**)** to inquire of someone again at a later time. ☐ *Please check back with me later.*

check in (at something**)** to go to a place to record one's arrival. ☐ *When you get there, check in at the front office.*

check in (on someone or something**)** Go to **look in (on** someone or something**).**

check in (with someone**)** to go to someone and indicate that one has arrived some place. ☐ *Please check in with the desk clerk.*

check in(to something**) 1.** to sign oneself into a place to stay, such as a hotel, hospital, motel, etc. ☐ *She checked into a private hospital for some kind of treatment.* ☐ *They checked into the first motel they came to on the highway.* **2.** Go to **look into** something.

check on someone or something to look into the legitimacy or condition of someone or something. ☐ *Sarah will check on the matter and report to us.* ☐ *I will check on Jeff while he's not feeling well.*

check out [for someone or something] to prove to be correctly represented. ☐ *Everything you told me checks out with what other witnesses said.*

check out (of something**)** and **check out (from** something**)** to do whatever is necessary to leave a place and then depart. (**check out (of** something**)** is more frequent.) ☐ *I will check out of the hotel at about noon.* ☐ *I will check out from the office and come right to where you are.*

check out the plumbing *Euph.* to go to the bathroom. (The order is fixed.) ☐ *I think I'd better check out the plumbing before we get on the highway.*

Check, please. and **Could I have the bill?; Could I have the check?** Could you give me the check or the bill for this food or drink? ☐ *When they both had finished their dessert and coffee, Tom said, "Check, please."* ☐ *Bill: That meal was really good. Waiter! Could I have the check, please. Waiter: Right away, sir.*

check someone **in**† to record the arrival of someone. ☐ *Ask the guard to check you in when you get there.* ☐ *Tell the guard to check in the visitors as they arrive.*

check someone or something **off**† to mark or cross out the name of a person or thing on a list. ☐ *I am glad to see that you were able to come. I will check you off.* ☐ *I checked the items off.* ☐ *I checked off the recent arrivals.*

check someone or something **out**† to evaluate someone or something. ☐ *That stock sounds good. I'll check it out.* ☐ *I'll check out the competition.*

check someone or something **out† (of** something**)** to do the paperwork necessary to remove someone or something from something or some place. ☐ *I will have the manager check you out of the hotel and send you the bill.* ☐ *The librarian checked out the computer to me.*

check someone or something **over†** to examine someone or something closely. ☐ *You should have the doctor check you over before you go back to work.* ☐ *The doctor checked over the children who had shown the worst symptoms.* ☐ *The mechanic checked the car over.*

check someone or something **through (**something**)** to allow one to pass through something after checking one's identification, tickets, passes, etc. (Fixed order.) ☐ *The guard checked us through the gate, and we went about our business.* ☐ *We checked them through security.*

check someone's **bags through (to** some place**)** and **check** someone's **luggage through (to** some place**)** to have one's luggage sent directly to one's final destination. ☐ *Please check these bags through London to Madrid.*

check something **in† 1.** to record that someone has returned something. ☐ *I asked the librarian to check the book in for me.* ☐ *Did the librarian check in the book?* **2.** to take something to a place, return it, and make sure that its return has been recorded. ☐ *I checked the book in on time.* ☐ *Did you really check in the book on time?* **3.** to examine a shipment or an order received and make certain that everything ordered was received. ☐ *I checked the order in and sent a report to the manager.* ☐ *Tim checked in the order from the supplier to make sure that everything was there.*

check something **out†** to examine or try something; to think about something. ☐ *It's something we all have to be concerned with. Check it out.* ☐ *Check out the new comedy show on tonight.*

check that cancel that; ignore that (last remark). ☐ *Check that. I was wrong.* ☐ *At four, no, check that, at three o'clock this afternoon, the shipment arrived and was signed for.*

check through something to examine something or a collection of things. (Usually refers to papers or written work, or to details in the paperwork.) ☐ *Check through this and look for missing pages.* ☐ *I'll check through it for typographical errors also.*

check up (on someone or something**)** to determine the state of someone or something. ☐ *Please don't check up on me. I can be trusted.* ☐ *I see no need to check up.*

check with someone **(about** something**)** to ask someone about something. ☐ *You should check with the concierge about the bus to the airport.* ☐ *Please check with your agent.*

checks and balances a system, as in the U.S. Constitution, where power is shared between the various branches of government. ☐ *The newspaper editor claimed that the system of checks and balances built into our Constitution has been subverted by party politics.*

*****a **checkup** a physical examination by a physician. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *She got a checkup yesterday.* ☐ *I'm going to have a checkup in the morning. I hope I'm okay.*

cheek by jowl *Fig.* side by side; close together. ☐ *The pedestrians had to walk cheek by jowl along the narrow streets.* ☐ *The two families lived cheek by jowl in one house.*

cheer for someone or something to give a shout of encouragement for someone or something. ☐ *Everyone cheered for the team.* ☐ *I cheered for the winning goal.*

cheer someone or something **on†** to encourage someone or a group to continue to do well, as by cheering. ☐ *We cheered them on, and they won.* ☐ *We cheered on the team.* ☐ *Sam cheered Jane on.*

cheer someone **up†** to make a sad person happy. ☐ *When Bill was sick, Ann tried to cheer him up by reading to him.* ☐ *Interest rates went up, and that cheered up all the bankers.*

cheer up [for a sad person] to become happy. ☐ *After a while, she began to cheer up and smile more.* ☐ *Cheer up! Things could be worse.*

cheese someone **off†** *Sl.* to make someone very angry. ☐ *You sure know how to cheese Laurel off.* ☐ *Bobby cheesed off every person in the club.*

***cheesed off** *Sl.* angry; disgusted. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; get** someone **~**.) ☐ *Clare was really cheesed off at the waiter.* ☐ *The waiter was cheesed off at the cook.*

cherry-pick something *Fig.* to choose something very carefully. (As if one were closely examining cherries on the tree, looking for the best.) ☐ *We have to cherry-pick the lumber we want to use for the cabinetry. Nothing but the best will do.*

chew (away) at something to gnaw or chew something for a period of time. ☐ *The puppy chewed away at the leather belt all night.*

chew on someone or something **1.** to gnaw at something. ☐ *The dog was chewing on my shoe.* **2.** Go to **chew** something **over**.

chew one's **own tobacco** *Rur.* to mind one's own business. ☐ *Sally: You seem awfully happy all of a sudden. How come? Tom: Chew your own tobacco.* ☐ *I'm just sitting here chewing my own tobacco, not bothering anybody.*

chew one's cud *Fig.* to think deeply; to be deeply involved in private thought. (Alludes to the cow's habit of bringing food back from the first stomach into the mouth to chew it, called chewing the cud.) ☐ *He's chewing his cud about what to do next.*

chew someone or something **up†** to damage or ruin someone or something by pinching, grinding, biting, etc. ☐ *Stay away from the mower blade or it will chew you up.* ☐ *The lawn mower chewed up the flowers.*

chew someone **out†** and **eat** someone **out†** *Fig.* to scold someone. ☐ *The sergeant chewed the corporal out; then the corporal chewed the private out.* ☐ *The boss is always chewing out somebody.*

chew something **away†** to gnaw something off; to gnaw at something until it's all gone. ☐ *You can see what's left of it. Most of it has been chewed away by some animal.* ☐ *Your puppy chewed away the top of my shoe!*

chew something **off** something and **chew** something **off†** to bite or gnaw something off something. ☐ *The puppy chewed the heel off my shoe.* ☐ *The puppy chewed off the heel and mangled the tongue.*

chew something **over† 1.** *Inf.* to talk something over; to discuss something. ☐ *We can chew it over at lunch.* ☐ *Why don't we do lunch sometime and chew over these matters?*

2. and **chew on** something *Fig.* to think something over. □ *I'll have to chew it over for a while. I'm not sure now.* □ *I have to chew on all this stuff for a day or two. Then I'll get back to you.*

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chew something **up**† to grind food with the teeth until it can be swallowed. □ *You had better chew that stuff up well.* □ *Please chew up your food well.*

chew the fat and **chew the rag** *Fig.* to chat or gossip. □ *Sit yourself down and let's chew the fat for a while.* □ *We were just chewing the rag. Nothing important.*

chew the rag Go to previous.

chicken feed *Fig.* a small amount of anything, especially of money. (See also **for chicken feed**. Compare this with **for peanuts**.) □ *Of course I can afford $800. That's just chicken feed.* □ *It may be chicken feed to you, but that's a month's rent to me.*

chicken out (of something**)** *Inf.* to manage to get out of something, usually because of fear or cowardice. □ *Come on! Don't chicken out now!* □ *Freddy chickened out of the plan at the last minute.*

chicken out on someone *Inf.* to decide not to do something for or with someone. □ *Come on, don't chicken out on me now!* □ *Ken chickened out on us and won't be going with us.*

chicken-hearted cowardly. □ *Yes, I'm a chicken-hearted softie. I never try anything too risky.*

The **chickens come home to roost.** *Prov.* You have to face the consequences of your mistakes or bad deeds. □ *Jill: Emily found out that I said she was incompetent, and now she won't recommend me for that job. Jane: The chickens have come home to roost, I see.*

chide someone **for** something to tease or scold someone for doing something. □ *Maria chided Gerald for being late.*

chief cook and bottle washer *Fig.* the person in charge of practically everything (such as in a very small business). □ *I'm the chief cook and bottle washer around here. I do everything.*

The **child is father of the man.** and The **child is father to the man.** *Prov.* People's personalities form when they are children; A person will have the same qualities as an adult that he or she had as a child. (From William Wordsworth's poem, "My Heart Leaps Up.") □ *In Bill's case, the child was father of the man; he never lost his childhood delight in observing nature.*

child's play something very easy to do. □ *The test was child's play to those who took good notes.* □ *Finding the right street was child's play with a map.*

Children and fools tell the truth. *Prov.* Children have not yet learned, and fools never did learn, that it is often advantageous to lie. □ *Fred: What will I tell Ellen when she asks why I'm so late getting home? Alan: Tell her the truth—we were out having a few drinks. Fred: Children and fools tell the truth, Alan.*

Children should be seen and not heard. *Prov.* Children should not speak in the presence of adults. (Often used as a way to rebuke a child who has spoken when he or she should not.) □ *You may come out and meet the party guests if you'll remember that children should be seen and not heard.*

chill out and **cool out** *Sl.* to calm down. □ *Before we can debate this matter, you're all gonna have to chill out. So sit down and stop bickering.* □ *Everybody cooled out after the emergency, and everything was fine.*

chill someone's **action** *Sl.* to squelch someone; to prevent someone from accomplishing something. □ *Freddie is trying to chill my action, and he'd better stop and leave me alone.*

***chilled to the bone** *Fig.* very cold. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) □ *I got chilled to the bone in that snowstorm.* □ *The children were chilled to the bone from their swim in the ocean.*

chime in (with something**)** *Fig.* to add a comment to the discussion. □ *Little Billy chimed in with a suggestion.* □ *He chimed in too late; the meeting was breaking up.*

chin music *Fig. Inf.* talk; conversation. □ *Whenever those two get together, you can be sure there'll be plenty of chin music.* □ *Bill just loves to hear himself talk. He'll make chin music for hours at a time.*

a **chink in** one's **armor** *Fig.* a special weakness that provides a means for attacking or impressing someone otherwise invulnerable. (Alludes to an opening in a suit of armor that allows a weapon to penetrate.) □ *Jane's insecurity is the chink in her armor.* □ *The boss seems mean, but the chink in his armor is that he is easily flattered.*

chip away [for something] to break off or break away in small chips. □ *The edges of the marble step chipped away over the years.* □ *Some of the stone figures had chipped away so badly that we couldn't see what they were.*

chip (away) at something to break off tiny pieces of something little by little. □ *The mason chipped away at the bricks.* □ *He chipped at the block of marble gently.*

chip in (on something**)** and **chip** something **in**† **(on** something**) 1.** to contribute a small amount of money to a fund that will be used to buy something. □ *Could you chip in a dollar on the gift, please?* **2.** chip in (on something) **(for** someone**)** to contribute money toward a gift for someone. □ *Would you please chip in on the present for Richard?* □ *Will you chip in for Randy?*

chip in (with something**) (on** something**) (for** someone**)** and **chip in (with** something**) (for** something**) (for** someone**); chip** something **in**† **(on** something**) (for** someone**)** to contribute money for a gift for someone. □ *Would you like to chip in with a little cash on a gift for Carol?* □ *I will chip in a little with you on a gift for Carol.* □ *Would you chip in with a few bucks for a gift for Carol?* □ *Would you chip a few bucks in on a gift for Carol?* □ *Would you care to chip in on a gift for the teacher?* □ *Yes, I'd be happy to chip in.*

a **chip off the old block** *Fig.* a person (usually a male) who behaves in the same way as his father or resembles his father. □ *John looks like his father—a real chip off the old block.* □ *Bill Jones, Jr., is a chip off the old block. He's a banker just like his father.*

*a **chip on** one's **shoulder** *Fig.* a bad attitude that tends to get someone easily upset. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** one **~**.) □ *Why did you get so angry at the slightest criticism? You seem to have a chip on your shoulder.*

chip something **away**† **(from** something**)** to break off tiny pieces of something. □ *Many years of heavy use chipped*

the marble steps away. ☐ *Someone chipped away little bits of the marble from that step.*

chip something **in† (on** something**)** Go to **chip in (on** something**).**

chip something **in† (on** something**) (for** someone**)** Go to **chip in (with** something**) (on** something**) (for** someone**).**

chips and dip potato chips, or some other kind of crisp snack food, and a sauce or dressing to dip them into before eating them. ☐ *There were tons of chips and dip and all kinds of cold drinks available for everyone.*

chisel in (on someone or something**)** *Sl.* to use deception to get a share of something. ☐ *I won't chisel in on your deal.* ☐ *You had better not chisel in!*

chisel someone **out of** something and **chisel** something **out of** someone**; chisel** something **from** someone to get something away from someone by cheating. ☐ *The scam tried to chisel pension money out of retired people.*

chock full of something *Fig.* very full of something. ☐ *These cookies are chock full of big chunks of chocolate.*

choke on something to gag and cough on something stuck in the throat. ☐ *The dog choked on the meat.* ☐ *The restaurant patron began to choke on a fish bone.*

choke someone **off†** to prevent someone from continuing to talk. (A figurative use; does not imply physical choking.) ☐ *The opposition choked the speakers' debate off before they finished.* ☐ *Why did they want to choke off the speakers?*

choke someone **up†** *Fig.* to cause someone to feel like starting to cry. ☐ *Sad stories like that always choke me up.* ☐ *The movie was sad and it choked up most of the audience.*

choke something **back†** to fight hard to keep something from coming out of one's mouth, such as sobs, tears, angry words, vomit, etc. ☐ *I tried to choke the unpleasant words back, but I could not.* ☐ *She choked back her grief, but it came forth nonetheless.* ☐ *I could hardly choke my tears back.*

choke something **down†** to eat something, even though it is hard to swallow or tastes bad. ☐ *The cough medicine tasted terrible, but I managed to choke it down.* ☐ *She choked down four of those pills all at once.*

choke something **off† 1.** *Lit.* to restrict or strangle a living creature's windpipe. ☐ *The tight collar on the cat tended to choke its airstream off.* ☐ *The collar choked off its airstream.* **2.** *Fig.* to put an end to debate or discussion; to stop the flow of words from any source. ☐ *Are they going to choke the debate off?* ☐ *The chair tried to choke off debate but failed.*

choke something **up† 1.** to clog something up; to fill up and block something. ☐ *Branches and leaves choked the sewer up.* ☐ *Rust choked up the pipes.* **2.** to cough or choke until something that has blocked one's windpipe is brought up. ☐ *The old man choked up the candy that was stuck in his windpipe.* ☐ *He choked up the chunk of meat and could breathe again.*

choke up 1. to feel like crying. ☐ *I choked up when I heard the news.* ☐ *He was beginning to choke up as he talked.* **2.** to become emotional or saddened so that one cannot speak. ☐ *I choked up when I heard about the disaster.* ☐ *I was choking up, and I knew I would not be able to go on.*

chomp at the bit Go to **champ at the bit.**

choose among someone or something to make a choice of a person or thing from a variety of possibilities. ☐ *We will choose among the names on the list you gave us.* ☐ *I need to choose among the car models available.*

choose between two people or things to choose one from a selection of two persons or things in any combination. ☐ *For dessert, you can choose between chocolate and vanilla ice cream.* ☐ *I am unable to choose between promoting John and hiring one of the others.*

choose from someone or something to make a selection from a group of persons or things. ☐ *You will have to choose from these people only.* ☐ *Ron chose from the items in the catalog.*

choose someone **as** something to select someone to be something. ☐ *We will choose her as our representative.* ☐ *I chose Sam as my assistant.*

choose someone or something **for** something to select someone or something for a particular purpose, office, title, etc. ☐ *I chose red for the color or the carpet.* ☐ *I will choose Alice for office manager.*

choose something **for** someone to select something for someone, perhaps as a gift. ☐ *I will probably choose flowers for your mother.* ☐ *I chose a funny card for his birthday.*

choose (up) sides to select from a group to be on opposing sides for a debate, fight, or game. (Fixed order.) ☐ *Let's choose up sides and play basketball.* ☐ *The children chose up sides and began the game.*

chop someone **off†** *Fig.* to stop someone in the middle of a sentence or speech. (Abruptly, as if actually chopping or cutting.) ☐ *I'm not finished. Don't chop me off!* ☐ *The moderator chopped off the speaker.*

chop someone or something **(up†) (in(to)** something**)** to cut something up into something smaller, perhaps with an axe or a cleaver. ☐ *The butcher chopped up the beef loin into small fillets.* ☐ *I chopped up the onion into little pieces.*

chop something **back†** to prune vegetation; to reduce the size of plants by cutting. ☐ *Why don't you chop those bushes back while you have the shears out?* ☐ *Chop back the bushes, please.*

chop something **down† 1.** *Lit.* to cut down something, such as a tree, with an ax. ☐ *Please don't chop my favorite tree down.* ☐ *Don't chop down this tree!* **2.** *Fig.* to destroy something, such as a plan or an idea. ☐ *The committee chopped the idea down in its early stages.* ☐ *They chopped down a great idea!*

chop something **off (of)** something and **chop** something **off†** to cut something off something, as with an axe or saw. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *We chopped the dead branches off the tree.* ☐ *You should chop off the other branch.*

chortle about someone or something and **chortle over** someone or something to chuckle or giggle about someone or something funny. ☐ *I was chortling about Elaine's silly puppy for a long time.* ☐ *Elaine chortled about me and my dislike for cats.*

chortle with something Go to **chuckle with** something.

chow (something**) down** *Sl.* to eat something, usually quickly or without good manners. ☐ *We can chow this*

pizza down in about two minutes! ☐ *I found a box of cookies and chowed it down before anybody knew what I was doing.*

Christmas comes but once a year. *Prov.* Since Christmas only happens once a year, we should treat it as a special time by being good to others or by indulging children. ☐ *Christmas comes but once a year, so we urge you to give to those less fortunate through this Christmas charity campaign.*

chuck it in *Inf.* to quit; to give up. (Fixed order.) ☐ *I was so depressed, I almost chucked it in.* ☐ *If I didn't have to keep the job to pay my bills, I'd have chucked it in long ago.*

chuck someone or something **away**† to push or shove someone or something out of the way quickly or roughly. ☐ *She chucked the children away and ran to lock the door to protect them.* ☐ *He chucked away his clothes in a drawer.* ☐ *The rock star approached, and the guard chucked the teenagers away.*

chuck someone **out of** some place and **chuck** someone **out**† to throw someone out of some place. ☐ *The bouncer chucked the drunks out of the tavern.* ☐ *He chucks out about three drunks a night.*

chuck someone **under the chin** to tap someone, as a child, lightly under the chin, as a sign of affection. ☐ *He said hello to little Mary and chucked her under the chin.* ☐ *Please don't chuck me under the chin! I am not a child, you know!*

chuck something **away**† to throw something away; to dispose of something. ☐ *Would you please just chuck this garbage bag away?* ☐ *I don't want to chuck away any paper that's been used on only one side.*

chuck something **down**† *Sl.* to eat something very quickly. ☐ *Don't just chuck your food down. Enjoy it!* ☐ *I'll be with you as soon as I chuck down this hamburger.*

chuck something **into** something and **chuck** something **in**† to pack something into something. ☐ *She chucked her clothes into the suitcase and left.* ☐ *Just chuck in all your clothes and let's go.*

chuck something **over** something to throw something over something. ☐ *Here, chuck this over the wall, and let's go.* ☐ *If you chuck another can over the fence, I will file a complaint.*

chuck something **up**† to vomit something up. ☐ *Don't give chocolate to the dog. It will just chuck it up later.* ☐ *The dog chucked up the grass it had eaten.*

chuckle about someone or something and **chuckle over** someone or something to giggle about someone or something. ☐ *I had to chuckle about Wally and his story about that broken-down old car.* ☐ *We chuckled over how angry Jed was.*

chuckle with something and **chortle with** something to giggle in some manner because one is gleeful or happy. ☐ *He chuckled with unsuppressed mirth at the antics of the strangely dressed people.* ☐ *Sally chortled with glee at the thought of Ken slipping on the ice.*

chug along 1. *Lit.* [for a train engine] to labor along slowly. (Steam locomotives made the sound "chug, chug.") ☐ *The train chugged along to the top of the hill.* **2.** *Fig.* to move along at a steady pace. ☐ *We chugged along for two hours but finally made it home.*

chum up to someone to try or seem to become friendly with someone. ☐ *Todd chummed up to Martin.* ☐ *I don't want to have to chum up to anyone I don't want to work with.*

chum up with someone to become friendly with someone. ☐ *He seems to have chummed up with Fred.* ☐ *Juan quickly chummed up with all the guys in his class.*

a **chunk of change** *Fig.* a lot of money. ☐ *Tom's new sports car cost a real big chunk of change!*

chunk something *Rur.* to throw something. ☐ *The kids were out chunking rocks into the lake.* ☐ *Somebody chunked a snowball at me!*

Church ain't out till they quit singing. *Rur.* things have not yet reached the end. ☐ *Charlie: No way our team can win now. Mary: Church ain't out till they quit singing. There's another inning to go.*

church key a two-ended device used to remove bottle tops and to pierce a hole in can lids. ☐ *I'm looking for the church key so I can open this beer.* ☐ *She opened the can of tomato juice with the church key.*

churn something **out**† to produce something in large numbers, perhaps carelessly. ☐ *We churn toys out by the thousand.* ☐ *This factory can churn out these parts day and night.*

churn something **up**† to stir up a liquid; to mix up material suspended in water. ☐ *The oars of our boat churned the shallow water up, leaving little clouds of sediment in our wake.* ☐ *The oars churned up the mud.*

circle around (over someone or something**)** [for a plane or a bird] to fly around above someone, something, or some place. ☐ *The plane circled around over us for a few minutes and then went on.* ☐ *It circled around over the field.*

circle around someone or something Go to **around** someone or something.

circulate among someone or something to move at random within a gathering of people or things. ☐ *Karen circulated among the guests, serving drinks.* ☐ *The guests circulated among the various rooms in the house.*

circulate something **through** something to route something through something; to make something travel through something. ☐ *Walter circulated the memo from the boss through the department.* ☐ *I would like for you to circulate this through the members of the club.*

circulate through something **1.** *Lit.* [for a fluid in a closed system of pipes or tubes] to flow through the various pathways of pipes and tubes. ☐ *Cold water circulates through the entire building and keeps it cool.* ☐ *Blood circulates through the veins and arteries, reaching all parts of the body.* **2.** *Fig.* to move through a group of people or an area, from person to person. ☐ *Rumors circulated through the department about Tom's retirement.* ☐ *Please circulate through the room and hand out these papers to each person.*

Circumstances alter cases. *Prov.* In unusual situations, people are allowed to do unusual things. ☐ *Cashier: I'm sorry, this store does not accept personal checks. Customer: But I need this medicine, and I don't have any cash. I've shopped at this store for fifteen years. Surely you can trust me this once. Cashier: Well, all right. Circumstances alter cases.*

cite someone **for** something **1.** to honor someone for doing something; to give someone a citation of honor for doing something good. ☐ *The town council cited her for bravery.* ☐ *They cited Maria for her courageous act.* **2.** to charge or arraign someone for breaking a law; to issue a legal citation to someone for breaking a law. ☐ *An officer cited the driver for driving too fast.* ☐ *The housing department cited the landlord for sanitary violations.*

city slicker someone from the city who is not familiar with country ways. ☐ *Them city slickers think we're stupid just because we talk different.* ☐ *The city slicker didn't know the first thing about fishing for trout.*

Civility costs nothing. and **Courtesy costs nothing.** *Prov.* It never hurts you to be polite. ☐ *Always greet people politely, no matter what you think of them. Civility costs nothing.* ☐ *Why not write Mildred a thank-you note? Courtesy costs nothing.*

claim a life *Fig.* [for something] to take the life of someone. ☐ *The killer tornado claimed the lives of six people at the trailer park.* ☐ *The athlete's life was claimed in a skiing accident.*

claim something **for** someone or something to declare rights to or control of something for someone, or that something is the property of someone, a group, or a nation. ☐ *The small country claimed the mountainous area for itself.* ☐ *Roger claimed all the rest of the ice cream for himself.*

claim something **for** something to make a claim for money in payment for damages. ☐ *David claimed one thousand dollars for the damaged car.* ☐ *She claimed a lot of money for the amount of harm she experienced.*

clam up to say nothing. (Closing one's mouth in the way that a clam closes up.) ☐ *The minute they got him in for questioning, he clammed up.* ☐ *You'll clam up if you know what's good for you.*

clamber onto something and **clamber in(to** something**); clamber on** to climb onto something clumsily. ☐ *The kids clambered onto the tractor and tried to start it.* ☐ *The wagon stopped and the kids clambered on.* ☐ *All the campers clambered into the bus.*

clamber up (something**)** to climb up something, especially in a particular way. ☐ *The wall climbers clambered up the wall quickly.* ☐ *Tricia clambered up the ladder and cautiously went down again.*

clamor against someone or something to raise a great outcry against someone or something. ☐ *The protestors clamored against the mayor.* ☐ *The citizens clamored against the new taxes.*

clamor for someone or something to raise a great outcry for someone or something. ☐ *Everyone was clamoring for Mark. They just loved him.* ☐ *The children were clamoring for ice cream.*

clamp down (on someone or something**)** to become strict with someone; to become strict about something. ☐ *Because Bob's grades were getting worse, his parents clamped down on him.* ☐ *The police have clamped down on speeders in this town.*

clamp something **on(to)** something and **clamp** something **on†** to press or squeeze something onto something else. ☐ *Clamp this board onto the workbench.* ☐ *Clear a place near the edge of the table, and then clamp on the meat grinder.*

clap eyes on someone or something to see someone or something, perhaps for the first time; to **set eyes on someone or something.** ☐ *I wish she had never clapped eyes on her fiancé.* ☐ *I haven't clapped eyes on a red squirrel for years.*

clap someone **in(to)** some place to shove or push someone into a place, usually jail. ☐ *Be good or the sheriff will clap you into jail.* ☐ *The cops clapped Max into a cell.*

clap something **on(to)** something to slap or attack something onto something else. ☐ *The police came and clapped a sign onto the car saying it was abandoned.* ☐ *Do not clap any signs on my fence.*

clap something **out†** to clap the rhythmic beat of something in order to learn it. (Said of music.) ☐ *All right, now. Let's clap the rhythm out.* ☐ *We'll clap out the rhythm in time with our singing.*

clap something **together** to slap two things, usually hands, together so that they make a noise. ☐ *The boys clapped their hands together whenever a goal was scored.* ☐ *One of the orchestra members clapped two blocks of wood together periodically, making a very loud noise.*

clash against something to wage a battle or attack against someone or something. ☐ *The troops clashed against the enemy.* ☐ *We clashed against the opposite side for over three days.*

clash (with someone**) (over** someone or something**)** to fight or argue with someone about someone or something. ☐ *The customer clashed with the pharmacist over the price of the medicine.* ☐ *I clashed over my pay increase with the school principal.*

clash with something [for the color of something] to conflict with or mismatch another color. ☐ *This red carpet clashes with the purple of the drapes.* ☐ *This red does not clash with purple. It looks gorgeous.*

clasp someone or something **to** something to hold on to and press someone or something to a part of one's body. ☐ *He clasped a wad of cloth to the bleeding wound.* ☐ *She clasped the child to her breast and hugged him.*

class someone or something **with** someone or something to group someone or something with someone or something considered similar. ☐ *Please don't class this car with anything you've ever driven before.* ☐ *The sportswriters classed this team with some of the all-time best in history.*

clatter around and **clatter** something **around** to move around among things, making noise. ☐ *Stop clattering around! It's late.* ☐ *I wish you would not clatter those dishes around.*

claw one's **way to the top** *Fig.* to climb to the most prestigious level of something ruthlessly. ☐ *He was the type of hard-hitting guy who claws his way to the top.* ☐ *She clawed her way to the top, fighting at every step.*

claw something **off** someone or something and **claw** something **off†** to rip or tear something off from someone or something. ☐ *We saw a guy clawing his burning clothes off himself.* ☐ *He clawed off his burning clothes.*

***clean as a hound's tooth** and ***clean as a whistle** **1.** *Rur. Cliché* very clean. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *After his*

mother scrubbed him thoroughly, the baby was as clean as a hound's tooth. ☐ *The car was as clean as a whistle after the Girl Scouts washed it.* **2.** *Rur. Cliché* innocent and free from sin or wrong. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Jane's record was clean as a whistle; she had never committed even the smallest infraction.*

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clean as a whistle Go to previous.

*a **clean bill of health** *Fig.* a physician's determination that a person is in good condition, especially following an illness, surgery, etc. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Sally got a clean bill of health from the doctor.* ☐ *Now that Sally has a clean bill of health, she can go back to work.*

clean one's **act up**† to reform one's conduct; to improve one's performance. ☐ *We were told to clean our act up or move out.* ☐ *I cleaned up my act, but not in time. I got kicked out.*

clean one's **plate** Go to clean up one's plate.

clean out (of something**)** Go to fresh out (of something).

clean someone or something **down**† to clean someone or something by brushing or with flowing water. ☐ *He was covered with mud, and we used the garden hose to clean him down.* ☐ *Please clean down the sidewalk.*

clean someone or something **out of** something and **clean** someone or something **out**† to remove people or things from something or some place. ☐ *Someone should clean those bums out of political office.* ☐ *Let's clean out the garage this weekend; I can't get the car in.*

clean someone or something **up**† to get someone or something clean. ☐ *Please go into the bathroom and clean yourself up.* ☐ *I'll clean up the kids before we leave for dinner.* ☐ *Can you clean this place up a little?*

clean someone **out**† **1.** *Fig.* to get or use up all of someone's money. ☐ *The bill for supper cleaned me out, and we couldn't go to the flick.* ☐ *The robbers cleaned out all the bank's cash.* **2.** *Fig.* to empty someone's bowels. ☐ *That medicine I took really cleaned me out.* ☐ *Whatever was in that stew cleaned out every kid in the entire scout camp.*

clean someone's **plow** *Rur.* to beat someone up. ☐ *If Joe crosses me one more time, I'll clean his plow for sure.* ☐ *Somebody must have really cleaned Bill's plow last night. He had two black eyes this morning!*

clean something **off**† and **clean** something **off** something to take something off something; to remove something such as dirt or dirty dishes. ☐ *Please clean the table off and put the dishes in the kitchen.* ☐ *I'll clean off the table.* ☐ *Judy cleaned the writing off the wall.*

clean something **out**† to remove dirt or unwanted things from the inside of something. ☐ *Someone has to clean the garage out.* ☐ *I'll clean out my closet tonight.*

a **clean sweep** a broad movement clearing or affecting everything in its pathway. (See also make a clean sweep. Usually figurative.) ☐ *The manager and everybody in accounting got fired in a clean sweep of that department.* ☐ *Everybody got a pay rise. It was a clean sweep.*

clean the floor up† **with** someone *Fig.* to beat someone up. ☐ *If you don't shut up, I'll clean up the floor with you.* ☐ *You won't clean the floor up with me!*

clean up (on something**)** *Fig.* to make a lot of money on something. ☐ *The promoters cleaned up on the product.* ☐ *If we get this invention to market soon, we can clean up.*

clean (up) one's **plate** to eat all the food on one's plate. ☐ *You have to clean up your plate before you can leave the table.* ☐ *Mom said we can't watch TV tonight unless we clean our plates.*

clean-cut having to do with a person (usually male) who is neat and tidy. ☐ *He's a very clean-cut guy, and polite too.* ☐ *He's sort of clean-cut looking, but with curly hair.*

cleaned out 1. *Fig.* broke; with no money. ☐ *I'm cleaned out. Not a cent left.* ☐ *Tom's cleaned out. How will he pay his bills now?* **2.** *Fig.* with one's digestive tract emptied. ☐ *That medicine really left me cleaned out.*

Cleanliness is next to godliness. *Prov.* It is very important to keep yourself clean. ☐ *Child: How come I have to take a bath? Mother: Cleanliness is next to godliness.* ☐ *The woman sitting next to me on the bus had obviously never heard that cleanliness is next to godliness.*

***clear as a bell** very clear, as with the sound of a bell. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *I fixed the radio, so now all the stations come in clear as a bell.* ☐ *Through the wall, I could hear the neighbors talking, just as clear as a bell.*

***clear as crystal 1.** *Cliché* very clear; transparent. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *The stream was as clear as crystal.* ☐ *She cleaned the windowpane until it was clear as crystal.* **2.** *Cliché* very clear; easy to understand. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *The explanation was as clear as crystal.* ☐ *Her lecture was not clear as crystal, but at least it was not dull.*

***clear as mud 1.** *Cliché* not clear at all. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Your swimming pool needs cleaning; the water is clear as mud.* **2.** *Cliché* not easy to understand. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *This physics chapter is clear as mud to me.* ☐ *I did all the reading, but it's still as clear as mud.*

clear as vodka Go to clear as crystal.

***clear of** something without touching something; away from something. (*Typically: **keep ~; move ~; remain ~; stand ~**.) ☐ *Please stand clear of the doors while the train is moving.* ☐ *Make sure the dog moves clear of the driveway before backing the car up.*

clear off ((of) some place**)** to depart; to get off someone's property. ☐ *Clear off my property!* ☐ *Clear off, do you hear?*

clear out (of some place**)** to get out of some place. ☐ *Will you all clear out of here?* ☐ *Please clear out!*

***clear sailing** and ***smooth sailing** *Fig.* a situation where progress is made without any difficulty. (*Typically: **be ~; have ~**.) ☐ *Once you've passed that exam, it will be clear sailing to graduation.* ☐ *Working there was not all smooth sailing. The boss had a very bad temper.*

clear someone **of** something to show that a person is innocent; to exonerate someone of a crime. (See also clear someone's name.) ☐ *An investigation cleared me of any wrongdoing.* ☐ *They were unable to clear themselves of the charges.*

clear someone or something **out of** some place and **clear** someone or something **out**† to make someone or something leave a place. ☐ *Please clear all the people out of here.* ☐ *Clear out the people quickly, please.*

clear someone's **name** to prove that someone is not guilty of a crime or misdeed. (See also **clear** someone **of** something.) ☐ *I was accused of theft, but the real thief confessed and I cleared my name.*

clear something **away**† to take something away. ☐ *Please clear the children's toys away.* ☐ *Would you clear away the dishes?*

clear something **for publication** to approve the release of something so it can be published. ☐ *The government refused to clear the story for publication.* ☐ *I want to clear this for publication as soon as possible.*

clear something **from** some place to take something away from a place. ☐ *Please clear all these papers from the desk.* ☐ *Would you clear the dishes from the table?*

clear something **off** something and **clear** something **off**† to take something off something. ☐ *Please clear the dishes off the table.* ☐ *I'll clear off the dishes.*

clear something **up**† **1.** to make something more clear. ☐ *Let the muddy water stand overnight so it will clear up.* ☐ *A strong wind blew in and cleared up the smoke in the air.* **2.** to explain something; to solve a mystery. ☐ *I think that we can clear this matter up without calling in the police.* ☐ *First we have to clear up the problem of the missing jewels.* **3.** to cause a rash or inflammation to return to normal; to cause skin to "clear." ☐ *There is some new medicine that will clear your rash up.* **4.** to cure a disease or a medical condition. ☐ *The doctor will give you something to clear up your congestion.*

clear something **with** someone or something to get someone's approval for something. ☐ *You will have to clear this expenditure with the main office.* ☐ *I will clear your trip with Dad.*

clear the air 1. *Lit.* to get rid of stale or bad air. ☐ *Open some windows and clear the air. It's stuffy in here.* **2.** *Fig.* to get rid of doubts or hard feelings. ☐ *All right, let's discuss this frankly. It'll be better if we clear the air.*

clear the decks 1. *Lit.* [for everyone] leave the deck of a ship and prepare for action. (A naval expression urging seaman to stow gear and prepare for battle or other action.) ☐ *An attack is coming. Clear the decks.* **2.** *Fig.* get out of the way; get out of this area. ☐ *Clear the decks! Here comes the teacher.* ☐ *Clear the decks and take your seats.*

clear the table to remove the dishes and other eating utensils from the table after a meal. (Compare this with **set the table**.) ☐ *Will you please help clear the table?* ☐ *After you clear the table, we'll play cards.*

Clear the way! Please get out of the way, because someone or something is coming through and needs room! ☐ *The movers were shouting, "Clear the way!" because they needed room to take the piano out of the house.*

clear up 1. [for the sky] to become more clear or sunny. ☐ *Suddenly, the sky cleared up.* ☐ *When the sky cleared up, the breeze began to blow.* **2.** [for something] to become more understandable. ☐ *At about the middle of the very confusing lecture, things began to clear up.* ☐ *I was having trouble, but things are beginning to clear up.* **3.** [for a rash or skin condition] to clear the skin and return to normal. ☐ *I'm sure your rash will clear up soon.* **4.** [for a minor illness] to improve or become cured. ☐ *His cold cleared up after a couple of weeks.*

cleave to someone to be sexually faithful, usually to one's husband. (Biblical. As in the traditional marriage ceremony, "And cleave only unto him.") ☐ *She promised to cleave only to him for the rest of her life.*

click with someone **1.** [for something] to be understood or comprehended by someone suddenly. ☐ *His explanation clicked with Maggie at once.* **2.** [for someone or something new] to catch on with someone; to become popular or friendly with someone very quickly. ☐ *The new product clicked with consumers and was an instant success.* ☐ *I clicked with Tom the moment I met him.*

climb down (from something**)** to dismount something; to come down from something. ☐ *The child climbed down from the roof.* ☐ *Please climb down!*

climb on Go to **climb on(to)** something.

climb on the bandwagon Go to **on the bandwagon**.

climb on(to) something and **climb on** to ascend to or mount something. ☐ *I climbed onto the side of the truck.* ☐ *Tommy climbed on the truck.*

climb out (of something**)** to get, crawl, or move out of something. ☐ *He climbed out of the wreckage and examined himself carefully for injuries.* ☐ *He climbed out very carefully.*

climb the wall(s) *Fig.* to be very agitated, anxious, bored, or excited. ☐ *He was home for only three days; then he began to climb the wall.* ☐ *I was climbing the walls to get back to work.*

climb up (something**)** to ascend something; to scale something. (Fixed order.) ☐ *The hikers took two hours to climb up the hill.* ☐ *The adventurer tried to climb up the side of the cliff.*

cling to someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to hold on tight to someone or something. ☐ *The child clung tightly to his mother.* ☐ *As she drifted in the sea, she clung to a floating log.* **2.** *Fig.* to hold onto the thought or memory of someone or something; to have a strong emotional attachment to or dependence on someone or something. ☐ *Her immigrant parents clung to the old ways.* ☐ *Harold clung to the memory of his grandmother.*

cling together [for two or more people or animals] to hold on tightly to each other. ☐ *The two children clung together throughout the ordeal.* ☐ *The baby baboon and its mother clung together and could not be separated.*

clip someone's **wings** *Fig.* to restrain someone; to reduce or put an end to someone's privileges. (Alludes to clipping a bird's wings to keep it from flying away.) ☐ *You had better learn to get home on time, or I will clip your wings.* ☐ *My mother clipped my wings. I can't go out tonight.*

clip something **from** something to cut something out of or away from something; to cut something off something. ☐ *I clipped the picture from the magazine.* ☐ *I clipped the straggly hairs from his head.*

clip something **on(to)** someone or something and **clip** something **on**† to attach something to someone or something with a clip. ☐ *I clipped a little name tag onto him before I put him on the plane.* ☐ *I clipped on a name tag.*

clip something **out of** something and **clip** something **out**† to remove something from something by clipping or cut-

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ting. □ *Please clip the article out of the magazine.* □ *Could you clip out the picture, too?*

cloak someone or something **in secrecy** *Fig.* to hide or conceal someone or something in secrecy. □ *Patrick cloaked his activities in secrecy.* □ *The agents cloaked the spy in secrecy, making her identity a mystery.*

cloak-and-dagger involving secrecy and plotting. □ *A great deal of cloak-and-dagger stuff goes on in political circles.* □ *A lot of cloak-and-dagger activity was involved in the appointment of the director.*

clock in to record one's time of arrival, usually by punching a time clock. □ *What time did she clock in?* □ *She forgot to clock in today.*

clock out to record one's time of departure, usually by punching a time clock. □ *I will clock out just before I go home.* □ *Jim clocked out early Tuesday to go to the doctor.*

clock someone **in** to observe and record someone's time of arrival. □ *The manager says he clocked you in at noon. That's a bit late, isn't it?*

clock someone or something **at** something to measure the speed of someone or something to be a certain figure. □ *I clocked the runner at a record speed for the race.* □ *Karen clocked the race at three minutes flat.*

clock someone **out** to observe and record someone's time of departure. □ *Jane clocked herself out and went home.*

clock someone **at speeds of** some amount Go to **speeds of** some amount.

clock something **up**† **1.** to record the accumulated hours, miles, etc., of some device or machine. (The recording is usually done by a meter of some type such as a speedometer, an elapsed time meter, etc. □ *She must have clocked two hundred flying hours up in six months.* □ *She clocked up a lot of hours.* **2.** to reach a goal that is worthy of being recorded. (Typically sports journalism. Compare this with **chalk** something **up**.) □ *Patrick clocked a fantastic number of points up this year.* □ *He sure clocked up a lot of goals.*

clock-watcher someone—a worker or a student—who is always looking at the clock, anticipating when something will be over. □ *There are four clock-watchers in our office.* □ *People who don't like their jobs can turn into clock-watchers.*

clog someone **up**† [for some kind of food] to constipate someone. □ *This cheese clogs me up. I can't eat it.* □ *This food clogs up people who eat it.*

clog something **up**† [for something] to obstruct a channel or conduit. □ *The leaves clogged the gutters up.* □ *They clogged up the gutter.*

clog something **with** something to block or obstruct a channel or conduit with something. □ *The neighbors clogged the creek with their brush and leaves.* □ *Please don't clog the drain with garbage.*

clog up [for a channel or conduit] to become blocked. □ *The canal clogged up with leaves and mud.*

close a deal and **close the deal** to formally conclude bargaining; to bring negotiating to an end by reaching an agreement. □ *We negotiated the terms of the agreement, and this afternoon we will close the deal.*

close a sale and **close the sale** to complete the sale of something; to **seal a bargain** in the sale of something. □ *The salesman closed the sale and the customer drove off in a brand new car.*

***close as two coats of paint** *Cliché* close and intimate. (*Also: **as** ~.) □ *When Tom and Mary were in high school, they were as close as two coats of paint.* □ *All their lives, the cousins were close as two coats of paint.*

close at hand within reach; handy. □ *I'm sorry, but your letter isn't close at hand. Please remind me what you said in it.* □ *When you're cooking, you should keep all the ingredients close at hand.*

Close, but no cigar. *Cliché* Some effort came close to succeeding, but did not succeed. (Alludes to not quite winning a cigar as a prize.) □ *Jill: How did you do in the contest? Jane: Close, but no cigar. I got second place.*

a **close call** Go to a **close shave**.

close chewer and a tight spitter *Rur.* someone who hates to spend money; a cheapskate. □ *He's a close chewer and a tight spitter. Everything about him looks run-down, but he's probably the richest man in the county.*

close down and **shut down** [for someone] to close a business, office, shop, etc., permanently or temporarily. □ *This shop will have to close down if they raise taxes.* □ *The fire department closed down all the stores on the block because of the gas leak.*

close enough for government work and **good enough for government work** sufficiently close; done just well enough. (Alludes to the notion that work for the government is not done with care or pride.) □ *I didn't do the best job of mending your shirt, but it's close enough for government work.*

close enough to use the same toothpick *Rur.* very close. (Used to describe close friends.) □ *We've been friends since we were five years old. We're close enough to use the same toothpick.*

close (in) around someone or something to move to surround someone or something. □ *The police closed in around the thieves.* □ *We closed in around the enemy camp.*

close in for the kill and **move in for the kill 1.** *Lit.* to move in on someone or something for the purpose of killing. □ *The wolves closed in for the kill.* □ *When the lions closed in for the kill, the zebras began to stampede.* **2.** *Fig.* to get ready to do the final and climactic part of something. □ *The car salesman closed in for the kill with contract and pen in hand.*

close in (on someone or something**) 1.** *Lit.* to move inward on someone or something. □ *The cops were closing in on the thugs.* □ *They closed in quietly and trapped the bear.* **2.** *Fig.* [for threats or negative feelings] to overwhelm or seem to surround someone or something. □ *My problems are closing in on me.* □ *I feel trapped. Everything is closing in.*

close on something to formally complete the sale and transfer of property, especially real estate. □ *We closed on the new house on April 16.* □ *We were able to close on our old house on June 2.*

close one's **eyes to** something and **shut** one's **eyes to** something **1.** *Lit.* to close one's eyes to avoid seeing something unpleasant. □ *I had to close my eyes to the carnage about me. I couldn't bear to look.* **2.** *Fig.* to ignore something; to pretend that something is not happening. □

Maria simply shut her eyes to the bad morale in her department.

Close only counts in horseshoes (and hand grenades). *Prov.* Coming close but not succeeding is not good enough. ☐ *I came close to winning the election, but close only counts in horseshoes and hand grenades.*

close ranks to move closer together in a military formation. ☐ *The soldiers closed ranks and marched on the enemy in tight formation.*

close ranks (behind someone or something**)** to support someone or something; to back someone or something. ☐ *We will close ranks behind the party's nominee.* ☐ *Let's close ranks behind her and give her the support she needs.*

close ranks (with someone**)** to join with someone in a cause, or agreement. ☐ *We can fight this menace only if we close ranks.* ☐ *Let's all close ranks with Ann and adopt her suggestions.*

a **close shave** and a **close call** a narrow escape. (See also have a close shave.) ☐ *Wow, that was a close shave. I thought the guard would spot us.* ☐ *The speeding car passed only a few inches from us—a real close call.*

close someone or something **down**† to force someone or someone's business, office, shop, etc., to close permanently or temporarily. ☐ *The health department closed the restaurant down.* ☐ *They closed down the same place last year, too.*

close someone or something **in (**something**)** to contain someone or something in something or some place; to seal someone or something inside something. ☐ *Don't close the bird in such a small cage.* ☐ *Don't close me in! Leave the door open.*

close someone **out of** something and **close** someone **out**† to prevent someone from getting into something, such as a class, a room, a waiting list, etc. ☐ *They closed me out of the class I wanted.* ☐ *I got in, but they closed out everyone after me in line.*

close someone **up**† to close a surgical wound at the end of a surgical procedure. ☐ *Fred, would you close her up for me?* ☐ *Fred closed up the patient.*

close something **down**† and **shut** something **down**† to make something stop operating; to put something out of business. ☐ *The police closed the illegal casino down.* ☐ *The manager shut down the factory for the holidays.*

close something **off**† to prevent entrance into something; to block something off. ☐ *Please don't close this passageway off.* ☐ *They closed off the passageway anyway.*

close something **out**† **1.** to sell off a particular kind of merchandise with the intention of not selling it in the future. ☐ *These are not selling. Let's close them out.* ☐ *They closed out all of last season's merchandise.* **2.** to prevent further registration in something. ☐ *We are going to have to close this class out.* ☐ *The registrar closed out the class.*

close something **to** someone to prevent someone or some type of person from participating in or attending something. ☐ *We closed membership to anyone who signed up late.* ☐ *They had to close the registration to nonresidents.*

close something **up**† **1.** to close someone's business, office, shop, etc., temporarily or permanently. ☐ *Tom's restaurant nearly went out of business when the health department closed him up.* ☐ *The health department closed up the restaurant.* **2.** to close something that is open, such as a door or a box. ☐ *Please close the door when you leave.*

close the books on someone or something *Fig.* to declare that a matter concerning someone or something is finished. (The *books* here originally referred to financial accounting records.) ☐ *It's time to close the books on Fred. He's had enough time to apologize to us.*

close the deal Go to close a deal.

close the door on someone or something Go to shut the door (up)on someone or something.

close the door to someone or something Go to shut the door (up)on someone or something.

close the sale Go to close a sale.

close to home *Fig.* affecting one personally and intimately. ☐ *Her remarks were a bit too close to home. I took her review as a personal insult.*

***close to** someone friendly or intimate with someone. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *She is very shy and really won't let anyone get close to her.* ☐ *It is difficult to get close to a loner like Wally.*

***close to** someone or something **1.** near someone or something. (*Typically: **get ~; stand ~; sit ~; move ~**.) ☐ *Don't get close to me. I have a cold.* ☐ *If you get close to the fire, you may get burned.* **2.** approximating someone or something in some quality or measure. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *This brand of frozen fish does not even get close to that brand in flavor and freshness.* ☐ *Tom doesn't even get close to Nancy when it comes to artistic ability.*

close up 1. *Lit.* [for an opening] to close completely. ☐ *The door closed up and would not open again.* ☐ *The wound will close up completely in a day or so.* **2.** *Fig.* [for a place of business] to close for business. ☐ *The store closed up and did not open until the next day.*

close up shop *Fig.* to quit working, for the day or forever. (Fixed order.) ☐ *It's five o'clock. Time to close up shop.* ☐ *I can't make any money in this town. The time has come to close up shop and move to another town.*

close with someone or something to end a performance with a particular act or event. ☐ *The show is almost over and we will close with Sarah Miles, who will announce her own song title.* ☐ *The evening closed with a magic act.*

closefisted (with money) Go to tightfisted (with money).

closet someone **with** someone to put someone into a private room with someone else for the purposes of conducting business. ☐ *She closeted herself with the president and finally, once and for all, had her say.*

clothe someone **in** something to dress someone in something. ☐ *She clothed her children in the finest garments.* ☐ *He clothed himself in his tuxedo for the wedding.*

Clothes make the man. *Prov.* People will judge you according to the way you dress. ☐ *Jim was always careful about how he dressed. He believed that clothes make the man.*

cloud over 1. *Lit.* [for the sky] to fill with clouds; [for the sun] to be obscured by clouds. ☐ *It was beginning to cloud over, so we went inside.* ☐ *The sky clouded over and it began to get chilly.* **2.** *Fig.* [for something once clear] to

become opaque; to become clouded. ☐ *My vision seemed to cloud over, and I could see very little.* ☐ *The mirror clouded over as the steam rose from the hot water in the sink.*

cloud up 1. *Lit.* [for the sky] to get cloudy, as if it were going to rain. ☐ *All of a sudden it clouded up and began to rain.* ☐ *It usually clouds up at the top of the mountain.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to grow very sad, as if to cry. ☐ *Whenever Mary got homesick, she'd cloud up. She really wanted to go home.*

clown around (with someone**)** *Fig.* to join with someone in acting silly; [for two or more people] to act silly together. ☐ *The boys were clowning around with each other.* ☐ *The kids are having fun clowning around.*

clue someone **in† (on** something**)** to inform someone of something. ☐ *Please clue me in on what's been going on.* ☐ *Clue in those guys before it's too late.*

clunk down [for something] to drop or fall, making the sound "clunk." ☐ *A large piece of metal clunked down right in front of me.* ☐ *A tree branch clunked down on the roof and damaged a few shingles.*

clunk something **down†** to drop or place something heavily on something so that it makes a clunking noise. ☐ *He clunked the big box down on the table.* ☐ *He clunked down all his school books on the table.*

cluster around someone or something [for a group of people or things] to bunch together, surrounding someone or something. ☐ *The birds clustered around the chimney top to keep warm.* ☐ *The kids clustered around the police officer.*

cluster someone or something **around** someone or something to bunch people or things together around someone or something. ☐ *She clustered the cups around the punch bowl.* ☐ *Karen clustered the children around the fire.*

cluster together to bunch or group together. ☐ *All of the bats clustered together on the roof of the cave.* ☐ *The children clustered together in small groups here and there on the playground.*

clutch at someone or something to grasp at or grab for someone or something. ☐ *He clutched at the roots of the trees along the bank, but the flood swept him away.* ☐ *Karen clutched at me, but lost her grip.*

clutch at straws *Fig.* to continue to seek solutions, ideas, or hopes that are insubstantial. ☐ *When you talk of cashing in quick on your inventions, you are just clutching at straws.* ☐ *That is not a real solution to the problem. You are just clutching at straws.*

clutch someone or something **to** something to grasp and hold someone or something to something. ☐ *She clutched the baby to her bosom.* ☐ *Lee clutched the ice pack to his head.*

clutch (up) to become very tense and anxious; to freeze with anxiety. ☐ *I have been known to clutch before a big game.* ☐ *Just relax, play your game, and you won't clutch!*

clutter something **up†** to mess something up; to fill something or some place up with too many things. ☐ *Heaps of newspapers cluttered the room up and made it a fire hazard.* ☐ *Who cluttered up this house?*

coach someone **for** something to train or drill someone in preparation for doing something. ☐ *Elliott coached his roommate every night for the contest.* ☐ *Juan coached Alice for the play.*

coalesce into something [for two or more things] to blend or fuse and become one thing. ☐ *The fading colors coalesced into a gray blur.* ☐ *In the distance, the crowd coalesced into a single blob.*

coast along to roll or move along with little or no effort. ☐ *We just coasted along on the flat prairie.* ☐ *We coasted along until we came to the bottom of the hill.*

The **coast is clear.** There is no visible danger. ☐ *I'm going to stay hidden here until the coast is clear.* ☐ *You can come out of your hiding place now. The coast is clear.*

coast-to-coast from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans (in the continental U.S.A.); all the land between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans (considered in either direction). ☐ *My voice was once heard on a coast-to-coast radio broadcast.* ☐ *Our car made the coast-to-coast trip in eighty hours.*

coat and tie [for men] a jacket or sports coat and necktie. (A respectable but less than formal standard of dress.) ☐ *My brother was not wearing a coat and tie, and they would not admit him into the restaurant.* ☐ *I always carry a coat and tie in my car just in case I have to dress up a little for something.*

coat someone or something **with** something to put a layer of something on someone or something. ☐ *Her manager coated her with grease before she began the Channel swim.* ☐ *The cook coated the chicken with batter and dropped it into the hot fat.*

coax someone or an animal **in(to** something**) 1.** to urge or persuade someone or an animal to go into something. ☐ *We coaxed the lion into the cage with fresh meat.* ☐ *The teacher coaxed the child into the kindergarten classroom.* **2.** to urge or persuade someone or an animal into doing something. ☐ *We coaxed her into singing for us.* ☐ *Janet coaxed the dog into sitting up and begging.*

coax someone or an animal **out of** something **1.** to urge or persuade someone or an animal to give something up. ☐ *He almost wouldn't sell it, but I coaxed him out of it.* ☐ *I coaxed the cat out of the canary it was holding in its mouth.* **2.** to urge or persuade someone or an animal to come out of something. ☐ *She coaxed the puppy out of the carton.* ☐ *Janet coaxed the child out of the closet with a promise of a piece of cake.*

coax someone **to** do something to urge someone to do something. ☐ *The kids coaxed her to let them go swimming.* ☐ *Can I coax you to try some of this pie?*

cobble something **up†** and **cobble** something **together** to make something or put something together hastily or carelessly. ☐ *Who cobbled this thing up? Take it apart and start over.* ☐ *The kids cobbled up their model planes badly.* ☐ *It looks like you cobbled together that report just last night.*

cock a snook at someone to show or express defiance or scorn at someone. ☐ *He cocked a snook at the traffic cop and tore up the ticket.* ☐ *The boy cocked a snook at the park attendant and walked on the grass.*

cock of the walk someone who acts more important than others in a group. ☐ *The deputy manager was cock of the*

walk until the new manager arrived. ☐ *He loved acting cock of the walk and ordering everyone about.*

cock-and-bull story a hard-to-believe, made-up story; a story that is a lie. ☐ *Don't give me that cock-and-bull story.* ☐ *I asked for an explanation, and all I got was your ridiculous cock-and-bull story!*

***cocky as the king of spades** boastful; overly proud. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *He'd challenge anyone to a fight. He's as cocky as the king of spades.* ☐ *She strutted in, cocky as the king of spades.*

coerce someone or an animal **into** something to force or compel someone or an animal to do something. ☐ *I could not coerce her into coming along with us.* ☐ *You cannot coerce a cat into anything.*

coexist with someone or something to exist agreeably or tolerably with or at the same time as someone or something. ☐ *I decided that I would have to coexist with your policies, despite my objections.* ☐ *It is hard for cats to coexist with dogs.*

coffee and coffee and a doughnut or a pastry. ☐ *I'll have coffee and.* ☐ *We stopped at a little shop for coffee and.*

coffee and Danish a cup of coffee and a Danish sweet roll. ☐ *A few of us like to have coffee and Danish before we start work.* ☐ *Coffee and Danish is not my idea of a good breakfast!*

coffee-table book a book that is more suitable for display than for reading, typically, an oversize, illustrated book left on the coffee table for visitors to examine. ☐ *This book is more of a coffee-table book than an art book. I prefer something more scholarly.* ☐ *We purchased a coffee-table book for Jan's birthday.*

cogitate on something *Rur.* to think about something. ☐ *Cogitate on this idea for a while.* ☐ *I will have to cogitate on this for a few days. I'll get back to you.*

cohabit with someone **1.** [for an unmarried person] to live with a person of the opposite sex. ☐ *They were cohabiting with one another for several years.* **2.** *Euph.* to copulate with someone. ☐ *She had been cohabiting with him, and she admitted it in court.*

coil (itself) around someone or something [for something or an animal] to wrap itself around someone or something. ☐ *The monkey's tail coiled itself around the branch.* ☐ *The huge python coiled around poor Roger.*

coil (itself) up [for something] to wrap or roll itself into a coil. ☐ *The snake coiled itself up, trying to hide.* ☐ *It coiled up, ready to strike.*

coil (itself) up into something [for something] to wrap or twist itself into a particular shape. ☐ *The frightened snaked coiled itself up into a knot.* ☐ *The spring coiled up into its original shape.*

coil something **up**† to roll or twist something into a coil. ☐ *Maria coiled the strip of stamps up and put them in the little dispenser.* ☐ *Please coil up the rope.*

coin a phrase *Fig.* to create a new expression that is worthy of being remembered and repeated. (Often jocular.) ☐ *He is "worth his weight in feathers," to coin a phrase.*

coincide with something to agree with or match something; [for something] to happen at the same time as something else. ☐ *This pattern coincides with the pattern we see in the carpet.* ☐ *My birthday sometimes coincides with Thanksgiving Day.*

***cold as a welldigger's ass (in January)** and ***cold as a welldigger's feet (in January); *cold as a witch's caress; *cold as marble; *cold as a witch's tit; *cold as a welldigger's ears (in January)** very, very cold; chilling. (Use caution with *ass.* *Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Bill: How's the weather where you are? Tom: Cold as a welldigger's ass in January.* ☐ *By the time I got in from the storm, I was as cold as a welldigger's feet.* ☐ *The car's heater broke, so it's as cold as a welldigger's ears to ride around in it.* ☐ *She gave me a look as cold as a witch's caress.*

cold as a welldigger's feet (in January) Go to previous.

cold as a witch's tit Go to cold as a welldigger's ass (in January).

cold as marble Go to cold as a welldigger's ass (in January).

coldcock someone to knock someone unconscious. ☐ *He hit him once and looks like he coldcocked him.* ☐ *She coldcocked him with her walking stick.*

cold comfort no comfort or consolation at all. ☐ *She knows there are others worse off than her, but that's cold comfort.* ☐ *It was cold comfort to the student that others had failed as he had done.*

***cold feet** *Fig.* fear of doing something; cowardice at the moment of action. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *The bridegroom got cold feet on the day of the wedding.* ☐ *Sally said I should try skydiving, but I had cold feet.*

*a **cold fish** *Fig.* a person who is distant and unfeeling. (*Typically: **act like ~; be ~**.) ☐ *Bob is so dull—a real cold fish.* ☐ *She hardly ever speaks to anyone. She's a cold fish.*

Cold hands, warm heart. *Prov.* People whose hands are usually cold have kind and loving personalities. ☐ *Nancy: I don't like holding hands with Joe. His hands are so cold. Jane: Cold hands, warm heart.*

cold, hard cash cash, not checks or credit. ☐ *I want to be paid in cold, hard cash, and I want to be paid now!* ☐ *Pay me now! Cash on the barrelhead—cold, hard cash.*

cold-shoulder to ignore someone; to give someone a cool reception. (See also the cold shoulder.) ☐ *The hostess cold-shouldered me, so I spilt my appetizers in the swimming pool.* ☐ *Tiffany cold-shouldered the guy who was trying to flirt with her.*

*the **cold shoulder** *Fig.* an attitude of rejection. (*Typically: **get ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *If you greet her at a party, you'll just get the cold shoulder.* ☐ *I thought that Sally and I were friends, but lately I've been getting the cold shoulder.*

cold sober Go to stone (cold) sober.

cold turkey *Sl.* immediately; without tapering off or cutting down gradually. (See also go cold turkey. Originally drug slang. Now used of breaking any habit.) ☐ *Tom stopped smoking cold turkey.* ☐ *She gave up her drinking habit cold turkey and had no ill effects.*

C

collaborate with someone or something to work together on something with someone or a group. ☐ *I will collaborate with Amy on this research.* ☐ *I was forced to collaborate with a totally uninformed committee.*

collapse into something **1.** *Lit.* to fall down into something with suddenness, as if out of energy. ☐ *She was so tired, she collapsed into the chair.* ☐ *Juan collapsed into a chair and fell fast asleep.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to fall into a particular kind of despair. ☐ *The poor man collapsed into a deep depression.* ☐ *Scott collapsed into his own personal brand of grieving.*

collapse under someone or something to cave in under the weight of someone or something. ☐ *The grandstand collapsed under the weight of the spectators.* ☐ *The bridge collapsed from the force of the flood.*

collar-and-tie men *Rur.* businessmen who wear dress shirts and ties. ☐ *After Jim graduated from college, he went off to join the collar-and-tie men.* ☐ *Us working folks at the plant have an awful time getting the collar-and-tie men to see our point of view.*

collate something **with** something to compare or match something with something. ☐ *Try to collate these figures with that other list.* ☐ *I can't collate these notations with the spreadsheet they go with.*

collect around someone or something to gather around someone or something; to accumulate around someone or something. ☐ *The guests collected around the table that held the birthday cake.* ☐ *The children collected around the birthday boy.*

collect (money) for someone or something to solicit money for the benefit of someone or something. ☐ *I would like to collect some money for Fred, who is in the hospital.* ☐ *I am collecting for the church building fund.*

collect (money) for something to solicit money that is owed. ☐ *I'm collecting money for payment on your loan.* ☐ *Someone is calling to collect for the newspaper delivery.*

collect on something to take or receive payment on a debt or promise. ☐ *I have come to collect on your debt.* ☐ *I will have to assign your account to an agency to collect on this bill.*

collect one's **thoughts** *Fig.* to take time to think through an issue; to give some thought to a topic. ☐ *I'll speak to the visitors in a moment. I need some time to collect my thoughts.*

collect something **from** someone **1.** to gather up something from someone; to gather money from someone. ☐ *I'm here to collect used clothing from you.* ☐ *She is out collecting donations from the neighbors.* **2.** to take a medical specimen from a person. ☐ *I am here to collect a urine specimen from the patient.* ☐ *The phlebotomist collected the specimen from Todd and left the room.*

collect something **up**† to gather something up. ☐ *Collect your things up, and let's go.* ☐ *I collected up all my luggage and left.*

collide with someone or something to crash with or bump into someone or something. ☐ *The bus collided with a truck.* ☐ *Maria collided with Alice, but neither was hurt.*

collude with someone or something to plot or conspire with someone or a group. ☐ *The CEO colluded with the board of directors in the stock scandal.*

color something **in**† to paint or draw color on a pattern or outline. ☐ *Here is a sketch. Please color it in.* ☐ *Color in the sketch, please.*

comb something **for** someone or something *Fig.* to look all over or all through something for a particular person or thing. ☐ *The police combed the entire neighborhood for the criminals.* ☐ *I combed the entire house for the missing paper.*

comb something **out of** something and **comb** something **out**† to remove substances or knots and snarls from something by combing. ☐ *I had to comb the gum out of her hair.* ☐ *It took me over an hour to comb out the gum.*

comb through something *Fig.* to look through something, examining it thoroughly. ☐ *I combed through all my belongings, looking for the lost papers.* ☐ *The vet combed through the dog's coat, looking for tick bites.*

combine something **against** someone or something to join something together in opposition to someone or something. ☐ *We will combine forces against the enemy.* ☐ *Our game plan combined our various talents against the opposite team.*

combine something **with** something to mix something with something else. ☐ *I want to combine the red flowers with the pink ones for a bouquet.* ☐ *First, combine the eggs with the sugar.*

come a cropper *Fig.* to have a misfortune; to fail. (Meaning 'fall off one's horse.') ☐ *Bob invested all his money in the stock market just before it fell. Boy, did he come a cropper.* ☐ *Jane was out all night before she took her final. She really came a cropper.*

come aboard and **go aboard** to get onto a boat or ship. ☐ *Please come aboard. We are shoving off now.* ☐ *Please ask everyone to go aboard.*

come about 1. to happen. ☐ *How did this damage come about?* ☐ *This came about due to the windstorm.* **2.** [for a ship or boat] to turn. ☐ *Look how easily this boat comes about.* ☐ *Now, practice making the boat come about.*

come across 1. to be compliant. ☐ *Oh, she'll come across, just you wait; she'll do what we want.* **2.** to agree; to yield. ☐ *How can we get him to come across?*

come across as someone or something **(to** someone**)** Go to next.

come across like someone or something **(to** someone**)** and **come across as** someone or something **(to** someone**)** to appear or seem like someone or something to other people. ☐ *You always come across like a madman to people.* ☐ *She comes across like the Queen of the Nile to most people who meet her.*

come across someone or something and **run across** someone or something to find someone or something; to discover someone or something. ☐ *John came across a book he had been looking for.* ☐ *Where did you run across that lovely skirt?*

come across (to something**)** to agree to something; to yield to someone else's position. ☐ *He came across to our point of view.* ☐ *Will a sign-on bonus get him to come across?*

come across (with something**)** to deliver what is expected of one. ☐ *You had better come across with what you owe*

me. ☐ *You owe me money, and I wish you would come across.*

come after someone or something Go to **after** someone or something.

Come again. 1. Please come back again sometime. ☐ *Mary: I had a lovely time. Thank you for asking me. Sally: You're quite welcome. Come again.* ☐ *"Come again," said Mrs. Martin as she let Jimmy out the door.* **2.** *Rur.* (usually **Come again?**) I didn't hear what you said. Please repeat it. ☐ *Sally: Do you want some more carrots? Mary: Come again? Sally: Carrots. Do you want some more carrots?*

come along (with someone**)** to come with or go with someone. ☐ *Please come along with me to the store.* ☐ *Come along, let's go.*

Come and get it! and **Come 'n' get it!** Dinner's ready. Come eat! ☐ *The camp cook shouted, "Time to eat! Come and get it!"*

come apart to break apart; to break up. ☐ *The missile came apart in midair.* ☐ *I was afraid our car would come apart on that rough road.*

come apart at the seams Go to **fall apart at the seams.**

come (a)round 1. finally to agree or consent (to something). ☐ *I thought he'd never agree, but in the end he came around.* ☐ *She came round only after we argued for an hour.* **2.** to return to consciousness; to wake up. ☐ *He came around after we threw cold water in his face.* ☐ *The boxer was knocked out, but came round in a few seconds.*

come around (for a visit) Go to **come around (to visit).**

come around (to doing something**)** to agree to do something eventually, after a long wait. ☐ *Finally, she came around to painting the kitchen.* ☐ *She hesitated for a long time, but eventually we got Lynn to come around.*

come around (to some place**) 1.** to come to some place for a visit. ☐ *You must come around to our place for a while.* ☐ *Do come around and have dinner with us sometime.* **2.** and **come around (to visit)** and **come around (for a visit)** to pay a casual visit to someone. ☐ *Why don't you come around to visit next week?* ☐ *Why don't you come around for a visit? You are welcome any time.*

come as no surprise will not be surprising [for someone] to learn [something]. ☐ *It will come as no surprise for you to learn that the company is losing money this year.* ☐ *It came as no surprise that the president had been lying.*

come at someone or something **1.** to make a threatening move toward someone or something. ☐ *The gorilla came at the cage and shook the bars.* ☐ *Walter came at the cake as if he were going to snatch the whole thing.* **2.** to attack someone or something. ☐ *The elephant came at us and we moved away.* ☐ *The cat came at the mouse and pounced on it.*

come away empty-handed to return without anything. ☐ *All right, go gambling. Don't come away empty-handed, though.* ☐ *Go to the bank and ask for the loan again. This time don't come away empty-handed.*

come away (from someone or something**)** to move away from someone or something. ☐ *Please come away from the fire. You will get burned if you don't.* ☐ *Come away! You can walk with me for a while.*

come away with someone to go away or travel away with someone. ☐ *Come away with me for a ride in the country.* ☐ *Come away with me and we'll find a nice place to eat.*

come back to return; to return to an advantageous or favorable state or condition. ☐ *Walter practiced every day, hoping to come back from his injury.* ☐ *When will the good old days come back?*

Come back and see us. and **Come back and see me.** Come visit us [or me] again. (Often said by a host or hostess to departing guests.) ☐ *Bill: Good night. Thanks for having me. Sally: Oh, you're quite welcome. Come back and see us.* ☐ *Bob: I enjoyed my visit. Good-bye. Mary: It was very nice of you to pay me a visit. Come back and see me.*

Come back anytime. Please come and visit us again. You're always welcome. (Often said by a host or hostess to departing guests.) ☐ *Mary: So glad you could come. Bill: Thank you. I had a wonderful time. Mary: Come back anytime.* ☐ *Bob: Thanks for the coffee and cake. Bye. Mary: We're glad to have you. Please come back anytime.*

come back (from some place**)** to return from a place. ☐ *When will you come back from Detroit?* ☐ *Please come back soon.*

come back to haunt one and **return to haunt** one *Fig.* [for a bad memory] to recur; for the consequences of a bad decision to affect one negatively later. ☐ *I never dreamed that a little thing like a traffic ticket could come back to haunt me years later.*

come back (to someone**)** [for a memory] to return to someone's consciousness. ☐ *Everything you said suddenly came back to me.* ☐ *All the old memories came back to me and made me feel very sad.*

come back (to someone or something**)** to return to someone or something. ☐ *Please come back to me. I'm lonely.* ☐ *Come back to your home!*

Come back when you can stay longer. Come back again sometime when your visit can be longer. (Often said by a host or hostess to departing guests.) ☐ *John: I really must go. Sue: So glad you could come. Please come back when you can stay longer.* ☐ *Bill: Well, I hate to eat and run, but I have to get up early tomorrow. Mary: Well, come back when you can stay longer.*

come before someone or something **1.** [of persons or things in an order or a line] to be in front of or in advance of someone or something. ☐ *This one comes before that one.* ☐ *She comes before me.* **2.** [for one] to present oneself in the presence of someone or a group. ☐ *Thank you for coming before this committee with your testimony.* ☐ *The judge said I would have to come before her again next month.* **3.** [for an issue] to be raised before someone, a board, committee, etc.; [for an issue] to appear on the agenda of someone or a deliberative body. ☐ *The matter of the broken windows came before the school board at last.* ☐ *The question came before the business manager.*

come between someone **and** someone else **1.** *Lit.* to be in between two people. ☐ *That's my place, there. I come between Maria and Lynn.* ☐ *In the line of contestants, I come between Bob and Bill.* **2.** *Fig.* to interfere in some-

one else's romance; to break up a pair of lovers. ☐ *Don't come between Terri and Jeff.*

come between something **and** something else to have a position between one thing and another. ☐ *April comes between March and May.* ☐ *This volume comes between numbers fourteen and sixteen.*

come by (some place**)** to stop some place for a visit. ☐ *Can you come by our place for a few minutes on the way home?* ☐ *Please come by sometime.*

come by something **1.** *Lit.* to travel by a specific means, such as a plane, a boat, or a car. ☐ *We came by train. It's more relaxing.* ☐ *Next time, we'll come by plane. It's faster.* **2.** *Fig.* to find or get something. ☐ *How did you come by that haircut?* ☐ *Where did you come by that new shirt?*

come by something **honestly 1.** *Fig.* to get something honestly. (See also **come by** something.) ☐ *Don't worry. I came by this Swiss watch honestly.* ☐ *I have a feeling she didn't come by it honestly.* **2.** *Fig.* to inherit something—such as a character trait—from one's parents. ☐ *I know I'm mean. I came by it honestly, though.* ☐ *She came by her kindness honestly.*

come clean (with someone**) (about** something**)** *Fig.* to be honest with somebody about something. ☐ *I want you to come clean with me about your financial status.* ☐ *Sam will come clean with me. I know he will.*

come close (to someone or something**) 1.** *Lit.* to approach very near to someone or something. ☐ *Come close to me and keep me warm.* ☐ *I didn't touch it, but I really came close that time.* **2.** *Fig.* to approximate someone or something in a specific quality. ☐ *When it comes to kindness, you don't even come close to Jane.* ☐ *You don't come close to the former owners in caring for your property.*

come down 1. *Sl.* to happen. ☐ *Hey, man! What's coming down?* ☐ *When something like this comes down, I have to stop and think things over.* **2.** a letdown; a disappointment. (Usually **comedown**.) ☐ *The loss of the race was a real comedown for Willard.* ☐ *It's hard to face a comedown like that.* **3.** *Sl.* to begin to recover from the effects of alcohol or drug intoxication. ☐ *She came down slow from her addiction, which was good.* ☐ *It was hard to get her to come down.* **4.** [for something] to descend (to someone) through inheritance. ☐ *All my silverware came down to me from my great-grandmother.* ☐ *The antique furniture came down through my mother's family.*

come down (from some place**)** Go to **down (from** some place**)**.

come down (from something**) 1.** to come to a lower point from a higher one. ☐ *Come down from there this instant!* ☐ *Come down, do you hear?* **2.** to move from a higher status to a lower one. (See also **come down in the world**.) ☐ *He has come down from his original position. Now he is just a clerk.* ☐ *He has come down quite a bit.*

come down (hard) (on someone or something**)** *Fig.* [for someone] to scold or punish someone or a group severely. ☐ *The judge really came down on the petty crooks.* ☐ *The critics came down much too hard on the performance.*

come down in the world to lose one's social position or financial standing. ☐ *Mr. Jones has really come down in the world since he lost his job.* ☐ *If I were unemployed, I'm sure I'd come down in the world, too.*

come down to earth 1. *Lit.* to arrive on earth from above. ☐ *An angel came down to earth and made an announcement.* **2.** *Fig.* to become realistic; to become alert to what is going on around one. ☐ *You have a fit of enthusiasm, John, but you must come down to earth. We can't possibly afford any of your suggestions.*

come down to some place to come to some place in the south or in a lower altitude for a visit. (Assumes a perspective of a visitor from a northern state of the U.S.) ☐ *Come down to our place in Florida this winter if you want.*

come down to something to be reduced to something; to amount to no more than something. ☐ *It comes down to whether you want to go to the movies or stay at home and watch television.* ☐ *It came down to either getting a job or going to college.*

come down with something to become or to be sick with some illness. ☐ *Susan came down with a bad cold and had to cancel her trip.* ☐ *I didn't go to work because I came down with the flu.*

come for someone to arrive to get someone. ☐ *I have come for Amy. Is she ready?* ☐ *The mothers came for their children at about five o'clock.*

come forth to come out; to move forward and appear. ☐ *Please come forth and meet your cousins.* ☐ *All the stage crew came forth and received some applause.*

come forward 1. *Lit.* to move oneself forward. ☐ *Come forward and stand before the whole class.* **2.** *Fig.* to present oneself to offer evidence in court voluntarily. ☐ *Why did you not come forward earlier in the trial?* ☐ *I was afraid to come forward during the trial.*

come forward (with something**)** to bring something, such as information, to someone's attention. ☐ *Colleen came forward with a new idea.* ☐ *I hope you each can come forward with something useful.*

come from behind to advance from a losing position. (Alludes to being behind in a score or in a race.) ☐ *Our team came from behind to win the game.* ☐ *The horse I bet on came from behind and almost placed second.*

come from far and wide to arrive from everywhere; to arrive from many directions and great distances. ☐ *People came from far and wide to attend the annual meeting.* ☐ *The deer came from far and wide to lick the salt block we had put out.*

come from nowhere to come as a surprise with no warning. ☐ *The dogs came from nowhere and attacked my cat.* ☐ *The whole set of problems came from nowhere. There was no way we could have foreseen them.*

come from some place Go to **from** some place.

come from someone or something to arrive from someone or something; [for something] to have originated with someone or something. ☐ *Did this letter come from Alice?* ☐ *A notice came from the Internal Revenue Service.*

come full circle *Fig.* to return to the original position or state of affairs. ☐ *The family sold the house generations ago, but things have come full circle and one of their descendants lives there now.*

come hell or high water *Fig.* no matter what happens. (Use *hell* with caution.) ☐ *I'll be there tomorrow, come hell*

or high water. ☐ *Come hell or high water, I intend to own my own home.*

come home from some place to arrive home from another place. ☐ *The soldiers came home from the war.* ☐ *When will you come home from the office?*

come home (to roost) 1. *Lit.* [for a fowl or other bird] to return to its home, as for a night's rest. ☐ *The chickens come home to roost in the evening.* **2.** *Fig.* [for a problem] to return to cause trouble [for someone]. (See also come home to someone.) ☐ *As I feared, all my problems came home to roost.*

come home to someone *Fig.* [for a fact] to be recognized suddenly by someone. ☐ *Suddenly, it came home to me that you thought I was Ronald.* ☐ *The importance of the events of the day finally came home to me.*

come home to someone or something to arrive home and find someone or something there. (See also come home to someone.) ☐ *I like to come home to a happy house.* ☐ *I look forward to coming home to you.*

come in 1. to enter. (Often a command or polite request.) ☐ *Please come in.* ☐ *If you will come in and have a seat, I will tell Betty that you are here.* **2.** to arrive; [for a shipment of something] to arrive. ☐ *New models come in almost every week.* ☐ *When do you expect a new batch to come in?* ☐ *The tomatoes will come in at the end of July.* ☐ *The election results came in early in the evening.* **3.** [for a broadcast signal] to be received satisfactorily. ☐ *Can you hear me? How am I coming in?* ☐ *You are coming in all right.*

come in a certain position to finish in a certain position or rank. ☐ *Fred came in fourth in the race.* ☐ *He was afraid he would come in last.*

Come in and make yourself at home. Please come into my home and make yourself comfortable. ☐ *Sue: Oh, hello, Tom. Come in and make yourself at home. Tom: Thanks. I will.*

Come in and sit a spell. and **Come in and set a spell.; Come in and sit down.; Come in and take a load off your feet.** *Rur.* Please come in and have a seat and a visit. (The variant with *set* informal or folksy.) ☐ *"Hi, Fred," smiled Tom, "Come in and sit a spell."* ☐ *Tom: I hope I'm not intruding. Bill: Not at all. Come in and set a spell.*

come in for something to be eligible for something; to be due something. ☐ *You are going to come in for a nice reward.* ☐ *Your report came in for a lot of criticism at the last board meeting.*

come in handy [for something] to be useful. ☐ *I think that this gadget will come in handy in the kitchen.*

come (in) on a wing and a prayer Go to on a wing and a prayer.

come in on something Go to in on something.

come in out of the rain 1. *Lit.* to seek shelter from the rain. ☐ *Come in out of the rain! You'll get wet.* **2.** *Fig.* to wake up to reality; to come down to earth. (See also doesn't have enough sense to come in out of the rain.) ☐ *Hey, man! Come in out of the rain! Don't you see that your boss is taking advantage of you!*

come in useful to be useful. ☐ *Your report has come in useful a number of times.*

come into a (small) fortune Go to come into (some) money.

C

come into being to begin existence. ☐ *This idea came into being during the last decade.* ☐ *When did this organization come into being?*

come into bloom and **come into blossom 1.** [for a flower] to bloom. ☐ *This rose comes into bloom later in the summer.* ☐ *When do they normally come into blossom?* **2.** [for a plant, bush, or tree] to begin to have many blossoms. ☐ *When do these bushes come into bloom?* ☐ *They come into blossom in June.*

come into blossom Go to previous.

come into conflict [for things or people] to conflict or to be at odds with one another. ☐ *The various policies came into conflict at the last moment.* ☐ *Bill and Bob came into conflict over almost everything.*

come in(to) contact (with someone or something**) 1.** *Lit.* to touch someone or something, probably unknowingly. ☐ *How many people have come into contact with the sick man?* ☐ *He came in contact with almost no one.* **2.** *Fig.* to meet up with and learn about someone or something. ☐ *Have you ever come into contact with trigonometry before?* ☐ *I have never come in contact with anything so difficult.*

come into effect to become valid, effective, or operable. ☐ *When did these rules come into effect?* ☐ *They came into effect while you were on vacation.*

come into existence to begin existence; to begin to be. ☐ *This country came into existence in the early part of the fifteenth century.* ☐ *When did this little town come into existence?*

come into fashion to become stylish or fashionable. ☐ *Do you think that a design like this will ever come into fashion?* ☐ *That kind of dance will never come into fashion.*

come into focus Go to in focus.

come in(to) heat and **come in(to) season** [for a female animal] to enter into the breeding season. ☐ *This animal will come into heat in the spring.* ☐ *When did your dog come in season?*

come into one's or its **own** to become independent; to be recognized as independent and capable, usually after much effort or time. ☐ *Maria is coming into her own as a concert pianist.*

come into play to become an important factor in something; to go into force. ☐ *All your hard practice and preparation will now come into play in the finals.*

come into power Go to in power.

come into prominence to become notable; to become renowned. ☐ *She first came into prominence during the late forties, when she starred in a few movies.* ☐ *Wally came into prominence when he won the state championship.*

come into season 1. [for a game animal] to be subject to legal hunting. ☐ *When do ducks come into season around here?* ☐ *Deer came into season just yesterday.* **2.** Go to come in(to) heat.

come into service to begin to be used; to begin to operate and function as designed. ☐ *When did this elevator*

C

come into service? ☐ *I think that this machine came into service during World War II.*

come into sight and **come into view** to become visible; to move closer so as to be seen. ☐ *The tall buildings of the city came into sight first.* ☐ *A large herd of elephants came into view in the distance.*

come into (some) money and **come into a (small) fortune** to get some money unexpectedly, usually by inheritance. ☐ *She came into a lot of money when she turned twenty.* ☐ *I hope I can come into some money some day.*

come into someone's **possession** Go to in someone's possession.

come into the world *Fig.* to be born. ☐ *I came into this world nearly seventy years ago.* ☐ *Little Timmy came into the world on a cold and snowy night.*

come into view Go to come into sight.

come Monday *Rur.* when Monday comes. (Can be used with other expressions for time, as in *come next week, come December, come five o'clock.* See the second example.) ☐ *Joe plays so hard on the weekend that come Monday, he's all worn out.* ☐ *You may think that putting up storm windows is a bother, but come December, you'll be glad you did it.*

Come 'n' get it! Go to Come and get it!

come naturally (to someone**)** to be natural and easy for someone. ☐ *Her ability to deal easily with people comes naturally to her.*

come of age Go to of age.

come off *Inf.* to happen; to take place. ☐ *What time does this party come off?* ☐ *How did your speech come off?* ☐ *It came off very well.*

Come off it! 1. *Inf.* Stop acting arrogantly! (See also come off ((of)something).) ☐ *Come off it, Tiff. You're not the Queen of England.* **2.** *Inf.* Give up your incorrect point of view! ☐ *Come off it! You're wrong, and you know it!*

come off ((of) something**) 1.** [for something] to detach from, fall off, or drop off something. (See also Come off it!. *Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *The paint came off the west side of the house because of the hot sun.* ☐ *A wheel came off Timmy's tricycle.* **2.** to get down off something; to get off something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Come off the roof immediately.* ☐ *Please come off of that horse!*

come off second best to be second to someone or something; to get the poorer end of a bargain. ☐ *As usual, he came off second best with a little less prize money than the winner.* ☐ *I don't want to come off second best again.*

come on 1. Stop it!; Stop doing that. (Usually **Come on!**) ☐ *Mary: Are you really going to sell your new car? Sally: Come on! How dumb do you think I am?* **2.** please oblige me. ☐ *Mother: Sorry. You can't go! Bill: Come on, let me go to the picnic!* ☐ *"Come on," whined Jimmy, "I want some more!"* **3.** to hurry up; to follow someone. ☐ *If you don't come on, we'll miss the train.* **4.** [for electricity or some other device] to start operating. ☐ *After a while, the lights came on again.* ☐ *I hope the heat comes on soon.* **5.** to walk out and appear on stage. ☐ *You are to come on when you hear your cue.* **6.** *Fig.* [for a pain] to begin hurting; [for a disease] to attack someone. ☐ *The pain began to come on again, and Sally had to lie down.* **7.** [for a program] to be broadcast on radio or television. ☐ *The news didn't come on until an hour later.*

come on as something to appear to be something; to project one's image as something. ☐ *The senator comes on as a liberal, but we all know better.* ☐ *He comes on as a happy guy, but he is miserable.*

come on (duty) to begin to work at one's scheduled time. ☐ *When did you come on duty tonight?* ☐ *What time does she come on?*

Come (on) in. and **come on in(to)** something Enter.; Come into this place. (A polite invitation to enter someone's home, office, room, etc. It is more emphatic with *on*.) ☐ *Bob: Hello, you guys. Come on in. We're just about to start dinner.* ☐ *Bill: Come in. Nice to see you. Mary: I hope we're not too early. Bill: Not at all.* ☐ *Come on into the house and have a cold drink.*

Come on in, the water's fine! 1. *Lit.* Get into the water and swim! (Usually a polite command.) ☐ *As Todd swam along, he said to Rachel, "Come on in. The water's fine."* **2.** *Fig.* to begin to do anything. ☐ *You will like skiing. Come on in, the water's fine.* ☐ *I think you would like working here, and I'm happy to offer you the job. Come on in, the water's fine.*

come on like gangbusters Go to come on strong.

come on somehow to advance in some fashion, manner, rate, or degree. ☐ *Darkness comes on early these days.* ☐ *The illness comes on by degrees.*

come on strong and **come on like gangbusters** to seem aggressive; to impress people initially as very aggressive and assertive. ☐ *She has a tendency to come on strong, but she's really a softie.* ☐ *The new president comes on strong at first.*

come on the scene and **arrive on the scene 1.** *Lit.* to arrive at a place. ☐ *When we came on the scene, the ambulances were already there.* ☐ *The police arrived on the scene and began directing traffic.* **2.** *Fig.* to become part of a situation. ☐ *She thought she was in love with Harry until Bob came on the scene.*

come on (to someone**)** *Sl.* to attempt to interest someone romantically or sexually. ☐ *He was trying to come on to me, but I found him unappealing.*

come on(to) someone or something to find someone or something by accident; to happen onto someone or something. ☐ *When I was out on my walk, I came on a little shop that sells leather goods.* ☐ *I came onto an old friend of yours downtown today.*

come out 1. *Lit.* to exit; to leave the inside of a place. ☐ *Please come out. We have to leave.* ☐ *When do you think they will all come out?* **2.** *Fig.* to result; to succeed; to happen. ☐ *I hope everything comes out fine.* ☐ *It will come out okay. Don't worry.* **3.** *Fig.* to come before the public; [for a book] to be published; [for a report] to be made public. ☐ *A new magazine has just come out.* ☐ *When will your next book come out?* **4.** *Fig.* to become visible or evident. ☐ *His pride came out in his refusal to accept help.* ☐ *The real reason finally came out, and it was not flattering.* **5.** *Fig.* [for a young woman] to make a social debut. (Now only done in certain U.S. regions.) ☐ *Does your daughter*

plan to come out this year? **6.** *Fig.* to reveal one's homosexuality. (See also **out of the closet**.) ☐ *Herbie finally came out when he was forty-five.*

come out against someone or something to announce or reveal that one is opposed to someone or something. ☐ *Our governor came out against the new tax bill.*

come out ahead to end up with a profit, benefit, or advantage. ☐ *It was a tricky deal, and no one came out ahead of anyone else.* ☐ *I never come out ahead after paying my bills.*

come out at an amount and **come out to** an amount to result in a certain amount, as the result of mathematical computation. ☐ *The total charges came out at far more than we expected.*

come out at someone or something and **come out toward(s)** someone or something to emerge and attack someone or something. ☐ *The dogs came out at us, but we got away.* ☐ *Betsy's bulldog came out toward my bike as I rode by.*

come out badly [for efforts at something] to have a bad result. ☐ *I hope trying to get back together with Joan doesn't come out badly.*

come out for someone or something and **come out in favor of** someone or something to announce or reveal that one supports someone or something. ☐ *The defense lawyers all came out for the judge's ruling.* ☐ *Roger came out for Lynn, who was running for mayor.* ☐ *I thought the mayor would come out in favor of more public housing.*

come out (in bloom) Go to **out (in blossom)**.

come out (in blossom) Go to **out (in blossom)**.

come out in droves Go to **out in large numbers**.

come out in force Go to **out in force**.

come out in large numbers Go to **out in large numbers**.

come out in something **1.** *Lit.* to come outside wearing something in particular. ☐ *You shouldn't come out in that skimpy jacket.* ☐ *I didn't mean to come out in my pajamas. I just wanted to get the newspaper.* **2.** *Fig.* to break out with a rash. ☐ *The baby has come out in a rash again.*

come out in the open Go to **out in the open**.

come out in the wash *Fig.* to work out all right. (Alludes to a clothing stain that can be removed by washing.) ☐ *Don't worry about that problem. It'll all come out in the wash.* ☐ *This trouble will go away. It'll come out in the wash.*

come out in(to) the open and **come (out) into the open 1.** *Lit.* [for someone or something] to move from a concealed position to an open area. ☐ *Sooner or later, she will have to come out in the open.* ☐ *The deer finally came into the open.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone who has been hiding] to appear in public. ☐ *The thief came out into the open and was recognized by one of the witnesses to the crime.* ☐ *The FBI agents finally came into the open.*

come out in(to) the open with something *Fig.* to make something known publicly. ☐ *The auditors came out into the open with the story of the bankruptcy.* ☐ *After much fuss about its secret dealings, the city council came out in the open with the whole story.*

come out of a clear blue sky and **come out of the clear blue sky; come out of the blue** suddenly; without warning. ☐ *Then, out of a clear blue sky, he told me he was leaving.* ☐ *My sister Mary appeared on my doorstep out of the blue, after years with no word from her.*

come out of left field [for a problem or dilemma] to come from an unexpected place. (See also **out of left field**.) ☐ *This new problem came out of left field. We were really surprised.* ☐ *Your remarks came out of left field. I can't understand your complaint.*

come out of nowhere Go to **out of nowhere**.

come out of one's **shell** *Fig.* to become more friendly; to be more sociable. (Alludes to a shy turtle putting its head out of its shell.) ☐ *Come out of your shell, Tom. Go out and make some friends.*

come out (of someone or something**)** to emerge from someone or something. ☐ *Did that pile of books really come out of just one office?* ☐ *The lion came out of its den.*

come out (of something**) 1.** and **come out from** something *Lit.* to exit from something. ☐ *When will they come out of that meeting?* ☐ *The people came out from the houses and celebrated.* **2.** *Fig.* to result from something. ☐ *Nothing at all came out of our discussions.*

come out of the blue Go to **come out of a clear blue sky**.

come out of the closet Go to **out of the closet**.

come out (of) the little end of the horn *Rur.* to lose a great deal; to end with less than one started with. (See also **end up with the short end of the stick**.) ☐ *After the stock market crash, plenty of folks came out the little end of the horn.*

come out of the woodwork Go to **out of the woodwork**.

come out on something [for someone] to do well or poorly on a business venture. ☐ *How did you come out on the Adams project?* ☐ *We came out ahead on the Adams project, but for the quarter we came out with a loss overall.*

come out on top *Fig.* to end up being the winner. ☐ *I knew that if I kept trying, I would come out on top.* ☐ *Harry came out on top as I knew he would.*

come out smelling like a rose *Fig.* to succeed; to do better than anyone else in some situation. ☐ *Everyone else in the firm lost money in the real estate deal, but Bob came out smelling like a rose.* ☐ *If I can just finish my research paper on time, I'll come out smelling like a rose by the end of the school year.*

come out to an amount Go to **come out at** an amount.

come out to be to end up being a certain way. ☐ *I do not know what this sculpture will come out to be.* ☐ *When I start writing a poem, I never know what it will come out to be.*

come out well to end up well. ☐ *I hope things come out well.* ☐ *Everything will come out well in the end.*

come out with something **1.** to publish something. ☐ *When are you going to come out with a new edition?* ☐ *The publisher decided not to come out with the book.* **2.** to express or utter something. ☐ *He came out with a strong dissenting opinion.* ☐ *It was over an hour before the president came out with an explanation.*

C

come over 1. to join this party or side; to change sides or affiliation. ☐ *Tom was formerly an enemy spy, but last year he came over.* ☐ *I thought that Bill was a Republican. When did he come over?* **2.** to come for a visit. ☐ *See if Ann wants to come over.* ☐ *I can't come over to visit now. I'm busy.*

come over someone [for something] to affect a person, perhaps suddenly. (See also **come over** someone or something.) ☐ *I just don't know what came over me.* ☐ *Something came over her just as she entered the room.*

come over someone or something to move over and above someone or something. (See also **come over** someone.) ☐ *A cloud came over us and rained like fury.* ☐ *Darkness came over the city and streetlights blinked on.*

come rain or (come) shine Go to next.

come rain or shine and **come rain or (come) shine** no matter whether it rains or the sun shines; in any sort of weather. (See also **rain or shine.**) ☐ *Don't worry. I'll be there come rain or shine.* ☐ *We'll hold the picnic—rain or shine.*

Come right in. Come in, please, you are very welcome here. ☐ *Fred (opening door): Well, hi, Bill. Bill: Hello, Fred. Good to see you. Fred: Come right in. Bill: Thanks.*

come (right) on top of something *Fig.* [for something] to happen immediately after something else. ☐ *The accident expenses came right on top of the costs of her illness.* ☐ *The bad news came on top of some other problems we were having.*

come short of something *Fig.* to do something almost; to fail to achieve something completely. ☐ *The workers came short of finishing the job on time.* ☐ *We came short of our goal for the year.*

come someone's **way** [for something] to come to someone. ☐ *I wish a large sum of money would come my way.* ☐ *I hope that no bad luck comes my way.*

come through 1. [for someone] to do what one is expected to do, especially under difficult conditions. ☐ *You can depend on Jane. She'll always come through.* ☐ *Tom came through at the last minute with everything we needed.* **2.** [for something] to be approved; [for something] to gain approval. ☐ *Our mortgage loan approval finally came through!* ☐ *Your papers came through, and you can be sure that the matter has been taken care of.* **3.** Go to **come through (for** someone or something**)**. **4.** Go to **come through** something. **5.** Go to **come through (with** something**)**.

come through (for someone or something**)** *Fig.* to produce or perform as promised for someone or a group. ☐ *You knew I would come through for you, didn't you?* ☐ *The team came through for its loyal fans again.*

come through something and **come through** *Fig.* to pass through something. ☐ *Please come through the entrance slowly.* ☐ *Please chain the gate up again when you come through.*

come through something **(with flying colors)** *Fig.* to survive something quite well. (See also **with flying colors.** *Colors* here refers originally to flags.) ☐ *Todd came through the test with flying colors.* ☐ *Mr. Franklin came through the operation with flying colors.*

come through (with something**)** to produce or deliver something as promised. ☐ *Finally, Bob came through with the money he had promised.* ☐ *I knew he would come through.*

come to to become conscious; to wake up. ☐ *We threw a little cold water in his face, and he came to immediately.*

come to a bad end *Fig.* to have a disaster, perhaps one that is deserved or expected; to die an unfortunate death. ☐ *My old car came to a bad end. Its engine seized up.* ☐ *The dishonest merchant came to a bad end.*

come to a boil 1. *Lit.* [for a liquid] to reach the boiling point. ☐ *The soup came to a boil and the chef reduced the flame.* **2.** *Fig.* [for a problem or situation] to reach a critical or crucial stage. (Alludes to water reaching an active boil.) ☐ *Finally, things really came to a boil.* ☐ *Everything came to a boil after Mary announced her engagement.* **3.** *Fig.* [for someone] to get very angry. ☐ *Fred was coming to a boil and clearly he was going to lose his temper.*

come to a climax Go to next.

come to a close and **come to an end; come to a climax** to end; to progress to an ending. ☐ *The celebration came to an end about midnight.*

come to a conclusion 1. to reach a decision. ☐ *We talked for a long time but never came to any conclusion.* ☐ *Can we come to a conclusion today, or do we have to meet again?* **2.** [for a process] to reach the end and be finished. ☐ *At last, the yearlong ordeal of buying a house came to a conclusion.* ☐ *I was afraid that the opera would never come to a conclusion.*

come to a dead end and **reach a dead end 1.** *Lit.* to reach a point where one can go no farther and can turn in no new direction. ☐ *The road comes to a dead end about a mile farther.* **2.** *Fig.* to have run out of possible ideas, solutions, energy, etc. ☐ *I've come to a dead end. I'm fresh out of ideas.* ☐ *The committee reached a dead end on the matter and tabled the whole business.*

come to a halt to stop; to slow down and stop. ☐ *Slowly, the train came to a halt.* ☐ *After the bus came to a halt, more people got on.*

come to a head *Fig.* [for a problem] to reach a critical or crucial stage. ☐ *At the end of the week, everything came to a head and Sam was fired.*

come to a pretty pass *Fig.* to encounter a difficult situation. (This *pretty* expresses irony.) ☐ *This project has come to a pretty pass. I don't know how we can possibly finish on time.* ☐ *Mary had come to a pretty pass. She quit her job to be with her husband, and then he left her.*

come to a standstill [for something] to slow down and finally stop; to stop completely. (Usually refers to something that is progressing, such as work, traffic, negotiations.) ☐ *As the strike began, the production line came to a standstill.* ☐ *At the height of rush hour, traffic comes to a standstill.*

come to a stop [for someone or something] to stop moving or happening. ☐ *The bus finally came to a stop so I could get off.* ☐ *The dog's barking finally came to a stop.*

come to a turning point Go to a **turning point.**

come to an end Go to **come to a close.**

come to an impasse *Fig.* to reach a deadlock, stalemate, etc., in a situation. (Alludes to a blocked roadway.) ☐ *The committee has come to an impasse in its deliberations.*

come to an understanding (with someone**)** Go to reach an understanding with someone.

come to an untimely end *Fig.* to come to an early death. ☐ *Poor Mr. Jones came to an untimely end in a car accident.* ☐ *Cancer caused Mrs. Smith to come to an untimely end.*

come to attention to assume a formal military posture, standing very straight. ☐ *Almost immediately, the soldiers came to attention.*

come to blows (over someone or something**)** and **come to blows (about** someone or something**)** to reach the point of fighting about someone or something. ☐ *Let's not come to blows over this silly disagreement.*

come to fruition *Fig.* to occur or turn out as suspected or intended. ☐ *When will all of these good things come to fruition?* ☐ *Our hard work and the end we planned for will soon come to fruition.*

come to grief *Fig.* to experience something unpleasant or damaging. ☐ *In the end, he came to grief because he did not follow instructions.*

come to grips with someone or something *Fig.* to begin to deal with someone or something difficult or challenging in a sensible way. ☐ *We must all come to grips with this tragedy.* ☐ *I cannot come to grips with Ed and his problems.*

come to harm to experience something bad; to get damaged or harmed. ☐ *I sincerely hope that you do not come to harm.* ☐ *I hope no one comes to harm.*

come to life 1. *Lit.* to act as if alive after a period of seeming not to be alive. ☐ *As the anesthetic wore off, the patient came to life.* ☐ *After CPR, the child came to life.* **2.** *Fig.* to become vigorous or lively. ☐ *About midnight, the party really came to life.* ☐ *The actors didn't come to life until the middle of the second act.*

come to light *Fig.* [for something] to become known or to be discovered. ☐ *Many surprises have come to light since then.* ☐ *Nothing new has come to light since we talked last.*

come to mind *Fig.* [for a thought or idea] to enter into one's consciousness or be remembered. ☐ *Do I know a good barber? No one comes to mind right now.* ☐ *Another idea comes to mind. Why not check in the phone book?*

come to much 1. to amount to a large amount of money. (Usually used with a negative.) ☐ *The bill did not come to much, considering what we had for dinner and drinks.* **2.** to count for much; to be important or meaningful. (Usually negative.) ☐ *No one thought he would come to much.* ☐ *All that discussion did not come to much.*

come to naught Go to come to nothing.

come to no good to end up badly; to come to a bad end. ☐ *The street gang leaders came to no good in the end.*

come to nothing and **come to naught** to amount to nothing; to be worthless. ☐ *So all my hard work comes to nothing.* ☐ *Yes, the whole project comes to naught.*

come to one's **feet** to stand up. ☐ *The audience came to its feet, cheering.* ☐ *Fred came to his feet to greet Roger.*

come to one's **senses** to begin thinking sensibly. ☐ *I'm glad he finally came to his senses and went on to college.* ☐ *I wish you would come to your senses and look for a better job.*

come to oneself to begin acting and thinking like one's normal self. ☐ *I began to come to myself and realize the wrong I had done.* ☐ *Please come to yourself and stop acting so strangely.*

come to pass to happen; to take place. ☐ *And when do you think all these good things will come to pass?* ☐ *Do you think it will really come to pass?*

come to rest to stop; to slow down and stop. ☐ *The ball rolled and rolled and finally came to rest.* ☐ *Where did the ball come to rest?*

come to someone's **assistance** to arrive and provide assistance to someone. ☐ *A kindly truck driver came to our assistance, and we were able to call for help.* ☐ *I hope someone will come to my assistance soon.*

come to someone's **attention** and **come to** someone's **notice** to be told to, revealed to, or discovered by someone. ☐ *It has come to my attention that you are not following the rules.* ☐ *Your comments have just come to my notice.*

come to someone's **notice** Go to previous.

come to someone's or something's **rescue** to rescue or save someone or something. ☐ *The paramedics came to our rescue at once.* ☐ *A big donor came to the college's rescue.*

come to something to end up being helpful or significant. (See also amount to something; when it comes to something.) ☐ *Do you think this work will come to anything?* ☐ *I don't think this will come to what we were promised.*

come to terms (about someone or something**)** and **come to terms (on** someone or something**)** [for two or more people] to reach an accord on someone or something. ☐ *Ed and Alice came to terms about money.* ☐ *They did not come to terms on the price.*

come to terms (with someone or something**) 1.** to come to an agreement with someone. ☐ *I finally came to terms with my lawyer about his fee.* ☐ *Bob, you have to come to terms with your father.* **2.** to learn to accept someone or something. ☐ *She had to come to terms with the loss of her sight.* ☐ *She couldn't come to terms with her estranged husband.*

come to the fore *Fig.* to become prominent; to become important. ☐ *The question of salary has now come to the fore.* ☐ *Since his great successes as a prosecutor, he has really come to the fore in city politics.*

come to the job with something and **come to the position with** something; **come to the task with** something to bring a particular quality to a task or job. ☐ *She comes to the job with great enthusiasm.* ☐ *Ann comes to this position with a lot of experience.*

come to the point and **get to the point** to get to the important part (of something). ☐ *He has been talking a long time. I wish he would come to the point.* ☐ *We are talking about money, Bob! Come on, get to the point.*

come to the position with something Go to come to the job with something.

come to the same thing Go to amount to the same thing.

come to the task with something Go to come to the job with something.

C

come to think of it I just remembered. ☐ *Come to think of it, I know someone who can help.* ☐ *I have a screwdriver in the trunk of my car, come to think of it.*

come to this to result in this situation. (Usually said out of surprise.) ☐ *Who would believe it would come to this?* ☐ *So, it has come to this?*

come together 1. to touch together; to meet. ☐ *The ends of the boards just came together. They were almost too short.* ☐ *We came together in the park, just as we had agreed.* **2.** to attend something together; to arrive at an event together. ☐ *Alice and I are going to come together.* ☐ *We will come to the party together.*

come together (on something**)** to discuss and agree on something. ☐ *I hope we can come together on a price.* ☐ *I'm sure we can come together.*

come true to materialize as expected or hoped. ☐ *Jane's wishes had come true.* ☐ *Dave wondered if his dreams would ever come true.*

come under something to be classed in the category of something. ☐ *This request comes under the category of a plain nuisance.* ☐ *Your proposal comes under the heading of new business and is out of order.*

come under the hammer and **go under the hammer** *Fig.* [for something] to be auctioned. ☐ *The house at the corner is coming under the hammer next week.* ☐ *The repossessed farm will go under the hammer.*

come unglued *Fig.* to lose emotional control; to break out into tears or laughter. ☐ *When Sally heard the joke, she almost came unglued.* ☐ *When the bank took away my car, I came unglued and cried and cried.*

come up 1. *Lit.* to come from a lower place to a higher one. ☐ *You can come up now. They are gone.* ☐ *Come up and enjoy the view from the tallest rooftop in the county.* **2.** *Lit.* to come near; to approach. ☐ *He came up and began to talk to us.* ☐ *A heron came up while we were fishing, but it just ignored us.* **3.** *Fig.* to come to someone's attention. ☐ *The question of what time to be there never came up.* ☐ *The matter came up, but it was never dealt with.*

come up a storm *Rur.* to become stormy. ☐ *It came up a storm as I was on my way home, and I got soaked to the skin.*

come up against someone or something Go to up against someone or something.

come up for air 1. *Lit.* to lift one's head out of the water to breathe. ☐ *After staying under water for almost a minute, Jason had to come up for air.* **2.** *Fig.* to stop what one is doing for a different activity or rest. ☐ *Whenever you get off the phone and come up for air, I have a question for you.* ☐ *I want you to go to the store for me when you come up for air.* **3.** *Fig.* to stop kissing for a moment and breathe. ☐ *Don't those kids ever come up for air?* ☐ *When are you two going to come up for air?*

come up for auction Go to up for auction.

come up for reelection Go to up for reelection.

come up for sale Go to up for sale.

come up for something to be eligible for something; to be in line or sequence for something. ☐ *She comes up for reelection in April.* ☐ *How soon does your driver's license come up for renewal?*

come (up) from behind to advance in competition; to improve one's position relative to the positions of other things or people. ☐ *The horse was working hard to come up from behind.* ☐ *Lee was losing in the election, but he began to come from behind in the last week.*

come up heads and **come up tails** *Fig.* [for a tossed coin] to turn out to be either heads or tails. ☐ *We tossed a coin, and it came up heads.* ☐ *The coin came up tails.*

come up in the world Go to move up in the world.

come up smelling like a rose and **come up smelling like roses** *Fig.* to end up looking good or respectable after being involved in some difficult or notorious affair. ☐ *I was surprised that my congressional representative came up smelling like a rose after his colleagues investigated him.*

come up tails Go to come up heads.

come up through the ranks *Fig.* to rise to a position of leadership by working up through the sequence of lower positions. ☐ *He came up through the ranks to become a corporate executive.* ☐ *The general came up through the ranks. There is no other way to become a general.*

come up to someone's **expectations** to be as good as someone expected. ☐ *Sorry, but this product does not come up to my expectations and I want to return it.*

come up to someone's **standards** to meet or be equal to someone's standards or requirements. ☐ *Does this ice cream come up to your standards?* ☐ *Ann's concert recital did not come up to her own standards.*

come up with someone or something to find or supply someone or something; to manage to find or improvise something. ☐ *I came up with a date at the last minute.* ☐ *My mom is always able to come up with some yummy snack for me in the afternoon.*

come (up)on someone or something to find or happen on someone or something. (See also happen (up)on someone or something.) ☐ *I came upon Walter while I was in the bookstore.* ☐ *I came on this little store near Maple Street that has everything we need.*

come what may *Cliché* no matter what might happen. ☐ *I'll be home for the holidays, come what may.* ☐ *Come what may, the mail will get delivered.*

come with (someone or something**)** to depart in the company of someone or something; to travel with someone or a group. ☐ *Come with me. We'll go to my place.* ☐ *Are you going to come with the tour?* ☐ *Are you going to come with?*

come with the territory and **go with the territory** *Fig.* to be expected under circumstances like this. (Alludes to the details and difficulties attendant to something like the assignment of a specific sales territory to a salesperson. When one accepts the assignment, one accepts the problems.) ☐ *There is a lot of paperwork in this job. Oh, well, I guess it comes with the territory.* ☐ *There are problems, but they go with the territory.*

come within a hair('s breadth) of someone or something Go to come within an inch of someone or something.

come within an ace of something to come very close to [doing] something. ☐ *I came within an ace of leaving school. I'm glad you talked me out of it.* ☐ *Donna came within an ace of having an accident.*

come within an inch of doing something *Fig.* almost to do something; to come very close to doing something. ☐ *I came within an inch of going into the army.* ☐ *I came within an inch of falling off the roof.*

come within an inch of someone or something and **come within a hair('s breadth) of** someone or something to come very close to someone or something. ☐ *The bullet came within an inch of Heather.* ☐ *The car came within a hair of the bus.*

come within earshot (of something**)** Go to within earshot (of something).

come within range Go to within range.

come within range (of something**)** Go to within range (of something).

come within something **1.** to be in the category of something; to be under the domain of someone or something. ☐ *This comes within the domain of the treasurer.* ☐ *This matter doesn't come within my area of expertise.* **2.** to be inside a stated range, such as price, time, weight, range, etc. ☐ *This comes within my price range. I'll take it.*

come-hither look an alluring or seductive look or glance, usually done by a woman. ☐ *She blinked her bedroom eyes and gave him a come-hither look.* ☐ *She had mastered the come-hither look, but was not ready for the next part.*

***comfortable as an old shoe** *Cliché* very comfortable; very comforting and familiar. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *My old house may seem small to you, but I think it's cozy. It's as comfortable as an old shoe.*

Coming events cast their shadows before. *Prov.* Significant events are often preceded by signs that they are about to happen. (From Thomas Campbell's poem, "Lochiel's Warning.") ☐ *If you pay attention to the news, you can generally tell when something momentous is about to happen. Coming events cast their shadows before.*

coming out of one's **ears** *Fig.* very numerous or abundant. (As if people or things were coming in great numbers from many sources including unlikely ones.) ☐ *I've got phone and e-mail messages coming out of my ears.* ☐ *We are very busy at the factory. We have orders coming out of our ears.*

Coming through(, please). Please let me pass through. (Often said by someone trying to get through a crowd of people, as in a passageway or an elevator. Compare this with Out, please.) ☐ *Tom: Coming through, please. Sue: Give him some room. He wants to get by.* ☐ *Mary (as the elevator stops): Well, this is my floor. Coming through, please. I've got to get off.*

coming up a cloud *Rur.* getting ready to rain. ☐ *Look at that sky! It's comin' up a cloud!*

commence with someone or something to start a procedure affecting a number of people or things by choosing a particular person or thing first. ☐ *Each meeting commences with a reading of the minutes of the last meeting.* ☐ *The doctor interviews with Lynn and took everyone else in the order in which they had arrived.*

commend someone **for** something to praise someone for doing something. ☐ *The committee commended Ralph for his good work.*

commend someone or something **to** someone or something to recommend or speak well of someone to someone or a group. ☐ *I commend Walter to your organization. He would make a fine employee.* ☐ *We commended your organization to Martha, who may wish to become a member.*

C

comment about someone or something and **comment (up)on** someone or something to make a remark about someone or something. ☐ *There is no need to comment upon this event.* ☐ *Please don't comment on Liz's problems.*

commiserate with someone to share one's misery with another person who is also miserable. ☐ *I stopped by Bruce's house to commiserate with him on being laid off.*

commit oneself **on** something to agree to something; to promise or pledge to do something. ☐ *I'm sorry, but I can't commit myself on this matter until I know more details.*

commit oneself **to** someone or something to devote oneself to someone or something; to be faithful to someone or something. ☐ *He committed himself to his wife.* ☐ *She settled down and committed herself to her job.*

commit oneself **to** something **1.** to agree to something; to promise or pledge to do something. ☐ *Yes, I will commit myself to the repair of the door frame.* ☐ *Will you commit yourself to finishing on time?* **2.** to promise to support and assist something. ☐ *I can't commit myself to your cause at the present time. Maybe next month when I am less busy.* ☐ *She committed herself to being there on time.*

commit someone or something **for** something to promise someone or something for a particular purpose or time. ☐ *I can't commit myself for Friday night.* ☐ *We are unable to commit any more funds for your project.*

commit someone or something **to** something to pledge or assign someone or something to something. ☐ *The boss committed Ralph to the task.* ☐ *I cannot commit any more money to your project.*

commit something **to memory** to memorize something. ☐ *Do we have to commit this poem to memory?* ☐ *The dress rehearsal of the play is tomorrow night. Please make sure you have committed all your lines to memory by that time.*

commit to someone to marry or enter into an exclusive relationship with another person. ☐ *Jane says she loves me, but she's not ready to commit to any one person.* ☐ *If you can't commit to me, then this relationship is over.*

commode-hugging drunk *Sl.* heavily alcohol intoxicated; drunk and vomiting. ☐ *Willie got commode-hugging drunk in the space of two hours.*

***common as an old shoe** and ***common as dirt** low class; uncouth. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *That ill-mannered girl is just as common as an old shoe.* ☐ *Despite Mamie's efforts to appear to be upper class, most folks considered her common as dirt.*

common as dirt Go to previous.

a **common thread (to all this)** *Fig.* a similar idea or pattern to a series of events. ☐ *All of these incidents are related. There is a common thread to all this.*

commune with something *Fig.* to experience wordless or spiritual communication with something. ☐ *She went on long walks to commune with nature.* ☐ *He enjoyed going off on a retreat to commune with his inner self.*

C

communicate something **to** someone to say or write something to someone; to tell someone something. ☐ *Will you please communicate my regards to her?* ☐ *I intend to communicate your request to the front office this morning.*

communicate with someone **1.** *Lit.* to correspond or talk with a person. ☐ *I have to communicate with Wally first.* ☐ *As soon as I have communicated with Fred, I can give you an answer.* **2.** *Fig.* to make oneself understood with a person. (Often used with a negative.) ☐ *I just don't seem to communicate with Sam, no matter what I do.* ☐ *We just can't seem to communicate with each other.*

commute between places to travel between the place where one works and the place where one lives. ☐ *I have to commute between Chicago and Detroit every week.* ☐ *Mary has commuted between New York City and New Jersey for years.*

commute from some place to travel to work from some place. ☐ *I commute from way out in the country.* ☐ *Betty commutes from only a few miles away and will be here very soon.*

commute something **into** something to change something into something. ☐ *No one, as it turns out, can commute lead into gold.* ☐ *I had hoped to commute this argument into a sensible discussion, but it is hopeless.*

compare notes on someone or something to share observations on someone or something. ☐ *We took a little time to compare notes on our ancestors and have discovered that we are cousins.*

compare someone or something **to** someone or something to liken people or things to other people or things; to say that some people or things have the same qualities as other people or things. (See the comment at **compare** someone or something **with** someone or something.) ☐ *I can only compare him to a cuddly teddy bear.* ☐ *He compared himself to one of the knights of the round table.*

compare someone or something **with** someone or something to consider the sameness or difference of sets of things or people. (This phrase is very close in meaning to **compare** someone or something **to** someone or something, but for some connotes stronger contrast.) ☐ *Let's compare the virtues of savings accounts with investing in bonds.* ☐ *When I compare Roger with Tom, I find very few similarities.* ☐ *Please compare Tom with Bill on their unemployment records.*

compartmentalize something **into** something to segment or divide something into smaller things; to assign the parts of something into categories. ☐ *We will have to compartmentalize this large area into a number of smaller offices.* ☐ *His brain seems to be compartmentalized into a number of different centers.*

compel someone **to** do something to force someone to do something; to drive someone to so something. ☐ *You can't compel me to do that.* ☐ *She compelled herself to try, even though she was ill.*

compensate for something to counterbalance or counteract something; to make up for something. ☐ *Your present kindness will not compensate for your previous rudeness.*

compensate someone **for** something to pay someone [back] money for something. ☐ *Don't worry. I will compensate you for your loss.* ☐ *Let us compensate you for your expenses.*

compete against someone to contend against someone; to play against someone in a game or contest. ☐ *I don't see how I can compete against all of them.* ☐ *She refused to compete against her own brothers.*

compete against something to struggle against something; to seem to be in a contest with something. ☐ *It was hard to be heard. I was competing against the noise of construction.* ☐ *Please stop talking. I do not wish to compete against the audience when I lecture.*

compete for someone or something to contend against or contest [someone] for someone or something; to struggle for someone or something [against a competitor]. ☐ *They are competing for a lovely prize.* ☐ *Ed and Roger are competing for Alice's attention.*

compete in something to enter into a competition. ☐ *I do not want to compete in that contest.* ☐ *Ann looked forward to competing in the race.*

compete with someone or something to contend against someone, something, or a group; to play in a competition against someone, something, or a group. ☐ *I can't compete with all this noise.* ☐ *We always compete closely with our crosstown rivals, Adams High School.*

compile something **from** something to make up something from something; to collect and consolidate something from something. ☐ *She compiled a book of poetry from verses written by her friends.* ☐ *Lynn compiled a picture book from family photographs going back almost a century.*

complain about someone or something to protest someone or something; to grouch about someone or something. ☐ *Oh, stop complaining about the weather.* ☐ *You are always complaining about me.*

complain of something to moan and suffer from a disease; to report the symptoms of a disease or health condition. ☐ *Kenneth complained of a headache and general weakness.* ☐ *The patient was complaining of a headache.*

complain to someone to grouch or protest to someone. ☐ *Don't complain to me.* ☐ *I will complain to the manager.*

compliment someone **on** something to say something nice to someone about something connected to that person. ☐ *I was pleased with Alice's work and complimented her on it.* ☐ *They complimented me on my new tie.*

comply with something to conform to something; to obey guidelines or regulations; to agree to something. ☐ *I hope you decide to comply with our rules.* ☐ *I am happy to comply with your request.*

comport oneself **with** some manner to behave in a certain manner. ☐ *I hope you are able to comport yourself with better behavior next time.* ☐ *The old man was able to comport himself with dignity.*

composed of something assembled or made out of something. ☐ *This cloth is composed of a number of different kinds of fibers.* ☐ *The committee is composed of people from every department.*

compound something **with** something to unite some substance with another; to mix something with something else. ☐ *Can this unpleasant medicine be compounded with something to make it palatable?*

compress something **into** something **1.** to squeeze or press something into something, such as a mold or container. ☐ *We compressed the tomatoes into the jar.* ☐ *I cannot compress any more clothing into the suitcase.* **2.** to form something into a shape by applying pressure. ☐ *He compressed the mass of paper into a tight ball.* ☐ *The clay was compressed into the shape of a brick upon the application of pressure to the mold.*

comprised of someone or something made up of someone or something. (The use of *of* after *comprise* is regarded as bad grammar by some.) ☐ *The committee was comprised of representatives from all areas.* ☐ *The dessert was comprised of a number of different delicious substances.*

compromise on someone or something **(with** someone**)** and **compromise (on** someone or something**) with** someone to reach agreement with someone on a disputed matter concerning someone or something; to make concessions to someone on some point concerning someone or something. ☐ *I intend to compromise on this matter with them.* ☐ *Are you going to compromise with me on this issue?*

compute something **at** something to calculate the total of something to be a certain figure. ☐ *I compute the total at nearly three thousand dollars.* ☐ *The tax department computed the penalty at an enormous amount.*

con someone **into** something to deceive someone into doing something. ☐ *The dishonest contractor conned her into buying a new furnace even when her old one was fine.* ☐ *You are just conning yourself into believing your plan will work.*

con someone **out of** something to trick someone out of money or something of value. ☐ *Anne conned her little sister out of her allowance.* ☐ *Dave conned me out of my autographed baseball.*

conceal someone or something **from** someone or something to hide someone or something from someone or something. ☐ *Are you trying to conceal something from me?* ☐ *I cannot conceal Roger from the police.* ☐ *We could not conceal the present from mom.*

concede something **to** someone or something to yield something to someone or a group; to grant something to someone or something. ☐ *At midnight, Ronald conceded the election to his opponent.*

concede to someone or something to yield to someone or a group; to give in to someone or a group. ☐ *In the end we conceded to the demands of the petition.* ☐ *I will not concede to you.*

***conceited as a barber's cat** *Rur.* very conceited; vain. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Ever since he won that award, he's been as conceited as a barber's cat.*

conceive of someone or something to think of or invent the notion of someone or something. ☐ *Who on earth ever conceived of doing this?* ☐ *Edison conceived of many very useful things that we now use every day.*

conceive of someone or something **as** someone or something to think of someone as being someone else; to think of something as being something else. ☐ *I can't conceive of you as a pilot.* ☐ *I can conceive of this grassy spot as a very interesting setting for a cottage.*

concentrate at some place to gather thickly at a place. ☐ *The moths concentrated at the window at night, attracted by the light.* ☐ *All the thirsty children concentrated at the water fountain.*

concentrate someone or something **at** something to cause people or things to gather at a place; to cause people or things to convene or converge at a place. ☐ *You shouldn't concentrate all the guards at one entrance.* ☐ *The general concentrated all the big guns at the entrance to the valley.*

concentrate something **on** someone or something to focus something on someone or something; to center on someone or something. ☐ *Let's try to concentrate our efforts on finishing this job today.* ☐ *She concentrated her attention on Lynn.*

concentrate (up)on someone or something to focus one's thinking on someone or something; to think intensely about someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Please concentrate upon Jeff. He is the one we should discuss.* ☐ *Try to concentrate on your work more.*

concern oneself **about** someone or something and **concern** oneself **over** someone or something to turn one's thoughts and consideration to someone or something. ☐ *I hope you will concern yourself over your work a little more.* ☐ *Please don't concern yourself about me. I'll do okay.*

concern someone **in** something to bring someone into some matter; to engage someone in something; to occupy someone with something. ☐ *Don't concern Dave in our party planning. He doesn't know anything about entertaining.* ☐ *The wrong committee was concerned in this from the very beginning.*

concern someone **with** someone or something to busy someone with someone or something; to worry someone with thoughts of someone or something. ☐ *I hope Jennifer does not concern herself with this matter.* ☐ *Try to concern him with something other than his work.*

concur on someone or something **(with** someone**)** and **concur (on** someone or something**) with** someone to agree with someone about someone or something. ☐ *I certainly do concur on this matter with all of you.* ☐ *I concur with you on Tom.* ☐ *We concurred with the committee on you as our choice for the job.* ☐ *We concurred on the plans with the council.*

condemn someone **as** something to blame or judge someone as being something bad. ☐ *The team condemned Larry as a traitor.* ☐ *Max was condemned as a common thief.*

condemn someone **for** something to blame or judge someone for something or for having done something. ☐ *I really can't condemn her for doing it. I would have done the same too.* ☐ *Don't condemn yourself for the accident. It was no one's fault.*

condemn someone **to** something [for a judge] to sentence someone to something; to relegate someone to a particular punishment. ☐ *By confessing, he condemned himself to many years in prison.* ☐ *I don't want to condemn you to a life of unpleasantness.*

condense something **(in)to** something to compress or reduce something to something; to shrink or abridge something into a smaller version. ☐ *Condense this into half its original volume.* ☐ *You should condense this novel to a short story.*

condescend to do something to agree to do something that is humbling or belittling. ☐ *I will not condescend to respond to that remark.* ☐ *"Will you condescend to join us for dinner?" teased Bob.*

C

condescend to someone to talk down to someone; to treat people as if they were below oneself; to patronize someone. ☐ *Please do not condescend to me.* ☐ *There is no need to condescend to the children. They are just small, not stupid.*

condition someone or something **to** something **1.** to train or adapt someone or an animal to do something. ☐ *I conditioned the dog to beg for a treat.* ☐ *Over the years, he had conditioned himself to run for hours at a stretch.* **2.** to train or adapt someone or an animal to something. ☐ *We could never condition the cat to the finer points of domestication.* ☐ *I conditioned myself to the extreme cold.*

conduct someone **away (from** someone or something**)** to lead someone away from someone or something. ☐ *The usher conducted the gentleman away from the front of the auditorium.* ☐ *Can you conduct Fred away from the area?* ☐ *Please conduct him away.*

conduct someone **into** something and **conduct** someone **in†** to lead someone into something or some place. ☐ *The usher conducted the gentleman into the hall.* ☐ *The host was pleased to conduct in the guest of honor.*

conduct someone **out of** something and **conduct** someone **out†** to lead someone out of something or some place. ☐ *The usher conducted the gentleman out of the hall.* ☐ *The cop conducted out the gang of rowdy youths.*

confederate with someone or something to organize, join, or unite with someone or a group. ☐ *A number of states confederated with one another and formed a loose association.* ☐ *I confederated with the neighbors and we filed a joint complaint.*

confer on someone or something **(with** someone**)** and **confer (on** someone or something**) with** someone**; confer with** someone **(about** someone or something**); confer (with** someone**) about** someone or something to discuss someone or something. ☐ *Let us confer on this matter with the headmaster.* ☐ *I want to confer with you on how to handle the problem.* ☐ *I need to confer with you about Walter.*

confer something **(up)on** someone to grant something, such as an academic degree, to someone, usually in a ceremony. (*Upon* is more formal than *on*.) ☐ *The university conferred an honorary degree upon her.* ☐ *They conferred degrees on 300 graduates this year.*

confer with someone **(about** someone or something**)** Go to confer on someone or something (with someone).

confess something **to** someone and **confess to** someone to admit something to someone; to admit having done something to someone. ☐ *Tom confessed his involvement to the boss.* ☐ *Max confessed to the police.*

confess to something to admit having done something. ☐ *He will not confess to the crime.* ☐ *In the end, Max confessed to it.*

confide in someone to trust someone with one's secrets or personal matters. ☐ *Sally always confided in her sister Ann.* ☐ *She didn't feel that she could confide in her mother.*

confide something **in** someone and **confide** something **to** someone to tell a secret or private matter to someone, trusting that the person will not reveal the secret. ☐ *I learned not to confide anything secret in Bob.* ☐ *Tom really needed to confide his inner fears to someone.*

confine someone or an animal **to** something to limit someone or an animal to a particular place; to imprison someone or an animal in a particular place. ☐ *Would you please confine the dog to the basement?* ☐ *She confined herself to the small room for over a year because of her fear of crowds.*

confine someone or an animal **within** something to contain someone or an animal within something. ☐ *We were unable to confine the dog within the yard.* ☐ *Could you confine all your car-repair mess within the garage?*

confine something **to** someone or something to limit something or the doing of something to a person or a thing. ☐ *Please try to confine your comments to John.* ☐ *Can we confine tonight's discussion to the agenda?*

confirm someone **in** something to perform a religious rite that ties one more closely to one's religion. ☐ *They confirmed her in the church this morning.*

confiscate something **from** someone or something to seize or impound something from someone or a group. ☐ *The police confiscated all the stolen property from the suspect's garage.* ☐ *The dean confiscated the beer from the dormitory.*

conflict with something to clash with something. (Does not refer to fighting.) ☐ *This date conflicts with my doctor's appointment.* ☐ *As far as I can tell, the date you suggest does not conflict with anything.*

conform to something to agree with or behave within guidelines or regulations. ☐ *I hope that your policies will conform to our guidelines.* ☐ *Does my casual dress conform to your regulations?*

conform with something to match or agree with a model, plan, or set of specifications. (Compare this with conform to something.) ☐ *Does this part conform with the specifications?* ☐ *This one conforms with them quite well.*

confront someone **with** something to face someone with incriminating evidence, charges of wrongdoing, or criticism. ☐ *The angry husband confronted his wife with the evidence of her financial irresponsibility.* ☐ *The police confronted Wilson with the witness's statement.*

confuse someone **about** something to cause someone to be puzzled or bewildered about something. ☐ *She confused me about the time of the concert.* ☐ *I wish you wouldn't confuse me about those things.*

confuse someone or an animal **with** something to use something to bewilder or confuse someone or an animal. ☐ *You have confused me with your clever talk.* ☐ *You confused the dog with your orders.*

confuse someone **with** someone else and **confuse** something **with** something else to mix someone up with someone else; to mistake someone or something with something else. ☐ *I'm afraid you have confused me with my brother.* ☐ *Don't confuse the old ones with the new ones.*

congratulate someone **(up)on** something to compliment or wish happiness to someone because of something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *I want to congratulate you on your recent success.* ☐ *I congratulate you on your new job!*

conjecture on something to speculate on or guess about something. ☐ *I will not even conjecture on the outcome.* ☐ *Dave conjectured on what might happen next.*

conjure someone or something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to make someone or something appear, seemingly by the use of magic. ☐ *The magician conjured seven white doves up.* ☐ *Then an old wizard conjured up a horse.* **2.** *Fig.* to manage to locate someone or something. ☐ *I think I can conjure a pencil up for you.* ☐ *Do you think you can conjure up a large coffee urn in the next half hour?* **3.** *Fig.* to manage to think up or imagine someone or something in one's mind. ☐ *Can you conjure a vision of grandma up?* ☐ *All I could do was to conjure up happy memeories.*

conk off and **conk out 1.** *Sl.* (from years ago.) to fall asleep. ☐ *I conked off about midnight.* ☐ *I was so tired that I nearly conked off.* ☐ *I was afraid I would conk out while I was driving.* **2.** *Sl.* (always **conk out**.) [for something] to break down; to quit running. ☐ *My car conked out finally.* ☐ *I hope my computer doesn't conk out.*

conk out Go to previous.

connect someone or something **(up) to** someone or something and **connect** someone or something **(up) with** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to connect people or things in any combination, physically or by wires. ☐ *The nurse connected Maggie up to the electrocardiograph.* ☐ *Eric connected the machine to the wall plug.* ☐ *The receptionist connected my call up to Susan.* **2.** *Fig.* to make a mental connection between people and things in any combination. ☐ *I connected myself up to a person with similar interests.* ☐ *I often connect up Bob to sailing, because I first met him on a boat.* **3.** *Fig.* to argue that someone or something is linked to a criminal or a criminal act. ☐ *I can connect Eric to the crime.* ☐ *The police connected the stolen goods to Susan.*

connect (up) to something to attach to something; to attach or link something to some electrical device or electrical signal. ☐ *When we finish the house, we will connect up to the utilities.* ☐ *We have to connect to the Internet ourselves.*

connect (up) with someone or something **1.** to form an association with someone or a group. (The *up* is informal.) ☐ *Let's connect up with some other people and form an organization through which we can express our views.* ☐ *We need to connect with like-minded people that can help us with our problems.* **2.** to meet with someone or a group; to communicate with someone or a group, especially over the telephone. ☐ *I tried to connect up with Bob over the phone, but I could never reach him.* ☐ *We could not connect with the council to discuss these matters.*

connect (with someone**)** *Fig.* to meet someone; to talk to someone on the telephone. ☐ *Let's try to connect on this matter tomorrow.* ☐ *We finally connected and discussed the matter fully over dinner.*

connect (with the ball) [for a batter] to hit a baseball. ☐ *Wally connected for a double.* ☐ *He swung, but didn't connect with the ball.*

connive at something **(with** someone**)** and **connive (at** something**) with** someone to scheme at something (with someone); to plot something (with someone). ☐ *Are you conniving at something with Ronald?* ☐ *Are you and Ronald conniving with Tom at something I should know about?* ☐ *Stop conniving with people!*

Consarn it! *Rur.* Damn it! (A mild oath.) ☐ *Consarn it! I can't find my keys.* ☐ *That's the second batch of muffins I've burned today, consarn it!*

Conscience does make cowards of us all. *Prov.* People sometimes fear to do what they want or what they believe is necessary because they think it is wrong. (From Shakespeare's play, *Hamlet*.) ☐ *Alan: I really want to go to the ball game with you guys this afternoon, but it just doesn't seem right to skip work to do it. Fred: Conscience does make cowards of us all, right, Alan?*

conscript someone **into** something to call someone into military service; to draft someone. ☐ *The war-torn country was even conscripting children into the army.* ☐ *Fred was conscripted into the army.*

consecrate someone or something **to God** to pledge someone to the service of God; to dedicate something to the glory or service of God. ☐ *They consecrated the new church building to the glory of God.*

consent to something to agree to permit something to happen. ☐ *I will not consent to your marriage.* ☐ *There is no need for you to consent to anything.*

consider someone **(as)** something to think of a person as a particular type of person. ☐ *I don't consider you as a possible candidate.* ☐ *I consider myself an excellent cook.*

consider someone **for** something to think about offering someone a job, office, or other responsibility. ☐ *Would you consider David for the job?* ☐ *I could not possibly consider you for the position.*

consign something **to** someone or something **1.** to entrust something to someone, something, or some place. ☐ *We consigned all the toughest assignments to our top employees.* ☐ *What shipping company should we consign these boxes to?* **2.** to assign something for shipment to a place. ☐ *Bill consigned this batch to Denver.*

consist of someone or something to include people or things; to be made up of people or things. ☐ *This bread consists of flour, water, sugar, oil, and yeast.* ☐ *The U.S. Senate consists of two elected officials from each state.*

console someone **on** something to comfort someone about something. ☐ *I want to console you on your recent loss.* ☐ *They consoled Fred on the continuing difficulties he was having.*

console someone **with** something to use something to comfort someone. ☐ *We consoled her with a sympathy card and flowers.* ☐ *He sat down and consoled himself with a beer or two.*

consort with someone **1.** to associate with someone. ☐ *It is said that she consorts with thieves.* ☐ *No one worth anything would consort with Max.* **2.** *Euph.* to have sex with someone. ☐ *Over the years it is rumored that she consorted with numerous young men.*

***conspicuous by** one's **absence** *Cliché* noticeably absent (from an event). (*Typically: **be ~; made ~**.) ☐ *How could the bride's father miss the wedding? He was certainly conspicuous by his absence.*

conspire with someone **(against** someone or something**)** and **conspire (with** someone**) against** someone or some-

thing to join with someone in a plot against someone or something else. ☐ *The CEO conspired with the board of directors against the stockholders.* ☐ *Ed conspired with Sam against the plan.*

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Constant dropping wears away a stone. and **Constant dripping wears away a stone.** *Prov.* Persistence accomplishes things. ☐ *Jill: How did you get Fred to give you a raise? Jane: I just kept asking him for it every week. Constant dropping wears away a stone.*

constrain someone **from** doing something to prevent someone from doing something; to hold someone back from doing something. ☐ *I hope this doesn't constrain you from trying out for the play.* ☐ *His handicap did not constrain him from finishing the race.*

construct something **from** something and **construct** something **out of** something to build something using something. ☐ *Do you want to construct the house from wood?* ☐ *Shall we construct the building out of stone?*

construe something **as** something to interpret something to mean something. ☐ *Please do not construe this as criticism.* ☐ *We mistakenly construed her comments as positive.*

consult (with) someone **(about** someone or something**)** to ask someone about someone or something. ☐ *Please consult with me about all your plans.* ☐ *You should consult the architect about your needs.* ☐ *Please consult with me first.*

***contact with** someone a link to someone resulting in communication. (*Typically: **be in ~; have ~; make ~**.) ☐ *I have had no contact with Bill since he left town.* ☐ *Tom made contact with a known criminal last month.*

contaminate someone or something **with** something to get someone or something dirty with something; to pollute someone or something with something. ☐ *Something in the hospital contaminated the patient with a serious infection.* ☐ *The campers learned not to contaminate the outdoors with anything they carried in.*

contend against someone or something to fight or compete against someone or something. ☐ *Do we have to contend against all this criticism?* ☐ *Ed refuses to have to contend against Eric.*

contend with a problem to put up with a difficulty; to struggle with the problems caused by someone or something. ☐ *I cannot contend with your temper anymore.* ☐ *I wish we did not have to contend with this changeable weather.*

contend with someone **(for** something**)** and **contend (with** someone**) for** something to fight someone for something; to compete with someone to win something. ☐ *I don't want to have to contend with Sally for the award.* ☐ *I don't want to have to contend for the job with Ed.*

content oneself **with** someone or something to be satisfied with (usually less of) someone or something. ☐ *You will just have to learn to content yourself with fewer nice vacations now that you have kids entering college.*

A **contented mind is a perpetual feast.** *Prov.* If you are mentally at peace, you will always feel that you have enough of everything, and will not have to strive to get more. ☐ *Jill: Lillian doesn't make very much money, but she seems to be happy all the time. I wonder how she manages that? Jane: A contented mind is a perpetual feast.*

continue by doing something to keep going by starting to do something else or the next step. ☐ *You are doing very well in this piano lesson. Please continue by playing the other sonata.* ☐ *After the interruption, Wally continued by explaining his position on the trade negotiations.*

continue one's **losing streak** Go to a **losing streak**.

continue with something to keep doing whatever was being done before. ☐ *Oh, please continue with your discussion.* ☐ *Do you mind if I continue with my knitting as we talk?*

contract something **out**† to make an agreement with someone to do a specific amount of work. (Rather than doing it oneself or in one's own place of business.) ☐ *I will contract this out and have it done by consultants.* ☐ *I contracted out this kind of job the last time.*

contract with someone **(for** something**)** and **contract (with** someone**) for** something to make an agreement with someone to produce or supply something, or to do something. ☐ *I will have to contract with an expert for that part of the project.* ☐ *We contracted with a local builder for a new kitchen.* ☐ *Did you contract for plumbing work with Eric?*

a **contradiction in terms** a statement containing a seeming contradiction. ☐ *A wealthy pauper is a contradiction in terms.* ☐ *A straight-talking politician may seem to be a contradiction in terms.*

contrary to something in spite of something that seems to suggest otherwise; regardless of something else. ☐ *Contrary to what you might think, I am neat and tidy.* ☐ *Contrary to public opinion, my uncle is well and healthy.*

contrast someone or something **with** someone or something else and **contrast** someone or something **to** someone or something else to examine people or things in a way that will show their differences. ☐ *Contrast Sally with Sam, for instance, to see real differences.* ☐ *Contrast the busy geometry of a Gothic cathedral to the simple lines of an old Saxon castle.*

contrast with someone or something **1.** to be different from someone or something. ☐ *Bill's cheery attitude really contrasts with the gloom of his twin brother, Bob.* ☐ *This stiped tie really contrasts with that polka-dot shirt.* **2.** [for a color or pattern, etc.] to show a marked difference with or complement another. ☐ *The black one contrasts nicely with the white one.*

contribute something **(to** someone**) (for** someone or something**)** to donate something to someone for the benefit of someone or something. ☐ *I hope you will contribute at least a dollar to Mary for Tom's birthday present.* ☐ *Will you contribute a dollar for Tom to Mary when she comes around?* ☐ *Can you contribute a dollar for the gift?*

contribute to something **1.** to donate something to some cause. ☐ *Please contribute to the fund for the needy.* **2.** to add to or exacerbate something. ☐ *The dry weather contributed to the failure of the crops.*

***control over** someone or something the power to direct or manage someone or something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I have no control over*

Mary. I can't stop her from running away. ☐ *Who gave you control over what goes on in this house?*

control the purse strings and **hold the purse strings** *Fig.* to be in charge of the money in a business or a household. ☐ *I control the purse strings at our house.* ☐ *Mr. Williams is the treasurer. He controls the purse strings.*

convalesce from something to recuperate from a disease, operation, or injury. ☐ *I spent three weeks in bed convalescing from the flu.* ☐ *Donna needed some time to convalesce from her surgery.*

converge (up)on someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to gather near or around someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Everyone converged on the wounded sailor.* ☐ *The shoppers converged on the store as it opened for the big sale.* **2.** *Fig.* to meet on someone or something; to grow together so as to focus on someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Even political enemies converged on the matter of simplifying the tax code.* ☐ *Our discussions converged on Eric.*

converse with someone **(about** someone or something**)** and **converse (with** someone**) about** someone or something to talk about someone or something. ☐ *Please converse with Ted about that.* ☐ *I need to converse about last night with you.* ☐ *The principal needs to converse with you.*

convert from something **((in)to** something**)** and **convert (from** something**) (in)to** something to change from one thing into another. ☐ *We converted from oil to natural gas to heat our house.* ☐ *I had hoped he would convert from an impatient youth into a relaxed gentleman. He did not.*

convert someone or something **(from** something**) ((in)to** something**)** to change someone or something from something into something else. ☐ *Can we convert you from a meat eater into a vegetarian?* ☐ *Would you be willing to convert your oil furnace to a gas one?*

convey something **(from** someone or something**) (to** someone or something**)** to carry or transport something from someone or something to someone, something, or some place. ☐ *I conveyed the box from the table to the basement.* ☐ *Please convey every good wish from those of us in the Midwest to those on the East Coast.* ☐ *Would you convey my blessings to the newlyweds?*

convict someone **of** something to pronounce someone guilty of something. ☐ *In the end, they convicted her of theft.* ☐ *The police wanted to convict Max of the crime.*

convince someone **of** something to persuade someone that something is true. ☐ *You will never convince me of what you say.* ☐ *I will probably convince myself of the need to find a better job.*

convulse someone **with** something to cause someone to quake or jerk because of pain or emotion. (Can be physical or figurative; see examples.) ☐ *He convulsed with abdominal pain from something he ate.* ☐ *The audience was convulsed with laughter.*

cook someone's **goose** *Fig.* to damage or ruin someone. ☐ *I cooked my own goose by not showing up on time.* ☐ *Sally cooked Bob's goose for treating her the way he did.*

cook (something**) out†** to cook food out of doors. ☐ *Shall we cook out some chicken tonight?* ☐ *Yes, let's cook out.*

cook something **to perfection** to cook something perfectly. ☐ *John cooked my steak to perfection.* ☐ *The entire dinner was cooked to perfection!*

cook something **up† 1.** *Lit.* to prepare a batch of some kind of food by cooking. ☐ *Fred cooked a batch of beans up for the ranch hands.* ☐ *He cooked up some food for dinner.* **2.** *Fig.* to devise or concoct something. ☐ *Fred cooked up a scheme that was supposed to earn him a lot of money.* ☐ *I don't have a plan right now, but I think I can cook one up.*

cook something **up† (with** someone**)** *Fig.* to arrange or plan to do something with someone. (The *something* is usually the word *something*. See also **cook** something **up**.) ☐ *I tried to cook something up with Karen for Tuesday.* ☐ *I want to cook up something with John.* ☐ *Let's see if we can cook something up.*

cook the accounts and **cook the books** to cheat in bookkeeping; to make the accounts appear to balance when they do not. ☐ *Jane was charged with cooking the accounts of her mother's store.* ☐ *It's hard to tell whether she really cooked the accounts or just didn't know what she was doing.*

cook the books Go to previous.

cook up a storm Go to **up a storm**.

cooked up contrived. (This is hyphenated before a nominal.) ☐ *The whole thing seems so cooked up.* ☐ *What a cooked-up story! Of course, you don't believe it.*

cooking with gas doing [something] exactly right. ☐ *That's great! Now you're cooking with gas!* ☐ *I knew she was finally cooking with gas when she answered all the questions correctly.*

***cool as a cucumber** extremely calm; imperturbable. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Joan felt nervous, but she acted as cool as a cucumber.* ☐ *The politician kept cool as a cucumber throughout the interview with the aggressive journalist.*

cool, calm, and collected *Cliché* [of a person] very calm and poised. ☐ *James did very well in his TV appearances. He stayed cool, calm, and collected.* ☐ *The bad news didn't seem to distress Jane at all. She remained cool, calm, and collected.*

cool down Go to **cool off**.

Cool it! *Inf.* Calm down!; Take it easy! ☐ *Don't get mad, Bob. Cool it!* ☐ *Cool it, you guys! No fighting around here.*

cool off and **cool down 1.** *Lit.* to lose or reduce heat. ☐ *I wish my soup would cool off. I'm hungry.* ☐ *It'll cool down this evening, after dusk.* **2.** *Fig.* to let one's anger die away. (As the "heat" of anger declines.) ☐ *I'm sorry I got angry. I'll cool off in a minute.* ☐ *Cool off, Tom. There is no sense getting so excited.* **3.** *Fig.* to let one's passion or love die away. (As the "heat" of passion declines.) ☐ *Ted: Is Bob still in love with Jane? Bill: No, he's cooled off a lot.*

cool one's **heels** *Fig.* to wait (for someone); to wait for something to happen. ☐ *I spent an hour cooling my heels in the waiting room while the doctor saw other patients.* ☐ *All right, if you can't behave properly, just sit down here and cool your heels until I call you.*

cool out Go to **chill out**.

cool someone **down†** and **cool** someone **off† 1.** *Lit.* to cool someone by reducing the heat or applying something cold. ☐ *Here, have a cold drink. Cool yourself down.* ☐ *The ice*

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finally cooled down the feverish child. ☐ *We need to cool off the pudding in a hurry.* **2.** *Fig.* to reduce someone's anger. (Reducing the "heat" of anger.) ☐ *I just stared at him while he was yelling. I knew that would cool him down.* ☐ *The coach talked to them for a long time. That cooled them off.* **3.** *Fig.* to reduce someone's passion or love. (Reducing the "heat" of passion.) ☐ *When she slapped him, that really cooled him down.* ☐ *Seeing Mary was too intense, so Bill cooled himself off by breaking it off for a while.*

cool someone **out†** *Sl.* to calm someone; to appease someone. ☐ *Cool yourselves out, you people. We gotta be sensible.* ☐ *The manager appeared and tried to cool out everybody, but that was a waste of time.*

cooled out *Sl.* calm; unabashed. ☐ *Ted is a really cooled out kind of guy.* ☐ *When she's cooled out, she's great.*

cooler heads prevail *Fig.* the ideas or influence of less emotional people prevail. (Used of a tense situation.) ☐ *One hopes that cooler heads will prevail and soon everything will calm down.*

coop someone or something **up†** to confine someone or something in a small place. ☐ *Don't coop me up. I can't stand small places.* ☐ *We had to coop up the dogs for a while.*

cooperate with someone **(on** something**)** and **cooperate (with** someone**) on** something to work together in harmony with someone on something. ☐ *Please cooperate with me on this project.* ☐ *Can you cooperate on this with me?* ☐ *I hope we can cooperate on this.*

co-opt someone **into** something to convince someone of a differing view to adopt one's position or philosophy. ☐ *They tried to co-opt the students into rioting.* ☐ *There is no point in trying to co-opt them into it. They are too clever.*

coordinate something **with** something **1.** to make something harmonize with something else. ☐ *I want to coordinate my hat with my shoes.* ☐ *Is this tie coordinated with my jacket?* **2.** to synchronize something with something else. ☐ *Let us coordinate our actions in this matter.* ☐ *I think we should coordinate our departure times with that of Fred.*

cop a packet to become badly injured; to be wounded severely. (Originally military.) ☐ *My uncle copped a packet in Normandy.* ☐ *If you want to cop a packet or worse, just stand up in that shallow trench, son.*

cop a plea *Fig.* to plead guilty to a lesser charge to avoid a more serious charge or lessen time of imprisonment. ☐ *He copped a plea and got off with only two months in the slammer.*

cop a squat *Sl.* to sit down. ☐ *Hey, man! Come in and cop a squat here next to me.* ☐ *Cop a squat and crack a tube.*

cop an attitude *Sl.* to take a negative or opposite attitude about something. ☐ *My teenage son copped an attitude when I asked why he seemed to be sneaking around.*

cop onto something *Sl.* to understand or become aware of something. ☐ *I think I'm copping onto the significance of this at last.* ☐ *Try to cop onto what I'm saying, Otto.*

cop out (of something**)** and **cop out (on** something**) 1.** *Sl.* to withdraw from doing something. ☐ *Are you copping out of this job?* ☐ *No, I'm not copping out!* **2.** *Sl.* to break one's promise about doing something. ☐ *You said you would and now you are copping out of it.* ☐ *I'm not copping out. I just can't find the time.* **3.** *Sl.* to plead guilty (to a lesser charge). ☐ *Frank copped out and got off with a night in the cooler.*

cop out (on someone**)** *Sl.* to break one's promise to someone. (See also previous.) ☐ *Come on! Don't cop out on me!* ☐ *You promised me you would do it! Don't cop out now!*

cop out (on something**)** Go to **cop out (of** something**)**.

cop some Zs Go to **catch some Zs.**

cop something **from** someone or something *Sl.* to steal or swipe something from someone or something. ☐ *Some thug copped my watch from me.* ☐ *Max copped food from a number of stores.*

cope with someone or something to endure someone or something; to manage to deal with someone or something. ☐ *I don't think I can cope with any more trouble.* ☐ *I can't cope with your being late for work anymore.*

copulate with someone [for someone] to have sexual intercourse with someone. ☐ *He said he wanted to copulate with whom?*

copy something **down† (from** someone or something**)** to copy onto paper what someone says; to copy onto paper what one reads. ☐ *Please copy this down from Tony.* ☐ *Ted copied down the directions from the invitation.* ☐ *Jane copied the recipe down from the cookbook.*

copy something **out†** Go to **copy** something **out of** something.

copy something **out† (by hand)** to copy something in handwriting. ☐ *I have to copy this out again. I lost the first copy.* ☐ *Please copy out this article for me.*

copy something **out of** something and **copy** something **out†** to copy something onto paper from a book or document. ☐ *Did you copy this out of a book?* ☐ *I did not copy this paper or any part of it out of anything.* ☐ *I copied out most of it.*

cordon something **off†** to mark off an area where people should not go with a rope, tape, ribbon, etc. ☐ *The police cordoned the scene of the crime off, and we could not even get close.* ☐ *They cordoned off the area.*

cork high and bottle deep *Rur.* very drunk. ☐ *By the time the party was over, he was cork high and bottle deep.*

cork something **up† 1.** *Lit.* to close and seal a bottle with a cork. ☐ *I think we should cork this up and save it for later.* ☐ *Cork up the bottle for later.* **2.** *Fig.* to stop up one's mouth and be quiet. ☐ *Cork it up and listen!* ☐ *Cork up your mouth!*

corner the market on something and **corner the** something **market** *Fig.* to develop or obtain a monopoly of something. ☐ *The company sought to corner the market on frozen yogurt.* ☐ *Standard Oil had the oil market cornered at the end of the nineteenth century.*

corral someone or something *Fig.* to herd someone or something into a corral or other enclosed space. ☐ *It took the cowboys two hours to corral the mustangs.* ☐ *The nursery school teacher herded the kids off the playground and corraled them in the classroom.*

correlate something **with** something to match or equate something with something else. ☐ *Can you correlate her comment with what she said yesterday?* ☐ *The scientist could not correlate the new data with his hypothesis.*

correlate with something to match or equate with something. ☐ *This does not correlate with your earlier story.* ☐ *What she said yesterday does not correlate with what she is saying today.*

correspond to something to match up with something; to harmonize with something. ☐ *This pin on this part corresponds to the receptacle on the other part it fits into.*

correspond with someone **(about** someone or something**)** **correspond (with** someone**) about** someone or something to write letters back and forth with someone about someone or something. ☐ *I will have to correspond with the manager about that.* ☐ *I corresponded about this with my brother.* ☐ *I corresponded with my brother for over a year.* ☐ *We corresponded about Fred.*

cost a king's ransom Go to a king's ransom.

cost a pretty penny and **cost an arm and a leg; cost the earth** *Fig.* to be expensive; to cost a lot of money. ☐ *Mary's dress is real silk. It must have cost a pretty penny.* ☐ *Taking care of a fancy car like that can cost a pretty penny, let me tell you.* ☐ *It cost an arm and a leg, so I didn't buy it.* ☐ *A house that size with an ocean view must cost the earth!*

cost an arm and a leg Go to previous.

cost something **out**† to figure out the total cost of some set of costs or a complex purchase of goods or services. ☐ *Give me a minute to cost this out, and I will have an estimate for you.* ☐ *Do you have time to cost out these specifications this week?*

cost the earth Go to cost a pretty penny.

cotton (on)to someone or something *Rur.* to begin to like or agree to someone or something quickly. ☐ *She began to cotton to Fred, despite his country ways.* ☐ *She cottoned onto Jane's way of thinking.*

cotton up to someone *Rur.* to try to make friends with someone; to flatter or fawn on someone in hopes of favorable treatment. ☐ *James set out to cotton up to the parents of his friends.* ☐ *Just watch her cotton up to the teacher!*

a **couch potato** a lazy individual, addicted to television-watching. ☐ *All he ever does is watch TV; he's become a real couch potato.* ☐ *Couch potatoes can tend to become very fat and unhealthy, you know.*

couch something **in** something to express something in carefully chosen or deceptive words. ☐ *He tended to couch his explanations in arcane vocabulary.* ☐ *She couched her words in an overly polite manner.*

cough one's **head off** *Fig.* to cough long and hard. (See also laugh one's head off.) ☐ *I had the flu. I nearly coughed my head off for two days.*

cough something **out**† to say something while coughing. ☐ *He coughed the words out, but no one could understand him.* ☐ *He coughed out the name of his assailant.*

cough something **up**† **1.** to get something out of the body by coughing. ☐ *She coughed some matter up and took some more medicine.* ☐ *She coughed up phlegm all night.* **2.** *Euph.* to vomit something. ☐ *The dog coughed the rabbit up.* ☐ *The dog coughed up the food it had eaten.* **3.** *Sl.* to produce or present something, such as an amount of money. ☐ *You will cough the money up, won't you?* ☐ *You had better cough up what you owe me, if you know what's good for you.*

could do with someone or something to want or need someone or something; to benefit from someone or something. ☐ *I could do with a nice cool drink right now.* ☐ *I could do with some help on this project.*

could fight a circle-saw (and it a-runnin') *Rur.* eager to fight. ☐ *He was so mad he could fight a circle-saw and it a-runnin'.* ☐ *She's a good watchdog. She could fight a circle-saw.*

Could I be excused? Would you give me permission to leave?; Would you give me permission to leave the table? (Also used with *can* or *may* in place of *could*.) ☐ *Bill: I'm finished, Mom. Could I be excused? Mother: Yes, of course, when you use good manners like that.*

(Could I) buy you a drink? 1. *Lit.* Could I purchase a drink for you? (An offer by one person—usually in a bar—to buy a drink for another. Then the two will drink together. Also used with *can* or *may* in place of *could*.) ☐ *When Sally and Mary met at the agreed time in the hotel bar, Sally said to Mary, "Could I buy you a drink?"* **2.** *Fig.* Could I make you a drink? (A slightly humorous way of offering to prepare and serve someone a drink, as in one's home. Also used with *can* or *may* in place of *could*.) ☐ *Bill: Come in, Fred. Can I buy you a drink? I've got wine and beer. Fred: Great. A beer would be fine, thanks.*

Could I call you? 1. I am too busy to talk to you now. Do you mind if I telephone you later on? (Usually in a business context. Also used with *can* in place of *could*. *May* is too polite here.) ☐ *Sally: I can't talk to you right now. Could I call you? Tom: Sure, no problem.* ☐ *Bill: I've got to run. Sorry. Can I call you? Bob: No, I'm leaving town. I'll try to get in touch next week.* **2.** Do you mind if I call you and ask for another date sometime?; Do you mind if I call you sometime (in order to further our relationship)? (Usually in a romantic context. Also used with *can* or *may* in place of *could*.) ☐ *Mary: I had a marvelous time, Bob. Bob: Me, too. Can I call you? Mary: Sure.* ☐ *Bob: I had a marvelous time, Mary. May I call you? Mary: Maybe in a week or two. I have a very busy week ahead. I'll call you, in fact.*

Could I come in? Do you mind if I enter? (A polite request. Also used with *can* or *may* in place of *could*.) ☐ *Tom (standing in the doorway): Hello, I'm with the Internal Revenue Service. Could I come in?* ☐ *Bill: Hi, Tom. What are you doing here? Tom: Could I come in? I have to talk to you. Bill: Sure. Come on in.*

Could I get by, please? Would you please allow me space to pass by? (Also used with *can* or *may* in place of *could*. *May* is almost too polite.) ☐ *Poor Bill, trapped at the back of the elevator behind a huge man, kept saying, "Could I get by, please?"* ☐ *"Can I get by, please?" Jane said, squeezing between passengers on the crowded bus.*

(Could I) get you something (to drink)? an expression offering a drink, usually an alcoholic drink. (Compare this with (Could I) buy you a drink? Also used with *can* or *may* in place of *could*.) ☐ *Bill: Hi, Alice! Come on in! Can I get you something to drink? Alice: Just a little soda, if you don't mind.* ☐ *Waiter: Get you something to drink? John: No, thanks. I'll just order dinner now.*

C

(Could I) give you a lift? Can I offer you a ride to some place? (Also used with *can* or *may* in place of *could.*) ☐ *Bill stopped his car at the side of the road where Tom stood. "Can I give you a lift?" asked Bill.* ☐ *John: Well, I've got to leave. Alice: Me, too. John: Give you a lift? Alice: Sure. Thanks.*

Could I have a lift? and **How about a lift?** Would you please give me a ride (in your car)? (This usually refers to a destination that is the same as the driver's or on the way to the driver's destination. Also used with *can* or *may* in place of *could.*) ☐ *Bob: Going north? Could I have a lift? Bill: Sure. Hop in. Bob: Thanks. That's such a long walk to the north end of campus.* ☐ *Sue: Can I have a lift? I'm late. Mary: Sure, if you're going somewhere on Maple Street.*

Could I have a word with you? Go to I'd like (to have) a word with you.

Could I have someone **call you?** Could I take a message so your call can be returned? (A question asked by someone who answers the telephone when the person the caller is seeking is not available. The *someone* can be a person's name or a pronoun, or even the word *someone*. Also used with *can* or *may* in place of *could.*) ☐ *Tom: Bill's not here now. Could I have him call you? Bob: Yeah. Ask him to leave a message on my machine. Tom: Sure.* ☐ *"Could I have her call you?" asked Mrs. Wilson's secretary.*

Could I have the bill? Go to Check, please.

Could I help you? and **Can I help you?; May I help you?** Could I assist you? (Said by shopkeepers, clerks, food service workers, and people who answer the telephone.) ☐ *The clerk came over and said, "Could I help you?"* ☐ *Clerk: May I help you? Mary: No thanks, I'm just looking.*

Could I join you? and **(Do you) care if I join you?; (Do you) mind if I join you?** Will you permit me to sit with you? (An inquiry seeking permission to sit at someone's table or join someone else in some activity. Also used with *can* or *may* in place of *could.*) ☐ *Tom came into the cafe and saw Fred and Sally sitting in a booth by the window. Coming up to them, Tom said, "Could I join you?"*

Could I leave a message? and **Can I leave a message?** Can I request that a message be written down for a person who is not available to come to the telephone. ☐ *Bill: Can I talk to Fred? Mary: He's not here. Bill: Could I leave a message? Mary: Sure, I can leave a message for him.*

Could I see you again? and **Can I see you again?; May I see you again?** Could we go out again sometime? ☐ *Tom: I had a wonderful time, Mary. Can I see you again? Mary: Call me tomorrow, Tom. Good night.* ☐ *"Could I see you again?" muttered Tom, dizzy with the magic of her kiss.*

Could I see you in my office? and **Can I see you in my office?** I want to talk to you in the privacy of my office. (Typically said by a supervisor to a lower-ranking employee.) ☐ *"Mr. Franklin," said Bill's boss sort of sternly, "Could I see you in my office for a minute? We need to talk about something."*

Could I speak to someone? and **Can I speak to** someone?**; May I speak to** someone? the phrase used to request to talk to a particular person, usually on the telephone. (Also used with *talk* in place of *speak.*) ☐ *Tom (answering the phone): Good morning, Acme Air Products. With whom do you wish to speak? Bill: Can I speak to Mr. Wilson? Tom: One moment.* ☐ *Sally: May I speak to the manager, please? Clerk: Certainly, madam. I'm the manager.*

Could I take a message? and **Can I take a message?; May I take a message?** the phrase used on the telephone to offer to take a message and give it to the person the caller is seeking. ☐ *Bill: Can I talk to Fred? Mary: He's not here. Could I take a message for him?*

Could I take your order (now)? and **Can I take your order (now)?; May I take your order (now)?** an expression used by food service personnel to determine if the customer is ready to order food. ☐ *Waiter: May I take your order now? Mary: Of course. Jane, what are you going to have? Jane: I'm still trying to decide. Waiter: I'll be back in a minute.* ☐ *Waiter: Can I take your order? Mary: Yes, we're ready.*

Could I tell him who's calling? and **Can I tell her who's calling?; May I tell him who's calling?** a question asked by people who answer the telephone to find out politely who is asking for someone. (*Him* or *her* can be replaced by a person's name or by a plural pronoun.) ☐ *Mary (on the phone): Hello. Could I speak to Bill Franklin? Sally: Could I tell him who's calling? Mary: It's Mary Peters. Sally: Oh yes, he's expecting your call. I'll get him for you.*

Could I use your powder room? and **Can I use your powder room?; May I use your powder room?; Where is your powder room?** *Euph.* a polite way to ask to use the bathroom in someone's home. (Alludes to a woman powdering her nose. Sometimes used jocularly by men. See also powder one's nose.) ☐ *Mary: Oh, Sally, could I use your powder room? Sally: Of course. It's just off the kitchen, on the left.* ☐ *Tom: Nice place you've got here. Uh, where is your powder room? Beth: At the top of the stairs.*

Could we continue this later? and **Can we continue this later?** Could we go on with this conversation at a later time? ☐ *As Mary and John were discussing something private, Bob entered the room. "Could we continue this later?" whispered John. "Yes, of course," answered Mary.*

Could you excuse us, please? and **Can you excuse us, please?; Would you excuse us, please?; Will you excuse us, please?** We must leave. I hope you will forgive us. (A polite way of announcing a departure.) ☐ *Bill: Could you excuse us, please? We simply must rush off. Alice: So sorry you have to go. Come back when you can stay longer.*

Could you hold? and **Can you hold?; Will you hold?** Do you mind if I put your telephone call on hold? ☐ *"Could you hold?" asked the operator.* ☐ *Sue: Hello. Acme Motors. Can you hold? Bob: I guess. Sue (after a while): Hello. Thank you for holding. Can I help you?*

Could you keep a secret? and **Can you keep a secret?** I am going to tell you something that I hope you will keep a secret. (Also used with *can* in place of *could.*) ☐ *Tom: Could you keep a secret? Mary: Sure. Tom: Don't tell anybody, but I'm going to be a daddy.* ☐ *Sue: Can you keep a secret? Alice: Of course. Sue: We're moving to Atlanta.*

couldn't be happier totally happy. ☐ *They both couldn't be happier since they got married.*

could(n't) care less [one is] unable to care at all; it does not matter at all. ☐ *John couldn't care less whether he goes to the party or not.* ☐ *I could care less if I live or die.*

couldn't hit a bull in the ass with a bass fiddle *Rur.* unable to aim; very clumsy. (Jocular. Use with caution.) ☐ *Tom: Is Jane a good shot? Charlie: She couldn't hit a bull in the ass with a bass fiddle.*

couldn't pour water out of a boot (if there was instructions on the heel) *Rur.* stupid. ☐ *I won't say Jim is dumb, but he couldn't pour water out of a boot.* ☐ *Jane couldn't pour water out of a boot if there was instructions on the heel—and she's the smartest one in her family!*

Councils of war never fight. *Prov.* A group of people charged with crucial decisions often cannot act decisively. ☐ *We tried to convince the boss not to form a committee, but to decide himself. We knew that councils of war never fight.*

counsel someone **about** something to give advice to someone about something. ☐ *Will you counsel George about which tires to buy?*

counsel someone **against** something to advise someone against doing something. ☐ *The lawyer counseled her against suing the government.* ☐ *I was counseled against going for a walk alone at night.*

count against someone [for something] to be held against someone; [for something] to weigh against someone. ☐ *I hope this mistake doesn't count against me.* ☐ *Don't worry, it won't count against you at all.*

count down to count backwards to an event that will start when zero is reached. ☐ *The project manager was counting down—getting ready for the launch of the rocket.* ☐ *I can still hear the captain counting down: "Five, four, three, two, one, zero, blast off!"*

count for something to be valid for something; to be worth something. ☐ *Doesn't all my work count for anything?* ☐ *Your positive attitude counts for a lot as far as I'm concerned.*

count from something **(up) to** something to say or list the numbers from one number to some other number. ☐ *Now, count from 100 up to 300 by threes.* ☐ *Timmy can count from 1 to 40.*

count heads and **count noses** *Fig.* to count people. ☐ *I'll tell you how many people are here after I count heads.* ☐ *Let's count noses so we can be sure everyone is back on the bus.*

Count no man happy till he dies. Go to Call no man happy till he dies.

count noses Go to count heads.

count off [for a series of people, one by one] to say aloud the next number in a fixed sequence. ☐ *The soldiers counted off by threes.* ☐ *The sergeant told them to count off.*

count on someone or something to rely on someone or something; to depend on someone or something. ☐ *We can count on Bill to get the job done.* ☐ *Can I count on this car to start every morning of the year?*

count one's **chickens before they hatch** *Fig.* to plan how to utilize good results of something before those results have occurred. (The same as Don't count your chickens before they are hatched.) ☐ *You may be disappointed if you count your chickens before they hatch.*

count someone **among** something to consider someone as a particular type of person or part of a particular group. ☐ *I count her among my closest friends.* ☐ *Rachel counted herself among the luckiest people alive.*

count someone **in (for** something**)** and **count** someone **in (on** something**); count** someone **in**† to include someone as part of something. ☐ *Please count me in for the party.* ☐ *Do count me in on it.* ☐ *Count in everybody who said they would attend.*

count someone or something **as** something to consider someone to be a particular type of person. ☐ *I count Todd as one of the possible candidates.* ☐ *I count this entry as a definite prizewinner.*

count someone or something **off**† to count people or things, to see if they are all there. (See also count off.) ☐ *Let's count them off to see who's missing.* ☐ *Count off each person, one by one.* ☐ *I counted each one off.*

count someone or something **up**† to count things or people to see how many there are. ☐ *Let's count them up and see how many we have.* ☐ *I counted all the guests up, and there are too many to seat.* ☐ *Please count up all these books and tell me how many there are.*

count someone **out (for** something**)** to exclude someone from something. ☐ *Please count me out for the party next Saturday. I have other plans.* ☐ *You should count the whole family out. We are going to the beach for the weekend.*

count something **against** someone to regard something in a negative way against someone. ☐ *I'm afraid we must count this against you as an unexcused absence.* ☐ *Don't count that last strike against the batter.*

count something **as** something to treat or think of something as being a certain thing. ☐ *I count this as a win.* ☐ *Did you count that one as a fair ball?*

count something **in**† to include something in a count of something. ☐ *Did you count the tall ones in?* ☐ *Did you count in the tall ones in the corner?*

count something **out**† **1.** to disregard something; to eliminate a possibility. ☐ *We'll have to count out the possibility of his being elected.* ☐ *Never count it out. It can always happen.* **2.** to give out things, counting them one by one. ☐ *She counted the cookies out, one by one.* ☐ *She counted out the cookies to each child.*

count up to something **1.** to say or list the numbers from zero on up to a certain number. ☐ *Can you count up to a million?* ☐ *I can count up to any number you name, and I will do it if you will stay around to listen.* **2.** to equal a specified total; to add up to something. ☐ *That counts up to a lot.* ☐ *The money we earned today counts up to just enough to pay for the electricity we used today.*

count (up)on someone or something to rely on someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Can I count upon you to do the job?* ☐ *You can count on me.*

count with someone to be important to someone. ☐ *Your cooperation really counts with me.* ☐ *All my efforts do not count with her.*

counter someone or something **with** something to refute someone or something with something. ☐ *She countered our evidence with an eyewitness.* ☐ *I countered Nancy with a better argument.*

C

counter with something to say something in refutation of something; to strike back with something. ☐ *Aren't you going to counter with an argument?* ☐ *He countered with a punch in the jaw.*

a **country mile** *Rur.* a great distance. ☐ *The batter knocked that ball a country mile.* ☐ *I had to walk a country mile to the next gas station.*

a **couple of** two; two or three; a few; some; not many. ☐ *Bill grabbed a couple of beers from the refrigerator.* ☐ *I hung a couple of pictures on the wall.*

couple someone **with** someone to join one person with another to make a pair. ☐ *I coupled Todd with Amy for the dinner party.*

couple something **(on)to** something and **couple** something **on(to** something**); couple** something **on†** to attach something to something. ☐ *Couple this connector to that one.* ☐ *The railroad worker coupled on the next car in line.* ☐ *Couple the green one onto the red one.*

couple something **together** to attach two parts of something together. ☐ *Couple these two cars together and put them on track seven.* ☐ *You have to couple the ends of the two hoses together before you turn on the water.*

couple something **with** something to join one thing with another to make a pair. ☐ *We coupled the budget issue with the staffing issue for our agenda.*

couple up (with someone**)** [for one person] to join another person to form a pair. ☐ *I decided to couple up with Larry.* ☐ *Larry and I coupled up with each other.* ☐ *By midnight, they all had coupled up and were dancing.*

couple with someone *Euph.* to have sexual intercourse with someone. ☐ *They coupled with each other in a night of passion.*

couple with something to connect or join to something. ☐ *This railroad car will couple with the engine.* ☐ *These cars did not couple with the others properly, and there was almost an accident.*

course of action the procedures or sequence of actions that someone will follow to accomplish a goal. ☐ *I plan to follow a course of action that will produce the best results.* ☐ *The board planned a course of action that would reduce costs and eliminate employees.*

The **course of true love never did run smooth.** *Prov.* People in love with each other often have to overcome difficulties in order to be together. (From Shakespeare's play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.) ☐ *Jill: What am I going to do? My boyfriend's job is transferring him to Texas, and I have to stay here. Jane: The course of true love never did run smooth.*

course through something to run, race, or flow rapidly through something. ☐ *I believe, sometimes, that ice water courses through your veins.* ☐ *No, perfectly red blood courses through them.*

Courtesy costs nothing. Go to **Civility costs nothing.**

cover a lot of ground 1. *Lit.* to travel over a great distance; to investigate a wide expanse of land. ☐ *The prospectors covered a lot of ground, looking for gold.* ☐ *My car can cover a lot of ground in one day.* **2.** *Fig.* to deal with much information and many facts. ☐ *The history lecture covered a lot of ground today.*

cover for someone **1.** to make excuses for someone; to conceal someone's errors. ☐ *If I miss class, please cover for me.* ☐ *If you're late, I'll cover for you.* **2.** to handle someone else's work. ☐ *Dr. Johnson's partner agreed to cover for him during his vacation.*

cover someone **in** something to place something over someone or something to serve as clothing or concealment. ☐ *The designer had covered her in see-through fabric that was very revealing.*

cover someone or something **against** something **1.** to cover someone or something as protection against something. ☐ *You should cover your ears against the cold.* ☐ *I covered little Jimmy against the night's drafts.* ☐ *I covered myself against the driving rain.* **2.** *Rur.* [for an insurer] to provide insurance on someone or something against some peril. ☐ *The insurance policy covered us against losses.* ☐ *This policy covers your car against theft.*

cover someone or something **for** something [for an insurer] to provide protection to someone or something for a particular price. ☐ *One company will cover the car for about a thousand dollars.* ☐ *This policy covers you for a few dollars a week.*

cover someone or something **up†** to place something on someone or something for protection or concealment. ☐ *Cover the pie up, so Terry won't see it.* ☐ *Cover up Jimmy so he doesn't get cold.*

cover someone's **tracks (up)†** to conceal one's trail; to conceal one's past activities. ☐ *She was able to cover her tracks up so that they couldn't pin the charges on her.* ☐ *It's easy to cover up your tracks when the investigators botch their job.* ☐ *The robber failed to cover his tracks.*

cover something **up† 1.** *Lit.* to place some sort of cover on something. ☐ *Please cover up that mess with a cloth.* ☐ *Cover it up.* **2.** *Fig.* to conceal a wrongdoing; to conceal evidence. ☐ *They tried to cover the crime up, but the single footprint gave them away.* ☐ *She could not cover up her misdeeds.*

cover the territory 1. *Lit.* to travel or deal with a specific large area. ☐ *The sales manager was responsible for all of the eastern states and personally covered the territory twice each year.* **2.** *Fig.* to deal with all matters relating to a specific topic. ☐ *That lecture really covered the territory in only an hour.*

cover the waterfront to deal with every detail concerning a specific topic. ☐ *Her talk really covered the waterfront. By the time she finished, I knew much more than I wanted to know.*

cover (up) for someone to conceal someone's wrongdoing by lying or concealing the evidence of wrongdoing. ☐ *Are you covering up for the person who committed the crime?* ☐ *I wouldn't cover for anyone.*

cow chip and **cow pie; cow patty; cow flop** *Inf.* a piece of cow manure. ☐ *The pioneers didn't have much wood, so they burned dried cow chips.* ☐ *How did that big ol' cow pie get in the middle of my flower bed?* ☐ *Tom slipped on a cow patty.*

cow juice *Sl.* milk. ☐ *Here's a little cow juice to pour on your cereal.*

cow paste *Rur.* butter. ☐ *Would you kindly pass the cow paste?*

cow patty Go to **cow chip**.

cow pie Go to **cow chip**.

cow someone **into** something to intimidate someone into doing something through the use of guilt or shame. ☐ *You can't cow me into doing it. Those tricks don't work on me.* ☐ *You can cow Wally into almost anything.*

Cowards die many times before their death(s). *Prov.* Cowards are often afraid that they are going to die, so that they often feel what it is like to die, while brave people only feel the fear of death when they are really about to die. (From Shakespeare's play, *Julius Caesar*.) ☐ *Every time Nina went out alone, she was always afraid. Cowards die many times before their deaths.*

cower (away) from someone or something to pull away from someone or something in fear. ☐ *The coyote cowered away from the fire.*

cower down (from something**)** and **cower down (with** something**)** to crouch down, displaying an emotion, such as fear. ☐ *They cowered down with sheer terror.* ☐ *I would cower down from fright in a similar situation.*

cower from something to draw back from the fear of something. ☐ *The wolves cowered from the flames.* ☐ *Some excited hyenas cowered from the lions as they passed by.*

cozy up (to someone**) 1.** *Lit.* to snuggle up to someone as if to get warm. ☐ *The children cozied up to their mother.* ☐ *They cozied up to each other.* **2.** *Fig.* to try to get in good with someone; to try to increase one's influence with someone by being extra nice and friendly. ☐ *The salesman tried to cozy up to the customer.*

crack a book *Fig.* to open a book to study. (Usually used with a negative.) ☐ *I never cracked a book and still passed the course.* ☐ *Sally didn't crack a book all semester.*

crack a bottle open† *Fig.* to open a bottle of liquor. ☐ *Let's crack open a bottle and celebrate.* ☐ *He cracked a bottle open and poured a little for everyone to try.*

crack a joke to tell a joke. ☐ *She's never serious. She's always cracking jokes.* ☐ *Every time Tom cracked a joke, his buddies broke up laughing.*

crack a smile to grin; to smile. ☐ *I was tellin' my best jokes, but Jim never cracked a smile.* ☐ *She looked surprised, and then cracked a big, beautiful smile.*

a **crack at** someone Go to a **try at** someone.

a **crack at** something Go to a **try at** something.

crack down (on someone or something**)** to put limits on someone or something; to become strict about enforcing rules about someone or something. ☐ *The police cracked down on the street gangs.* ☐ *They cracked down once last year too.*

crack open [for something brittle] to break or split open. ☐ *The egg cracked open and a chick worked its way out.* ☐ *The side of the mountain cracked open and molten lava flowed out.*

crack some suds *Sl.* to drink some beer. ☐ *Let's go out tonight and crack some suds.* ☐ *The guys wanted to watch the game and crack some suds.*

crack someone or something **up†** to damage someone or something. (See also **crack** someone **up**.) ☐ *Who cracked my car up?* ☐ *Who cracked up my car? Who was driving?* ☐ *The accident cracked him up a little.*

C

crack someone **up†** to make someone laugh very hard; to make someone break out laughing. ☐ *You and your jokes really crack me up.* ☐ *That comedian really knows how to crack up an audience.*

crack something **up†** to crash something; to destroy something (in an accident). ☐ *The driver cracked the car up in an accident.* ☐ *The pilot cracked up the plane.*

crack something **(wide) open 1.** *Lit.* to crack or split something. ☐ *An incredible eruption cracked the volcano wide open.* **2.** *Fig.* to expose and reveal some great wrongdoing. ☐ *The police cracked the drug ring wide open.* ☐ *The newspaper story cracked the trouble at city hall wide open.*

crack the door (open) and **crack the window (open)** to open the door or window a very small amount. ☐ *I cracked open the door to peek out.* ☐ *Just crack the window a bit to let some air inside.*

crack the window (open) Go to previous.

crack under the strain *Fig.* to have a mental or emotional collapse because of continued work or stress. ☐ *He worked 80-hour weeks for a month and finally cracked under the strain.*

crack up 1. to have a wreck. ☐ *The plane cracked up and killed two of the passengers.* ☐ *Whose car cracked up on the expressway?* **2.** to break out in laughter. ☐ *The whole audience cracked up.* ☐ *I knew I would crack up during the love scene.* **3.** *Sl.* to have a mental or emotional breakdown. ☐ *The poor guy cracked up. It was too much for him.* ☐ *You would crack up, too, if you had been through all he went through.* **4.** an accident; a wreck. (Usually **crack-up**.) ☐ *There was a terrible crack-up on the expressway.* ☐ *There were four cars in the crack-up.*

cracked *Fig.* solved; understood. (*Typically: **get** something **~; have** something **~**.) ☐ *I've got the mystery cracked!* ☐ *After I get it cracked, the rest'll be easy.*

cracked up to be something and **cracked up to be; cracked up as** something alleged or understood to be something. ☐ *She was cracked up to be a pretty good player.* ☐ *She was cracked up as a pretty good golfer.* ☐ (Used with the negative.) *He is not the problem solving CEO that he was cracked up to be.*

cram for a test Go to next.

cram for an examination and **cram for a test** *Fig.* to study very hard for an exam. ☐ *I have to go cram for a test now.* ☐ *If you would study during the school term, you would not have to cram.*

cram someone or something **into** something and **cram** someone or something **in†** to stuff or crush someone or something into something. ☐ *Can you really cram seven kids into that car?* ☐ *He crammed in his clothes and closed the drawer.*

cram someone or something **with** someone or something to fill someone or something by stuffing with someone or

something. ☐ *You won't be happy till you cram all of us with cake and ice cream.* ☐ *He crammed his drawer with his socks.*

cramp someone's **style** *Fig.* to limit someone in some way. ☐ *I hope this doesn't cramp your style, but could you please not hum while you work?* ☐ *To ask Bob to keep regular hours would really be cramping his style.*

C

crank someone **up**† *Fig.* to motivate; to get someone started. (See also **crank** something **up**.) ☐ *See if you can crank up your brother and get him going on time today.* ☐ *Some mornings, I can't crank myself up enough to get to work on time.*

crank something **out**† *Fig.* to produce something quickly or carelessly; to make something in a casual and mechanical way. ☐ *John can crank a lot of work out in a single day.* ☐ *The automated production line could really crank out parts, but the quality was shoddy.*

crank something **up**† **1.** to get a machine or a process started. (Alludes to turning the starting crank of an early automobile.) ☐ *Please crank the machinery so the workers can start working.* ☐ *Let's crank up the drill and make a few holes here in the wall.* **2.** to increase the volume of an electronic device. ☐ *He cranked it up a little more and* CRACK, *there went both speakers!* ☐ *Kelly cranked up his stereo until we were nearly deafened.*

crap out *Sl.* to die. ☐ *Max almost crapped out from the beating he took.* ☐ *The old dog just crapped out. What shall we do?*

crap out (of something**)** to lose on a roll of the dice in a dice game called craps and leave the game and the other players. (See also **crap out (of** something**) (on** someone**)**.) ☐ *Wally crapped out of the game early in the evening.*

crap out (of something**) (on** someone**)** **1.** *Sl.* to withdraw from doing something with someone, unexpectedly, perhaps because of fear or cowardice. ☐ *Are you going to crap out of this game on me?* **2.** *Sl.* to quit doing something with someone or withdraw because of exhaustion. ☐ *Don't crap out of this on me! Pull yourself together!* ☐ *Don't crap out on me!*

crash and burn **1.** *Lit.* [for a plane or car] to crash and burst into flames. ☐ *The small plane crashed and burned just after it took off.* **2.** *Fig.* to fail spectacularly. ☐ *Poor Chuck really crashed and burned when he made his presentation at the sales meeting.*

crash around to move around in a noisy way ☐ *Stop crashing around. I'm trying to study.* ☐ *The people upstairs were crashing around and I couldn't get any sleep.*

a **crash course in** something a short and intense training course in something. ☐ *I took a crash course in ballroom dancing so we wouldn't look stupid on the dance floor.*

crash down (around someone or something**)** and **crash down (about** someone or something**)** **1.** and **crash in (on** someone or something**)** *Lit.* [for something] to collapse on someone or something. ☐ *The walls crashed in around the burning house.* ☐ *The branches of the tree crashed down on the roof.* ☐ *The old barn crashed down.* **2.** *Fig.* [for the structure and stability of one's life] to fall apart. ☐ *Her whole life crashed down around her.* ☐ *Everything he was familiar with crashed down about him.*

crash into someone or something to bump or ram into someone or something accidentally or roughly. ☐ *The student crashed into the door when it opened suddenly.* ☐ *The car crashed into a bus.*

crash out (of some place**)** to break out of some place, such as a prison. ☐ *Max and Lefty crashed out of the state prison last week, but they were captured.* ☐ *They crashed out at midnight.*

crash something **together** to bring things together with great force, making a loud noise. ☐ *Fred crashed the cymbals together and the sound could have wakened the dead.* ☐ *Don't crash those pans together. It drives me crazy.*

crash through something to break through something forcefully. ☐ *The cows crashed right through the fence.*

crash to the floor to fall onto the floor and make a crashing sound. ☐ *The tray of dishes crashed to the floor.* ☐ *Everything crashed to the floor and was broken.*

crash together to ram or move together with great force. ☐ *The two cars crashed together, making a loud noise.* ☐ *The ships crashed together, opening a gaping hole in the side of one of them.*

crash with someone *Sl.* to spend the night at someone's place. ☐ *I don't need a hotel room. I can crash with Tom.* ☐ *There is no room for you to crash with me.*

crave to do something *Rur.* to want to do something eagerly. ☐ *I don't crave to ride the roller coaster, thank you.* ☐ *The kids have been craving to see that movie for weeks.*

crawl across something and **crawl along** something [for someone] to move across something on hands and knees; [for an insect or something similar] to walk across something. ☐ *The wounded officer had to crawl across the open area to get to safety.* ☐ *The caterpillar crawled across the leaf and stopped at the end.* ☐ *She crawled along the catwalk, fearing to look down.*

crawl along something Go to previous.

crawl back to someone *Fig.* to go back to someone humbly, perhaps asking for forgiveness. ☐ *I knew you would come crawling back to me!* ☐ *I wouldn't crawl back to him for all the tea in China.*

crawl in(to something**)** **1.** *Lit.* to enter a place crawling or creeping. ☐ *The cat crawled into the room and meowed.* ☐ *The baby crawled in and tried to stand up.* **2.** *Fig.* to dress quickly in some kind of clothing. ☐ *I crawled into my pants and threw on a shirt.* ☐ *He finally found his pants and crawled in.* **3.** *Fig.* to get into bed. ☐ *At about ten o'clock, she crawled into bed.* ☐ *She pulled back the covers and crawled in.*

crawl out to get out by crawling. ☐ *The bears finally woke up and crawled out.* ☐ *In the cave, I injured my leg and I had to crawl out.*

crawl out (from under someone or something**)** Go to **out (from under** someone or something**)**.

crawl out (of something**)** to get out of something by crawling. ☐ *The injured man crawled out of the overturned car.* ☐ *Donna crawled out of the cave.*

crawl over something to cross over something by crawling. ☐ *We crawled over the pile of boxes.* ☐ *Timmy crawled over the carpet and stood up at the coffee table.*

crawling with some kind of creature [of a surface] covered with insects or animals, moving about. ☐ *The basement was crawling with rats!* ☐ *We came home and found the kitchen floor crawling with ants.*

crawling with someone *Fig.* [of a surface] covered with many people or members of a class of people moving about. ☐ *The place was crawling with police and FBI agents.* ☐ *The city was crawling with tourists making it almost impossible to go from place to place.*

crazy about someone or something and **mad about** someone or something; **nuts about** someone or something; **crazy for** someone or something *Fig.* very fond of someone or something. ☐ *Ann is crazy about John.* ☐ *He's crazy about her, too.* ☐ *I'm mad about their new song.*

***crazy as a betsy bug** and ***crazy as a peach-orchard boar; *crazy as a loon** *Rur.* acting as if insane. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Tom: Susan says she's really the Queen of England. Bill: She's crazy as a betsy bug.* ☐ *Jill: David's a little eccentric, isn't he? Jane: Crazy as a loon, I'd say.* ☐ *What's wrong with Jim? He's acting as crazy as a peach-orchard boar.*

crazy as a loon Go to previous.

crazy as a peach-orchard boar Go to crazy as a betsy bug.

crazy bone Go to funny bone.

crazy for someone or something Go to crazy about someone or something.

crazy in the head stupid or insane. ☐ *Be quiet, Jed. You are just crazy in the head.* ☐ *Am I crazy in the head, or did I just see someone walking a leopard on a leash?*

A **creaking door hangs longest.** and A **creaking gate hangs longest.** *Prov.* Sickly people often live longer than healthy ones. ☐ *Jill: I'm worried that my grandmother may not live much longer. She's been sick for so many years. Jane: Well, if it's any comfort, I've heard that a creaking door hangs longest.*

A **creaking gate hangs longest.** Go to previous.

the **cream of the crop** *Fig.* the best of all. ☐ *This particular car is the cream of the crop.* ☐ *These three students are very bright. They are the cream of the crop in their class.*

crease something **up**† to get creases or folds into something that is supposed to be flat; to wrinkle one's clothing. (Very similar to *messed up*.) ☐ *You will crease your jacket up if you don't sit up straight.* ☐ *I was sitting so long that I creased up my pants.*

create a scene Go to make a scene.

create a stink (about something**)** and **make a stink (about** something**); raise a stink (about** something**)** *Fig.* to make a major issue out of something; to make much over something; to make a lot of complaints and criticisms about something. ☐ *Tom created a stink about Bob's remarks.* ☐ *Why did he make a stink about that?* ☐ *Tom is always trying to raise a stink.*

create an uproar and **make an uproar** to cause an outburst or sensation. ☐ *The dog got into church and made an uproar.* ☐ *Her poodle created an uproar in the restaurant.*

creature comforts things that make people comfortable. ☐ *The hotel room was a bit small, but all the creature comforts were there.*

***credit (for** something**) 1.** praise or recognition for one's role in something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) Especially with **a lot of ~, much ~**.) ☐ *Mary should get a lot of credit for the team's success.* ☐ *Each of the team captains should get credit.* **2.** praise or recognition of someone for having a particular quality. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *We give her a lot of credit for her ability to get people to work out their differences.* ☐ *We will give credit to Sharon for her good humor.* **3.** credit granted to someone's account for some other financial transaction. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I will give you credit for the returned merchandise.* ☐ *We got credit for the check Brian sent us.*

C

credit someone or something **for** something to give someone or something the praise deserved for doing something. ☐ *We must credit Sarah for her efforts on our behalf.* ☐ *We have to credit all the rain we've had for saving the crops.*

credit someone or something **with** something **1.** *Lit.* to record a payment, deposit, etc., to the account of someone or something. ☐ *I will credit you with this payment as you request.* ☐ *Your account has been credited with this adjustment.* **2.** *Fig.* to give someone or something well-deserved praise for doing something or having something. ☐ *We have to credit Jeff with saving us a lot of money.* ☐ *We will credit the weather with part of the success of the picnic.*

credit something **to** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to record a sum owed to the account of someone or something. ☐ *I will credit this payment to your account.* ☐ *I am afraid that I accidentally credited your payment to George.* **2.** *Fig.* to give someone or something well-deserved praise. ☐ *The entire organization credited much praise to Jeff.* ☐ *We had to credit much of our success to simple good luck.*

a **credit to** someone or something of value or benefit to someone or something; of enough value or worth as to enhance someone or something. ☐ *I always want to be a credit to my school.* ☐ *John is not what you would call a credit to his family.*

creep across something **1.** *Lit.* to move across something slowly and carefully; to sneak across something. ☐ *The soldiers crept slowly across the rope bridge.* ☐ *The cat crept across the floor, stalking the mouse.* **2.** *Fig.* [for light, fog, etc.] to move slowly across a place or an area. ☐ *A heavy fog crept across the coastal areas.* ☐ *The spotlight crept across the stage from one side to the other, as if looking for the performer.*

creep along something to move along something slowly and carefully; to sneak along something. ☐ *Creep along the side of the building until you reach the door.* ☐ *The cat crept along the narrow kitchen counter.*

creep away to travel away slowly and carefully; to sneak away. ☐ *The boys were completely ashamed and crept away.* ☐ *The cat crept away quietly.*

creep by *Fig.* [for time] to pass slowly. ☐ *The minutes crept by as I awaited Mrs. Barron's telephone call.* ☐ *I know the days will creep by until we finally get our test results.*

creep in(to something**)** to go into something or a place slowly and carefully; to sneak into something or a place. ☐ *The cat crept into the bedroom.* ☐ *Max planned to creep into the house and take cash and jewelry.*

C

creep out (from under someone or something**)** Go to **out (from under** someone or something**)**.

creep out (of something**)** to go out of something or a place slowly and carefully; to sneak out of something or a place. ☐ *A little mouse crept out of the cupboard.* ☐ *The fox crept out of the henhouse, carrying a chicken.*

creep out of the woodwork Go to **out of the woodwork**.

creep over someone or something **1.** *Lit.* [for something, such as an insect] to walk or crawl over someone or something. ☐ *A huge ant crept over me, and I just lay there.* **2.** *Fig.* [for darkness] to move slowly over someone or something. ☐ *The shadows crept over the picnic and made everyone realize what time it was.* ☐ *Dusk crept over us.*

creep under something to move slowly and carefully underneath something; to sneak underneath something. ☐ *The dog crept under the table to escape punishment.* ☐ *The chipmunk crept under a pile of leaves and disappeared.*

creep up [for darkness] to move gradually and slowly [toward someone or something]. ☐ *Dusk crept up and swallowed us in darkness.*

creep up on someone or something to sneak up on someone or something. ☐ *Please don't creep up on me like that. You scared me to death.* ☐ *The cat crept up on the mouse.*

***the creeps** and ***the willies** a state of anxiety or uneasiness. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I get the creeps when I see that old house.* ☐ *I really had the willies when I went down into the dark basement.*

crib something **from** someone or something to cheat by copying something from someone or something. ☐ *It appears that you cribbed this directly from the person sitting next to you.*

a **crick in** one's **back** a twisted or cramped place in the back that causes pain. ☐ *I can't move! I've got a crick in my back!* ☐ *I had a crick in my back all night and I couldn't sleep.*

a **crick in** one's **neck** *Fig.* a twisted place or a cramp in the neck that causes pain. ☐ *I got a crick in my neck from sleeping in a draft.* ☐ *When I read on the plane, I get a crick in my neck.*

Crime doesn't pay. *Prov.* Crime will ultimately not benefit a person. ☐ *No matter how tempting it may appear, crime doesn't pay.*

cringe away from someone or something and **cringe from** someone or something to pull back or away from someone or something, as from fear. ☐ *The child cringed away from the teacher.* ☐ *Why did you cringe away from the dentist's chair?* ☐ *The cat cringed from the fire.* ☐ *The child cringed from the huge dog.*

cringe before someone or something to cower or recoil in the presence of someone or something. ☐ *Jeff cringed before the wrath of the policeman.*

crinkle up to wrinkle up. ☐ *Her nose crinkled up when she laughed.*

criticize someone **for** something to reprimand or censure someone for something. ☐ *I hope you don't criticize me too severely for my part in this matter.* ☐ *Maria criticized Ken for not being there on time.*

crock someone or something **up**† *Sl.* to damage or harm someone or something. ☐ *The accident crocked me up a bit.* ☐ *I really crocked up my car last night.*

***crooked as a barrel of fish hooks** and ***crooked as a fish hook; *crooked as a dog's hind leg** very dishonest. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Don't play cards with him. He's as crooked as a barrel of fish hooks.* ☐ *Mary says all politicians are crooked as a dog's hind leg.*

crooked as a dog's hind leg Go to previous.

crop out to appear on the surface; [for something] to reveal itself in the open; to begin to show above the surface. ☐ *A layer of rock cropped out at the edges of the desert.*

crop someone or something **out**† [for a photographer] to cut or trim out someone or something from a photograph. ☐ *The photographer cropped Mr. Jones out of the picture.* ☐ *See if you can crop out the ugly fence at the side of the house.*

crop up to appear without warning; to happen suddenly; [for something] to begin to reveal itself in the open. ☐ *Some new problems cropped up at the last minute.*

cross a bridge before one **comes to it** and **cross that bridge before** one**comes to it** *Fig.* to worry excessively about something before it happens. (Note the variations in the examples. See also **cross that bridge when** one **comes to it**.) ☐ *There is no sense in crossing that bridge before you come to it.* ☐ *She's always crossing bridges before coming to them. She needs to learn to relax.*

cross from some place **to** some place to move across something from one point to another. ☐ *We crossed from one side of the hall to the other, looking for a seat.* ☐ *I have to cross from Illinois to Missouri over a rickety old bridge.*

cross one's **fingers** Go to **keep** one's **fingers crossed (for** someone or something**)**.

cross one's **heart (and hope to die)** *Fig.* a phrase said to pledge or vow that the truth is being told. ☐ *It's true, cross my heart and hope to die.* ☐ *It's really true—cross my heart.*

cross over 1. to cross something such as a river or a street. ☐ *This is a very wide river. Where do we cross over?* ☐ *Let's cross over here where it's shallow.* **2.** to change sides, from one to another. ☐ *Some players from the other team crossed over and joined ours after the tournament.* **3.** *Euph.* to die. ☐ *Uncle Herman crossed over long before Aunt Helen.*

cross over into some place to go from one place into another, by crossing a border, river, mountain range, etc. ☐ *The refugees crossed over into Switzerland.* ☐ *We crossed over into Missouri at dawn.*

cross over something to go some place by crossing a border, river, mountain range, etc. ☐ *Do we want to cross over the river at this point?* ☐ *How do we cross over the highway?*

cross paths (with someone**)** *Fig.* to meet someone by chance and not by choice. ☐ *The last time I crossed paths with Fred, we ended up arguing about something inconsequential.*

cross someone to oppose someone. ☐ *You best not cross Jim. He has a very bad temper.* ☐ *This is the last time you cross me, you hear?*

cross someone or something **off (of)** something and **cross** someone or something **off**† to eliminate a name from a list or record. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *We*

will have to cross her off of our list. ☐ *We crossed off Sarah.* ☐ *I crossed the sweater off the list of what I needed to buy.*

cross someone or something **out**† to draw a line through the name of someone or something on a list or record. ☐ *You can cross me out. I'm not going.* ☐ *Please cross out Sarah's name.* ☐ *I crossed the sweater out. It was an error.*

cross someone's **mind** Go to **pass through** someone's **mind.**

cross someone's **palm with silver** *Fig.* to pay money to someone in payment for a service. (A fortune-teller might ask for a potential customer to cross her palm with silver. Used in that sense or jocularly for something like tipping a porter.) ☐ *I crossed his palm with silver, but he still stood there.* ☐ *You will find that things happen much faster in hotels if you cross the staff's palms with silver fairly often.*

cross someone **up**† to give someone trouble; to defy or betray someone; to spoil someone's plans. (Also without *up.*) ☐ *You really crossed up Bill when you told Tom what he said.* ☐ *Please don't cross me up again.*

cross something **with** something **1.** to go across something, using a particular type of vehicle. ☐ *The explorers crossed the river with their Jeep.* ☐ *We can't cross this stream with the canoes. It's too fast.* **2.** to interbreed something with something else. ☐ *The farmer crossed this smaller breed of chicken with the meatier one.* ☐ *It is possible to cross a horse with a donkey.*

cross swords (with someone**)** *Fig.* to become the adversary of someone. ☐ *Gloria loved an argument and was looking forward to crossing swords with Sally.*

cross that bridge when one **comes to it** *Fig.* to delay worrying about something that might happen until it actually does happen. (Usually used in the phrase, "Let's cross that bridge when we come to it," a way of telling someone not to worry about something that has not happened yet.) ☐ *Alan: Where will we stop tonight? Jane: At the next town. Alan: What if all the hotels are full? Jane: Let's cross that bridge when we come to it.*

cross the Rubicon *Fig.* to do something that inevitably commits one to following a certain course of action. (Alludes to the crossing of the River Rubicon by Julius Caesar with his army, which involved him in a civil war in B.C. 49.) ☐ *Jane crossed the Rubicon by signing the contract.* ☐ *Find another job before you cross the Rubicon and resign from this one.*

Cross the stream where it is shallowest. *Prov.* To do things in the easiest possible way. ☐ *Jill: How can I get Fred to give me permission to start this project? Jane: Cross the stream where it is shallowest. First ask Fred's boss for permission; I'm sure she'll give it to you. Then Fred will have to agree.*

Crosses are ladders that lead to heaven. *Prov.* Having to endure trouble can help you to be virtuous. ☐ *When Mary was diagnosed with cancer, her mother consoled her by saying that crosses are ladders that lead to heaven, and that though she might have to suffer in this world, she would surely be rewarded in the next.*

cross-examine someone to question someone in court who has already been questioned by the opposing side; to question a suspect or a witness at great length. ☐ *The lawyer plans to cross-examine the witness tomorrow morning.* ☐ *The police cross-examined the suspect for three hours.*

crouch around [for people or other creatures] to stoop or squat within an area. ☐ *Everyone crouched around, hoping the bomb would fall somewhere else.* ☐ *The baboons crouched around, grooming one another.*

C

crouch down to stoop or huddle down. ☐ *Crouch down here, next to me.* ☐ *Suddenly, Tex crouched down and reached for his pistol.*

crow about something and **crow over** something **1.** *Lit.* [for a rooster] to cry out or squawk about something. ☐ *The rooster was crowing about something—you never know what.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to brag about something. ☐ *Stop crowing about your successes!* ☐ *She is crowing over her new car.*

crow bait *Rur.* someone or an animal that is likely to die; a useless animal or person. ☐ *That old dog used to hunt good, but now he's just crow bait.*

crow over something Go to **crow about** something.

crowd around someone or something to flock or swarm around someone or something. ☐ *The children crowded around the department store Santa, eager for their chance at talking to him.* ☐ *Everyone crowded around the radio to listen.*

crowd in Go to **crowd in(to)** some place.

crowd in (on someone or something**)** to press or crush around someone or something. ☐ *Please don't crowd in on the guest of honor.* ☐ *Can you keep them back from me? I don't like it when they crowd in.* ☐ *The people crowded in on us and frightened us a little bit.* ☐ *Don't crowd in on the display case. It is an antique.*

crowd in(to) some place and **crowd in** to push or squeeze into some place. ☐ *Please don't try to crowd into this place.* ☐ *Too many people are trying to crowd in.*

crowd someone or something **in(to)** something and **crowd** someone or something **in**† to push or squeeze someone or something into a place or a container. ☐ *They tried to crowd a dozen people into that tiny room.* ☐ *Then they crowded in one more.* ☐ *They all tried to crowd themselves into the same room.*

crowd someone or something **out of** something and **crowd** someone or something **out**† to push or force someone, something, or an animal out of something. ☐ *Don't crowd your brother out of line!* ☐ *Don't crowd out my favorite plants with all your rosebushes!*

crowd someone or something **together** to push or squeeze people or things together. ☐ *See if you can crowd them together and get more in the row.* ☐ *I am afraid that I crowded the plants together too much.*

crowd something **with** someone or something to pack too many people or things into something. ☐ *The ushers crowded the room with visitors.* ☐ *Aunt Victoria had crowded the room with the busy trappings of a bygone era.*

crowd through (something**)** [for a number of people] to push through something. ☐ *The little group of revelers crowded through the door.* ☐ *They all tried to crowd through.*

crowd together to pack tightly together. ☐ *The tenants crowded together in the lobby.* ☐ *All the kittens crowded together to keep warm.*

crown someone **with** something **1.** *Lit.* to place a crown on someone's head. ☐ *They crowned the prince with the heavily jeweled royal crown.* **2.** *Fig.* to strike someone on the head with something. ☐ *She crowned him with a skillet.* ☐ *The carpenter crowned himself with a board he knocked loose.*

C

crown something **with** something *Fig.* to place something on the very top of something. (As if crowning royalty.) ☐ *The chef crowned the cake with golden icing.*

cruise around in something to drive or ride around in something. ☐ *Would you like to cruise around in a car like that?* ☐ *They really liked cruising around in the motorboat.*

cruising for a bruising and **cruisin' for a bruisin'** *Sl.* asking for trouble. ☐ *You are cruising for a bruising, you know that?* ☐ *Who's cruisin' for a bruisin'?*

crum something **up†** and **crumb** something **up†** *Sl.* to mess something up. ☐ *Who crummed the bird feeder up?* ☐ *Now don't crum up this deal.* ☐ *Who crumbed up my room?*

crumble away to break away in little pieces. ☐ *The marble pillar was crumbling away because of the acidic rain.* ☐ *One of my teeth is just crumbling away.*

crumble into something to break apart and fall down into bits and pieces. ☐ *The base of the pillar suddenly crumbled into dust.* ☐ *The bones crumbled into dust as the body was lifted from the box.*

crumble something **up† (into** something**)** to crunch up or break up something into pieces. ☐ *Now, crumble the dried bread up into crumbs.* ☐ *Crumble up the bread into crumbs.*

crumble up to break up into little pieces. ☐ *The cake, which was very dry, crumbled up when I tried to cut it.* ☐ *The paper of the old book crumbled up when I turned the pages.*

crumped out *Sl.* intoxicated. ☐ *She was too crumped out to drive herself home.* ☐ *Are you crumped out again?*

crumple something **up†** to fold up or crush someone or something. ☐ *Walter crumpled the paper up.* ☐ *He crumpled up the paper.*

crumple up to fold up; to collapse. ☐ *She was so frightened that she just crumpled up.* ☐ *Fran crumpled up in a dead faint.*

crunch someone or something **up†** to break someone or something up into pieces. ☐ *That machine will crunch you up. Stay away from it!* ☐ *A number of blows with the hammer crunched up the rocks into pebbles.* ☐ *Try to crunch the larger chunks up.*

crunch something **down†** to press or crush something down, breaking it with a crunching noise. ☐ *Sally crunched the flower pot down, breaking it.* ☐ *She crunched down the fragile glass in the box accidentally.*

crusade against someone or something to campaign or demonstrate against someone or something. ☐ *You are always crusading against one cause or another.* ☐ *Ed started crusading against Eric and the latter threatened suit.*

crusade for someone or something to campaign or demonstrate for someone or something. ☐ *I can hardly crusade for the defeat of a friend.* ☐ *Ed went on a crusade for Eric, hoping to get him elected.*

*a **crush on** someone infatuation with someone. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~**.) ☐ *Mary thinks she's getting a crush on Bill.* ☐ *Sally says she'll never have a crush on anyone again.*

crush someone or something **down† 1.** *Lit.* to press or force someone or something down. ☐ *Crush the leaves down so you can put more into the basket.* ☐ *Crush down the leaves and fill the basket higher.* **2.** *Fig.* to suppress someone or something. ☐ *The dictator crushed the opposition down ruthlessly.* ☐ *He crushed down all political opposition.* ☐ *The army crushed the peasants down ruthlessly.*

crush someone or something **to** something to press or squeeze someone or something into a particular state, such as death, a pulp, nothing, etc. ☐ *The anaconda crushed the tapir to death.* ☐ *Donna crushed the bananas to a pulp and put them into the cake batter.*

crush something **in†** to force something inward; to break something in. ☐ *The beam nearly crushed Jason's head in.* ☐ *He tried to crush in the door.*

crush something **(in)to** something to grind or break something into bits and pieces. ☐ *He crushed the fennel seeds into a powder.* ☐ *The roller crushes the rocks to bits.*

crush something **out† 1.** to put out a cigarette or small flame by crushing. ☐ *She crushed her cigarette out and put the butt into the sink.* ☐ *Please crush out your cigarette.* **2.** Go to next.

crush something **out of** someone or something and **crush** something **out†** to press or squeeze something from someone or something. ☐ *He crushed the juice out of the grapes.* ☐ *He thought that the weight of the lumber would crush the life out of him.* ☐ *Robert crushed out the juice.*

crush something **up†** to reduce the mass of something by crushing. ☐ *Crush this up and put it in the sauce.* ☐ *Crush up a clove of garlic and put it in the sauce.*

crush something **up† (into** something**)** to press or grind something with great force until it is reduced to something smaller. ☐ *The chef crushed the almonds up into a powder and sprinkled them on the dessert.* ☐ *The machine crushed up all the glass into tiny bits.*

crush (up) against someone or something to press hard against someone or something. ☐ *The crowd crushed up against the people standing in line.* ☐ *The eager theatergoers crushed against the lobby doors.*

crushed by something *Fig.* demoralized; having hurt feelings. ☐ *The whole family was completely crushed by the news.* ☐ *I was just crushed by your attitude. I thought we were friends.*

*the **crux of the matter** and *the **root of the matter;** *the **heart of the matter** the central issue of the matter. (*Crux* is an old word meaning "cross." *Typically: **be at ~; get at ~; go to ~; look at ~**.) ☐ *All right, this is the crux of the matter.* ☐ *It's about time that we got to the heart of the matter.*

cry all the way to the bank *Fig.* to make a lot of money on something that one ought to be ashamed of. ☐ *Jane: Have you read the new book by that romance novelist? They say it sold a million copies, but it's so badly written that the author ought to be ashamed of herself. Alan: I'm sure she's*

crying all the way to the bank. ☐ *That dreadful movie had no artistic merit. I suppose the people who produced it are crying all the way to the bank.*

cry before one **is hurt** *Fig.* to cry or complain needlessly, before one is injured. ☐ *Bill always cries before he's hurt.* ☐ *There is no point in crying before one is hurt.*

cry bloody murder *Fig.* to scream as if something very serious has happened, especially unnecessarily. ☐ *Now that Bill is really hurt, he's crying bloody murder.* ☐ *There is no point in crying bloody murder about the bill if you knew the restaurant was expensive.*

cry crocodile tears Go to shed crocodile tears.

cry for someone or something **1.** to weep for the absence or loss of someone or something. ☐ *No need to cry for me. Take care of yourself.* ☐ *She cried for her lost cat.* **2.** to shout a demand for someone or something. ☐ *She cried for help, but no one heard her.* ☐ *Tony cried for Walter, but he did not hear.* **3.** to cry or bawl, signaling the need or want for someone or something. (As done by a baby.) ☐ *The baby cried for a bottle.* ☐ *Little Jimmy was crying for his mother.*

cry in one's **beer** *Fig.* to feel sorry for oneself. ☐ *She calls up, crying in her beer, and talks on and on about her problems.* ☐ *Don't cry in your beer. Get yourself straightened out.*

cry one's **eyes out** *Fig.* to cry very hard. ☐ *When we heard the news, we cried our eyes out with joy.* ☐ *She cried her eyes out after his death.*

cry one's **heart out** and **sing** one's **heart out; play** one's **heart out; sob** one's **heart out** *Fig.* to do something with vigor or intensity. ☐ *She suffered such grief—alone and sobbing her heart out.* ☐ *The bird sang its little heart out each morning.*

cry oneself **to sleep** to weep until sleep overtakes one. ☐ *The baby finally cried herself to sleep.*

cry out (against someone or something**)** to shout in anger against someone or something. ☐ *The crowd cried out against the police.* ☐ *She cried out against Eric, who had insulted her grossly.*

cry out for someone or something **1.** to shout praise or encouragement for someone or something. ☐ *Everyone in the street cried out for the mayor to make an appearance.* **2.** to shout out demands for someone or something. ☐ *The children cried out for ice cream.* ☐ *The mob was crying out for justice when they heard the unpopular sentences of the judge.*

cry out (in something**)** and **cry out (with** something**)** to scream or shout in pain, joy, anger, etc. ☐ *The child cried out in pain.* ☐ *On seeing his father, the overjoyed little boy cried out.*

cry over someone or something to weep because of someone or something. ☐ *There's no need to cry over it. Things will work out.* ☐ *She is still crying over her lost love.*

cry over spilled milk *Fig.* to be unhappy about what cannot be undone. (See also It's no use crying over spilled milk.) ☐ *He is always crying over spilled milk. He cannot accept reality.* ☐ *It can't be helped. Don't cry over spilled milk.*

cry (something**) out† (to** someone or an animal**)** to yell something to someone or an animal. ☐ *She cried a warning out to the others.* ☐ *Sally cried out a warning to the people behind her.* ☐ *The trainer cried a command out to the runaway horse.*

cry uncle Go to holler uncle.

cry wolf *Fig.* to cry or complain about something when nothing is really wrong. (From the story wherein a child sounds the alarm frequently about a wolf when there is no wolf, only to be ignored when there actually is a wolf.) ☐ *Pay no attention. She's just crying wolf again.* ☐ *Don't cry wolf too often. No one will come.*

a **crying need (for** someone or something**)** *Fig.* a definite or desperate need for someone or something. ☐ *There is a crying need for someone to come in and straighten things out.* ☐ *All the people in that area have a crying need for a local hospital.*

a **crying shame** *Fig.* a very unfortunate situation; a real shame. ☐ *It's a crying shame that people cannot afford adequate housing.* ☐ *That your father could not attend graduation was a crying shame.*

cuddle up (to someone or something**)** and **cuddle up (with** someone**)** to nestle or snuggle close to someone or something to get warm or to be intimate. ☐ *Let's cuddle up to the warmth, near the fireplace.* ☐ *She cuddled up with him and went to sleep.*

cuddle up with a (good) book and **curl up (with a (good) book)** to snuggle into a chair or bed comfortably to read a book. ☐ *I want to go home and cuddle up with a good book.* ☐ *She went home and curled up with a good book.*

cuddle up (with someone**)** Go to cuddle up (to someone or something).

cue someone **in† 1.** *Lit.* to give someone a cue; to indicate to someone that the time has come. ☐ *Now, cue the orchestra director in.* ☐ *All right, cue in the announcer.* **2.** *Fig.* to tell someone what is going on. (Almost the same as clue someone in (on something).) ☐ *I want to know what's going on. Cue me in.* ☐ *Cue in the general about the troop movement.*

cull someone or something **out of** something and **cull** someone or something **out†** to eliminate someone or something from a group. ☐ *We will cull the older pigeons out from the flock.* ☐ *They culled out the slower runners from the team.*

culminate in something to climax in something; to end with something. ☐ *The contest culminated in a victory for the best band.* ☐ *The play-offs culminated in a big win for the Chicago team.*

culturally advantaged *Euph.* rich; upper-class. ☐ *I can't deny I had a culturally advantaged upbringing.* ☐ *The charity appealed to culturally advantaged people to donate time and money to those less fortunate.*

culturally deprived and **culturally disadvantaged** *Euph.* poor; lower-class. ☐ *Joe is working at a summer camp for culturally deprived children.* ☐ *Jane grew up in a culturally disadvantaged neighborhood.*

culturally disadvantaged Go to previous.

culture vulture someone whom one considers to be excessively interested in the (classical) arts. ☐ *She won't go to a funny film. She's a real culture vulture.* ☐ *They watch only highbrow television. They're culture vultures.*

cunning as a fox Go to sly as a fox.

cup one's **hands together** to put one's hands together to form a sort of cup. □ *He cupped his hands together and scooped up the water.* □ *You have to cup your hands together if you want a drink.*

curdle someone's **blood** *Fig.* to frighten or disgust someone severely. □ *The story was scary enough to curdle your blood.* □ *The terrible scream was enough to curdle my blood.*

cure someone **of** something to rid someone of a disease, ailment, bad habit, or obsession. □ *I hope that the doctor prescribes something to cure him of that chronic cough.* □ *Will you please try to cure yourself of your constant interrupting?*

cure something **of** something to eliminate the cause of a malfunction in a machine or a device. (See also cure someone of something.) □ *I think I have cured the stapler of jamming all the time.* □ *I can't seem to cure the committee of procrastination.*

Curiosity killed the cat. *Prov.* Being curious can get you into trouble. (Often used to warn someone against prying into other's affairs.) □ *Jill: Where did you get all that money? Jane: Curiosity killed the cat.*

curl someone's **hair** and **make** someone's **hair curl** *Fig.* to frighten or alarm someone; to shock someone with sight, sound, or taste. □ *Don't ever sneak up on me like that again. You really curled my hair.* □ *The horror film made my hair curl.*

curl something **up**† to roll something up into a coil. □ *She curled the edges of the paper up while she spoke.* □ *Why did she curl up the paper?*

curl up and die *Fig.* to die. (Often jocular.) □ *When I heard you say that, I could have curled up and died.* □ *No, it wasn't an illness. She just curled up and died.*

curl up (in(to) something**) 1.** to roll into a coil. □ *The snake curled up into a neat coil.* □ *It curled up so we couldn't get at it.* **2.** [for one] to bend one's body into a resting place, such as a chair or a bed. □ *Colleen curled up in the chair and took a nap.* □ *She curled up and took a nap.*

curl up (with a (good) book) Go to cuddle up with a (good) book.

curl up with someone or an animal to snuggle up to someone or something. □ *She curled up with her husband and fell asleep.* □ *Elaine curled up with the family dog to keep warm.*

curly dirt and **house moss; slut's wool** puffs of dirt and dust. □ *How long has it been since you swept under this bed? There's a mountain of curly dirt under here!* □ *No one's been in this room for an age. Look at all the cobwebs and curly dirt.* □ *She was a terrible housekeeper. House moss collected in all the corners of her rooms.*

curry favor with someone to try to win favor from someone. □ *The lawyer tried to curry favor with the judge.* □ *It's silly to curry favor with the boss. Just act yourself.*

curse at someone or something to swear at someone or something; to use foul language at someone or something. □ *He cursed at the jammed toaster and pounded his fist on the counter in anger.* □ *Please don't curse at me.*

curse someone **for** something to damn someone for doing something; to invoke evil upon someone for doing something. □ *She cursed her mother for ever having borne her.* □ *Over and over, she cursed herself for ever having come there.*

curse someone or something **under** one's **breath** Go to under one's breath.

curse someone or something **with** something **1.** to damn someone or something with something, especially a verbal curse. □ *She cursed him with the fervent wish that he rot in hell.* □ *She cursed the day he was born with an unprintable oath.* **2.** to afflict or oppress someone or something with something. □ *His upbringing cursed him with a strong sense of guilt.* □ *The political scandal cursed the town with a dismal reputation for years.*

curse under one's **breath** Go to under one's breath.

curtain something **off**† to separate something or some place with a drape, screen, or curtain. □ *We curtained this part of the room off, so please sleep over there.* □ *We will curtain off part of the room.*

curtains for someone or something the death, end, or ruin of someone or something. (From the lowering or closing of the curtains at the end of a stage performance.) □ *If the car hadn't swerved, it would have been curtains for the pedestrians.* □ *If they can't get into the export market, it's curtains for the whole company.*

curtsy to someone [for a woman] to dip or bow in deference to someone. □ *Of course, I curtsied to the queen! Do you think I'm an anarchist?* □ *The little girls curtsied after they did their dance number.*

curve to something to bend or bow toward something, some direction, or some place. □ *The road curved to the left.* □ *One of her toes curves to the right.*

cuss a blue streak *Rur.* to curse a great deal. □ *When she dropped the brick on her toe, she cussed a blue streak.* □ *Bill could cuss a blue streak by the time he was eight years old.*

cuss someone **out**† to curse at someone. □ *Dad cussed me out for losing the money he gave me.* □ *The little kid cussed out his brother, shocking his grandmother.*

The **customer is always right.** *Prov.* In order to keep customers happy, the people who serve them should always obey their wishes. (Often cited as a principle of good business dealings; customers sometimes say it to the people serving them in order to try to get good service.) □ *When I began working at the gift shop, my boss told me, "Remember, the customer is always right, no matter how stupid or rude you may think he is being."*

cut a big swath Go to cut a wide swath.

cut a deal to arrange a deal; to negotiate an agreement. □ *Maybe we can cut a deal. Let's talk.* □ *The two lawyers cut a deal that left me with my car, although she got the house.*

cut a fine figure to look good; to look elegant. (Usually said of a male.) □ *Tom really cuts a fine figure on the dance floor.* □ *Bill cuts a fine figure since he bought some new clothes.*

cut a long story short Go to make a long story short.

cut a wide swath and **cut a big swath** to seem important; to attract a lot of attention. □ *In social matters, Mrs. Smith cuts a wide swath.* □ *Bob cuts a big swath whenever he appears in his military uniform.*

a **cut above average** better than average. (See also a **cut above** something. The *cut* is a degree or notch.) □ *John isn't the best mechanic in town, but he's a cut above average.*

a **cut above** something a measure or degree better than something else. (See also a **cut above average.** The *cut* is a degree or notch.) □ *Your shirt is beautiful, but mine is a cut above yours.*

cut across something **1.** and **cut across** *Lit.* to travel across a particular area; to take a shortcut across a particular area. □ *Please don't cut across the neighbor's yard anymore.* **2.** *Fig.* to reach beyond something; to embrace a wide variety; to slice across a figurative boundary or barrier. □ *His teaching cut across all human cultures and races.* □ *This rule cuts across all social barriers.*

cut against the grain Go to **against the grain.**

cut along something to make a cut following a line or guide. □ *Please cut along the dotted line.* □ *My hand is too shaky to cut along the line neatly.*

cut and dried fixed; determined beforehand; usual and uninteresting. (Can be hyphenated before nominals.) □ *I find your writing quite boring. It's too cut and dried.* □ *The lecture was, as usual, cut and dried.*

cut and paste 1. *Lit.* to cut something out of paper with scissors and paste it onto something else. □ *The teacher told the little children that it was time to cut and paste, and they all ran to the worktables.* □ *Mary made a tiny house by cutting and pasting little strips of paper.* **2.** *Fig.* something trivial, simple, or childish. □ *I hate this job. It's nothing but cut and paste.* □ *I don't mind doing things that have to be done, but I hate to waste my time on cut and paste.*

cut and run *Sl.* to run away quickly. (Alludes to cutting loose a ship's or boat's anchor and sailing away in a hurry.) □ *Wilbur decided to cut and run when he heard the police sirens.* □ *As soon as I finish what I am doing here, I'm going to cut and run. I've got to get home by six o'clock.*

cut around something to move rapidly around something, such as a corner, pole, beam, etc. □ *The cat cut around a corner and escaped from the dog.* □ *The speeding car cut around the light pole and almost hit it.*

cut at someone or an animal to thrust a knife or something similar at someone or an animal. □ *The hoodlum cut at me, but I dodged the blade.* □ *He cut at the dog, but it had no effect on the vicious animal.*

cut at something and **cut away at** to cut on something to slice something. □ *He cut at the chair leg carefully, trying not to remove too much.* □ *Dad cut away at the turkey and asked us what part we wanted.*

cut back to turn back; to reverse direction. □ *Suddenly, the bull cut back in our direction and began chasing us.* □ *The road cuts back about a mile ahead, and it goes west again.*

cut back (on something**)** to reduce the use, amount, or cost of something. □ *You are all going to have to cut back on water usage.* □ *You simply must cut back on office expenses.*

cut back to someone or something [for a film or television camera] to return to a picture of someone or something. □ *Suddenly, the camera cut back to the reporter, who—unprepared—just stood there.* □ *The scene cut back to the veranda overlooking the bay.*

cut both ways to affect both sides of an issue equally. □ *Remember that your suggestion that costs should be shared cuts both ways. Your division will have to reduce its budget as well.* □ *If our side cannot take along supporters to the game, then yours cannot either. The rule has to cut both ways.*

cut class and **cut school** to skip a school class or a day of school without an excuse. □ *As a joke, one day all the students cut their math class and went to lunch.* □ *Jane was grounded after she cut school last Friday.*

cut corners *Fig.* to take shortcuts; to save money or effort by finding cheaper or easier ways to do something. □ *They're always finding ways to cut corners.* □ *I won't cut corners just to save money. I put quality first.*

cut down (on something**)** to reduce the amount of something or of doing something; to use or buy less of something. □ *You will have to cut down on the time it takes you to get ready in the morning.* □ *The doctor told him to cut down on his drinking.*

cut from the same cloth and **made from the same mold** *Fig.* sharing a lot of similarities; seeming to have been created, reared, or fashioned in the same way. □ *She and her brother are cut from the same cloth. They both tell lies all the time.* □ *Father and son are made from the same mold and even sound alike on the telephone.*

cut in (ahead of someone or something**)** to move quickly and carelessly into line ahead of someone, as in a line of people or in traffic. □ *A red car cut in ahead of me and nearly caused me to run off the road.* □ *Careful! Don't cut in ahead of that car!*

cut in (on someone**) 1.** *Lit.* [for someone] to ask to replace one member of a dancing couple. □ *Excuse me, may I cut in?* □ *Please don't cut in.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to interrupt someone who is talking. □ *While Gloria was telling us her story, Tom kept cutting in on her.* □ *I'm talking. Please don't cut in!*

cut in (on something**) 1.** *Lit.* to interrupt something, especially some sort of electronic transmission. □ *I didn't mean to cut in on your announcement.* □ *Who cut in on my telephone call?* **2.** *Fig.* to join in something even when not invited. □ *Can I cut in on this little party?*

cut in (with something**)** to interrupt [someone] with a comment; to speak abruptly, interrupting what someone else is saying. □ *Jimmy cut in with a particularly witty remark.* □ *Must you always cut in while others are talking?*

cut in(to something**)** to slice something; to gouge something. □ *We cut into the watermelon and found it to be spoiled.* □ *It was a beautiful apple, but when she cut in, she found out that she had been cheated.*

Cut it out! *Inf.* Stop doing that!; Stop saying that! (Fixed order.) □ *Sue: Why, I think you have a crush on Mary! Tom: Cut it out!* □ *"Cut it out!" yelled Tommy as Billy hit him again.*

cut loose (with something**)** Go to **let go (with** something**).**

C

cut no ice (with someone**)** *Sl.* to have no influence on someone; to fail to convince someone. □ *I don't care who you are. It cuts no ice with me.* □ *So you're the mayor's daughter. It still cuts no ice.*

cut off 1. to stop by itself or oneself. □ *The machine got hot and cut off.* □ *Bob cut off in midsentence.* **2.** to turn off a road, path, highway, etc. □ *This is the place where you are supposed to cut off.* □ *When you come to a cutoff on the left, continue on for about mile.*

cut one's **coat according to** one's **cloth** and **cut** one's **coat to suit** one's **cloth** *Prov.* to plan one's aims and activities in line with one's resources and circumstances. □ *We would like a bigger house, but we must cut our coat according to our cloth.* □ *They can't afford a vacation abroad—they have to cut their coat according to their cloth.*

cut one's **coat to suit** one's **cloth** Go to previous.

cut one's **eyes at** someone or something *Rur.* to glance at someone or something. □ *He cut his eyes at me to see if I was looking.* □ *She cut her eyes at the TV for a second.*

cut one's **eyeteeth on** something *Fig.* to grow up experiencing something; to have had the experience of dealing with something [successfully] at a very early age. □ *My grandfather taught me how to fish, so I cut my eyeteeth on fishing.* □ *Fred cut his eyeteeth on writing; both his parents were authors.*

cut one's **losses** to do something to stop a loss of something. □ *I knew I had to do something to cut my losses, but it was almost too late.* □ *Sell some of the high-priced stuff to cut your losses.*

cut one's **nose off to spite** one's **face** *Prov.* to hurt yourself in an attempt to hurt someone else. (Often in the form, "Don't cut off your nose to spite your face.") □ *Isaac dropped out of school because he wanted to make his father angry; years later, he realized that he had cut off his nose to spite his face.*

cut one's **(own) throat** *Fig.* [for someone] to bring about one's (own) failure. □ *If I were to run for office, I'd just be cutting my throat.* □ *Judges who take bribes are cutting their own throats.*

cut one's **wolf loose** *Sl.* to go on a drinking bout; to get drunk. □ *I'm gonna go out and cut my wolf loose tonight.* □ *You're going to cut your wolf loose too often and really get into trouble.*

cut (oneself**) loose (from** someone or something**)** to get out from under the domination of someone or something. □ *At last, she cut herself loose from her mother.* □ *She had to cut loose from home.* □ *Everyone wished that Todd would cut himself loose from his mother.*

cut oneself **on** something to slice one's flesh with something accidentally. □ *Careful, you will cut yourself on that knife.* □ *Careful! Don't cut yourself on that broken glass.*

cut out to depart; to leave in a hurry. □ *Good-bye. I have to cut out now.* □ *It's time I was cutting out. I'm late already.*

cut out (for some place**)** and **light out (for** some place**)** to leave quickly for some place. □ *The kids all cut out for home.* □ *When they heard their mother call, the Wilson kids cut out for home.*

cut out for someone or something to run hurriedly toward someone or something. □ *At the last minute, he cut out for the gate, which was closing very fast.* □ *The child cut out for his mother, who had come to get him at school.*

cut out for something suited for something. □ *She was bright and she loved to read. Her folks thought she was cut out for being a schoolteacher.* □ *He did his best, but he just wasn't cut out for farming.*

cut out to be something destined to be something or a particular type of person. (See also **cut out for** something.) □ *I don't think I was cut out to do this.* □ *We weren't cut out to be laborers.*

cut school Go to **cut class.**

cut some Zs Go to **catch some Zs.**

cut someone **a break** and **cut** someone **some slack** *Sl.* to give someone a break; to allow someone a reprieve from the consequences of an action. □ *Come on, cut me a break! I'm a good guy!* □ *I was only a few minutes late! Cut me a break! Don't dock my pay!* □ *Cut me some slack and I'll be sure to pay you all I owe in a month.*

cut (someone**) a check** to write a check; to have a computer print a check. (Used in business especially of machine-made checks.) □ *We will cut a check for the balance due you later this afternoon.* □ *We will cut you a check as soon as possible.*

cut someone **dead** to ignore someone totally. □ *Joan was just about to speak to James when he walked away and cut her dead.* □ *Jean cut her former husband dead.*

cut someone **down†** to kill someone with a weapon, such as a sword, or with gunfire, etc. □ *The bandits cut the bystanders down and fled.* □ *The gunman cut down an innocent pedestrian.*

cut someone **down (to size)** and **take** someone **down (to size)** *Fig.* to make a person humble; to **put** one **in** one's **place.** □ *John's critical remarks really cut me down to size.* □ *Jane is too conceited. I think her new boss will take her down to size.*

cut someone **in† (on** something**)** *Sl.* to permit someone to share something, such as profits or loot. □ *Max refused to cut in his partner Lefty.* □ *We can't cut you in. There's not enough.*

cut someone **off† at the pass** *Fig.* to block someone's effort to get away; to thwart someone's efforts. □ *They are ahead now, but we'll cut them off at the pass.* □ *Try to cut off the bandits at the pass!*

cut someone **off† without a penny** *Fig.* to end someone's allowance; to fail to leave someone money in one's will. □ *Mr. and Mrs. Franklin cut their son off without a penny after he quit school.* □ *They cut off both of their sons without a penny.* □ *We learned, when Uncle Sam's will was read, that he cut off his own flesh and blood without a penny.*

cut someone or something **loose from** something to sever the connection between people or things, in any combination. □ *Wally cut the child loose from the tree where his playmates had tied him up.* □ *I cut the cord loose from the anchor by mistake.*

cut someone or something **off† (from** something**)** to block or isolate someone or something from some place or something. □ *They cut the cattle off from the wheat field.* □ *The enemy tanks cut off the troops from their camp.*

cut someone or something **off**† **(short)** *Fig.* to interrupt someone or something; to prevent someone from continuing to speak. (See also **chop** someone **off.**) ☐ *In the middle of her sentence, the teacher cut her off short.* ☐ *Bob cut off Mary when she was trying to explain.*

cut someone or something **out**† to eliminate someone or something. ☐ *They cut out the free coffee with lunch at the cafeteria.* ☐ *We have to cut Chuck out. There are too many better men on the team.*

cut someone or something **to** something **1.** *Lit.* to chop or slice up someone or something, especially to bits or pieces. ☐ *The chef cut the carrots to bite-size pieces.* ☐ *The lawn mower will cut you to bits if you get under it.* **2.** *Fig.* to destroy an argument; to destroy someone's argument. ☐ *The lawyer heard her argument and cut her to bits.* ☐ *She cut the argument to pieces.*

cut someone or something **up**† *Fig.* to criticize someone or something severely. ☐ *Jane is such a gossip. She was really cutting Mrs. Jones up.* ☐ *The professor really cut up my essay.*

cut someone or something **with** something and **cut** someone or something **on** something to slice someone or something with or on something. ☐ *Don't cut yourself on that sharp blade.* ☐ *He cut the bread with a dull knife and crushed it.*

cut someone's **water off**† *Fig.* to squelch someone; to thwart someone. (Fixed order.) ☐ *Well, I guess that cuts your water off!* ☐ *That sure cuts off my water!*

cut someone **some slack** Go to **cut** someone **a break.**

cut someone **to ribbons 1.** *Lit.* to cut or slice someone severely. ☐ *He broke a mirror and the glass cut his hand to ribbons.* **2.** *Fig.* to criticize someone severely. ☐ *The critics just cut her acting to ribbons!*

cut someone **to the bone** Go to next.

cut someone **to the quick** and **cut** someone **to the bone 1.** *Lit.* to slice the flesh of someone or some animal clear through to the underlying layer of flesh or to the bone. ☐ *With the very sharp knife, David cut the beast to the quick in one blow.* ☐ *He cut his finger to the quick with the sharp knife.* **2.** *Fig.* to injure someone emotionally. (See also **cut** something **to the bone.**) ☐ *Your heartless comments cut me to the quick.* ☐ *Her remarks cut him to the bone.*

cut someone **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to gash or carve on someone by cutting. ☐ *The thugs cut him up badly, just for talking back.* ☐ *They cut up their victim into pieces.* **2.** *Fig.* to cause someone severe emotional distress. ☐ *That rebuke really cut me up.* ☐ *The critic really cut up the performer.*

cut someone **up** *Fig.* to make someone laugh. ☐ *That comedian's routine really cut me up.* ☐ *Tommy's rude noises cut the whole class up, but not the teacher.*

cut something **away**† **(from** something**)** to separate something from something by cutting. ☐ *The doctor cut the wart away from the patient's foot.* ☐ *She cut away the loose thread.*

cut something **back**† to prune plants; to reduce the size of plants, bushes, etc. ☐ *Let's cut these bushes back. They're getting in the way.* ☐ *Don't cut back my roses!*

cut something **down**† **1.** *Lit.* to chop something down; to saw or cut at something until it is felled. ☐ *Stop cutting the banners down!* ☐ *Don't cut down that tree!* **2.** *Fig.* to destroy someone's argument; to destroy someone's position or standing. ☐ *The lawyer cut the testimony down quickly.* ☐ *The lawyer cut down the witness's story.* **3.** to reduce the price of something. ☐ *They cut the prices down to sell the goods off quickly.* ☐ *I wish they would cut down the prices in this store.*

cut something **down**† **to** something to reduce something to a manageable size. ☐ *We cut the program down to size and it was very enjoyable.* ☐ *We cut down the program to a half hour.*

cut something **from** something to remove something from something by cutting. ☐ *She carefully cut the blossoms from the bush.* ☐ *A few blossoms were cut from the bush.*

cut something **into** something **1.** and **cut** something **in**† to mix something, usually a soft baking ingredient, into something else. (See also **fold** something **into** something.) ☐ *Carefully cut the butter into the flour mixture.* ☐ *Now, cut in some more butter.* **2.** to slice or chop something into very small pieces, bits, etc. ☐ *We cut the meat into one-inch cubes for the stew.*

cut something **off**† **1.** to shorten something. ☐ *Cut this board off a bit, would you?* ☐ *Cut off this board a little, please.* **2.** to turn something off, such as power, electricity, water, the engine, etc. ☐ *Would you please cut that engine off?* ☐ *Cut off the engine, Chuck.*

cut something **on** something **1.** to slice something on or against something, accidentally. ☐ *I cut my finger on the knife.* ☐ *Maria cut her foot on the broken glass.* **2.** to slice something that is lying on something else. ☐ *I cut the tomatoes on the cutting board your mother gave us.*

cut something **out**† **1.** to stop doing something. (Usually a command. See also **Cut it out!**) ☐ *Cut that noise out!* ☐ *Cut out that noise!* ☐ *Now, cut that out!* **2.** Go to next.

cut something **out of** something and **cut** something **out**† to cut a pattern or shape from cloth, paper, sheet metal, etc.; to remove something from something by cutting; to excise something from something. (When both *out* and *of* are used, no direct object can intervene.) ☐ *Sam cut a pig out from the paper.* ☐ *I cut the picture out of a magazine.* ☐ *I cut out the shape of the moon from the paper.*

cut something **to the bone 1.** *Lit.* to slice deep to a bone. ☐ *The knife cut John to the bone. He had to be sewed up.* ☐ *Cut each slice of ham to the bone. Then each slice will be as big as possible.* **2.** *Fig.* to cut down severely (on something). (*To the bone* emphasizes the severity of the cutting.) ☐ *We cut our expenses to the bone and are still losing money.* ☐ *Congress had to cut expenditures to the bone in order to balance the budget.*

cut something **with** something to dilute something with something else. ☐ *They cut the liquor with cold water.* ☐ *Please cut this with some soda. It's too sweet, otherwise.*

cut teeth [for a baby or young person] to have new teeth emerging through the gums. ☐ *Billy is cranky because he's cutting teeth.* ☐ *Ann cut her first tooth this week.*

cut the cheese and **cut the mustard** *Sl.* to release intestinal gas. (Crude. Use caution with the topic.) ☐ *Who cut the cheese?* ☐ *People who cut the mustard in the car have to get out and walk.*

Cut the comedy! and **Cut the funny stuff!; Cut the shit!** Stop acting silly and telling jokes!; Be serious! (Use

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shit with caution, as it is considered vulgar.) ☐ *John: All right, you guys! Cut the comedy and get to work! Bill: Can't we ever have any fun? John: No.* ☐ *Bill: Come on, Mary, let's throw Tom in the pool! Mary: Yeah, let's drag him over and give him a good dunking! Tom: Okay, you clowns, cut the funny stuff! I'll throw both of you in!*

cut the deadwood out 1. *Lit.* to prune away and remove the dead branches from a tree or bush. ☐ *They cut a lot of the deadwood out to save the tree.* ☐ *You have to cut out the deadwood to make room for new growth.* **2.** *Fig.* to remove unproductive persons from employment. ☐ *This company would be more profitable if management would cut out the deadwood.* ☐ *When we cut the deadwood out, all our departments will run more smoothly.*

cut the dust *Fig.* to take a drink of liquor. ☐ *I think I'll stop in here and cut the dust.* ☐ *I want to cut the dust. Can I have a snort?*

Cut the funny stuff! Go to Cut the comedy!

cut the ground out† from under someone *Fig.* to destroy the foundation of someone's plans or someone's argument. ☐ *The politician cut the ground out from under his opponent.* ☐ *Congress cut out the ground from under the president.*

cut the mustard Go to cut the cheese.

cut the pie up† *Fig.* to divide something up. (Can refer to an actual pie or anything that can be divided into varying portions.) ☐ *It all depends on how you cut the pie up.* ☐ *How should I cut up the pie?*

Cut the shit! Go to Cut the comedy!

cut through red tape *Fig.* to eliminate or neutralize something complicated, such as bureaucratic rules and procedures. ☐ *I will try to cut through all the red tape for you so you get your visa on time.* ☐ *I am sure someone can help us cut through all this red tape.*

cut through something to penetrate something by cutting; to slice through something. ☐ *The worker cut through the steel door with a torch.* ☐ *Walter cut through the rind of the watermelon.*

cut to someone or something to shift the radio, movie, or television audience's attention abruptly to someone or something new. ☐ *Suddenly, the engineer cut to the announcer.* ☐ *The technical director cut to a remote unit that was covering an accident.* ☐ *The camera cut to scenes of Atlanta burning.*

cut to the chase *Sl.* to focus on what is important; to abandon the preliminaries and deal with the major points. ☐ *All right, let's stop the idle chatter and cut to the chase.* ☐ *After a few introductory comments, we cut to the chase and began negotiating.*

cut up 1. to act wildly; to show off and be troublesome; to act like a clown. ☐ *Tom, Billy! Stop cutting up, or I'll send you to the principal's office.* ☐ *If you spent more time studying than cutting up, you'd get better grades.* **2.** Go to next.

cut up (about someone or something**)** *Sl.* emotionally upset about someone or something. ☐ *She was all cut up about her divorce.* ☐ *You could see how cut up she was.*

cut your peaches *Rur.* go on with what you were doing. ☐ *Stop gawking and cut your peaches.* ☐ *There's no need for you to follow me around. Go cut your peaches.*

***cute as a bug's ear** very cute. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *That little baby is cute as a bug's ear.*

the **cutting edge** *Fig.* the most forward part of a trend; the leading part of a trend. (Alludes to the edge of a sword. See also on the cutting edge. See also on the bleeding edge.) ☐ *Fred's invention put him on the cutting edge of the computer chip business.*

dab at something to touch or pat something. ☐ *The painter dabbed at the canvas, making little changes here and there.* ☐ *Don't just dab at the wall, spread the paint on!*

dab something **off†** Go to next.

dab something **off (of)** something and **dab** something **off†** to pat or wipe something off something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Please dab the butter off your chin.* ☐ *Please dab off the butter.* ☐ *Dab the moisture off of the apples.*

dab something **on(to)** something and **dab** something **on†** to pat or spread carefully something onto something else. ☐ *Dab some medicine onto the scratch.* ☐ *Dab on some medicine.*

dabble at something to play at doing something; to do something halfheartedly. ☐ *Don't just dabble at your history paper. Settle down and do it right.* ☐ *She dabbles at painting.*

dabble in something to be involved in something in a casual manner. ☐ *She dabbled in local politics for a while.* ☐ *I want to dabble in something new for a while.*

Dad fetch my buttons! *Rur.* What a surprise!; Goodness me! ☐ *Dad fetch my buttons! It's a letter from Aunt Rita!* ☐ *Dad fetch my buttons, I never was so happy in all my life!*

the **daddy of them all** and the **granddaddy of them all** *Fig.* the biggest or oldest of all; the patriarch. ☐ *This old fish is the granddaddy of them all.* ☐ *This tree is the daddy of them all. It's been here since the place was built.*

daily dozen *Fig.* physical exercises done every day. ☐ *My brother always feels better after his daily dozen.* ☐ *She would rather do a daily dozen than go on a diet.*

the **daily grind** [someone's] everyday work routine. ☐ *I'm getting very tired of the daily grind.* ☐ *When my vacation was over, I had to go back to the daily grind.*

dally over something to waste time or take too long doing something. ☐ *Don't dally over your food. Eat your dinner.* ☐ *I wish you wouldn't dally over your homework.*

dally with someone to flirt with someone; to waste time with someone of the opposite sex. (Old.) ☐ *Sam is dallying with that Johnson girl again.* ☐ *Stop dallying with her and get back to your studies!*

dam something **up†** to erect a barrier in a river, stream, brook, etc. ☐ *We are going to have to dam this stream up to make a pond for the cattle.* ☐ *Let's dam up this stream.* ☐ *Why is this river dammed up?*

Damn it to blue blazes! *Rur.* Damn it. (An oath.) ☐ *Damn it to blue blazes, I told you I can't lend you any more money!* ☐ *"Damn it to blue blazes! I give up!" Joe shouted, flinging his tools aside.*

a **(damn) sight better** *Rur.* much better. ☐ *Mary can sing a damn sight better than Tom can.* ☐ *You look a sight better with your hair cut short.*

damn someone or something **with faint praise** *Fig.* to criticize someone or something indirectly by not praising enthusiastically. ☐ *The critic did not say that he disliked the play, but he damned it with faint praise.* ☐ *Mrs. Brown is very proud of her son's achievements, but damns her daughter's with faint praise.*

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damn someone **with** something **1.** *Lit.* to curse someone with words. ☐ *She damned him with curse after curse.* ☐ *Maria damned Joe with the worst curses she could think of.* **2.** *Fig.* to denounce or defeat someone in a particular way. ☐ *She damned him with her insincere words of praise.* ☐ *She damned herself with the evidence she had hoped would save her.*

Damned if you do, damned if you don't. *Prov.* No matter what you do, it will cause trouble. ☐ *If I use this money to pay the rent, I won't have enough left over for food. But if I don't use the money to pay the rent, my landlord will evict me. Damned if I do, damned if I don't.* ☐ *Helen: If I invite Shirley to the party, I'm sure she'll get drunk and make an unpleasant scene. But if I don't invite her, she'll never forgive me. Jane: Damned if you do, damned if you don't, huh?*

damp off [for seedlings] to die from too much water. ☐ *All the new plants damped off, and we had to buy some from the nursery.* ☐ *The little seedlings damped off and withered away.*

damp something **down† 1.** *Lit.* to make something damp. ☐ *Damp the clothes down before you iron them.* ☐ *Please damp down the clothes first.* **2.** *Fig.* to reduce the intensity of a flame, usually by cutting down on the air supply, as with a damper. ☐ *Please damp the woodstove down.* ☐ *Damp down the air supply or you are going to end up with a raging inferno.*

dampen someone's **spirits** Go to someone's **spirits**.

dance at someone's **wedding** to celebrate in honor of someone at someone's wedding. ☐ *I will dance at your wedding—if you invite me, of course.* ☐ *If you think I will dance at your wedding, you had better be nicer to me!*

dance on air *Fig.* to be very happy; to be euphoric enough as if to dance on air. ☐ *I was so happy, I could have danced on air.* ☐ *She was just dancing on air, she was so happy.*

dance out of step (with someone or something**)** Go to **out of step (with** someone or something**)**.

dance out of time (with someone or something**)** Go to **out of step (with** someone or something**)**.

dance to a different tune Go to next.

dance to another tune and **dance to a different tune** *Fig.* to shift quickly to different behavior; to change one's behavior or attitude. ☐ *After being yelled at, Ann danced to another tune.* ☐ *A stern talking-to will make her dance to a different tune.*

dance to something to respond to music or rhythm with dancing. ☐ *I can't dance to that fast beat!* ☐ *That music is horrible. No one can dance to that.*

dance with death *Fig.* to attempt to do something that is very risky. ☐ *The crossing of the border into enemy territory was like dancing with death.* ☐ *You are dancing with death in your effort to cross that narrow ledge.*

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dance with someone to perform social dancing with another person. ☐ *Do you think you would like to dance with Wally?* ☐ *Would you please dance with me?*

dangle from something to hang from something. ☐ *A number of colorful glass balls dangled from the branches of the tree.* ☐ *Some loose threads dangled from the bottom of his jacket.*

dangle something **before** someone and **dangle** something **in front of** someone **1.** *Lit.* to tempt someone by dangling a tempting object in front of them. ☐ *Don't dangle that string of pearls in front of me unless you intend to give them to me!* **2.** *Fig.* to lure someone with something. ☐ *He dangled the keys before Wally, hoping to get him to drive.* ☐ *He dangled the money in front of Eric, hoping to make him change his mind.*

dangle something **from** something to hang something loosely from something else. ☐ *She dangled a few small bells from the bottom of her skirt during the holidays.* ☐ *I dangled a bit of fish from the window so I could see how high the cat would jump.*

dangle something **in front of** someone Go to dangle something before someone.

dare someone **(to** do something**)** to challenge someone to do something. ☐ *Sally dared Jane to race her to the corner.* ☐ *You wouldn't do that, would you? I dare you.*

dark horse *Fig.* someone or something whose abilities, plans, or feelings are little known to others. (From a race horse about which little or nothing is known.) ☐ *It's difficult to predict who will win the prize—there are two or three dark horses in the tournament.* ☐ *Everyone was surprised at the results of the election. The dark horse won.*

the **dark side of** someone or something *Fig.* the negative and often hidden aspect of someone or something. ☐ *I had never seen the dark side of Mary before, and I have to tell you that I was horrified when she lost her temper.*

darken someone's **door** *Fig.* [for an unwelcome person] to come to someone's door seeking entry. (As if the visitor were casting a shadow on the door. Formal, or even jocular.) ☐ *Who is this who has come to darken my door?* ☐ *She pointed to the street and said, "Go and never darken my door again!"*

The **darkest hour is just before the dawn.** and **It's always darkest just before the dawn.** *Prov.* When things are extremely bad, it may signal that they are about to get much better. ☐ *Jill: I feel like giving up. I don't have a job, my boyfriend left me, and they're raising the rent for my apartment. Jane: It's always darkest just before the dawn.*

darn tooting and **darn tootin'** absolutely. ☐ *You're darn tooting I'll be there. I wouldn't miss it for the world.*

dart a glance at someone or something to shoot a quick look at someone or something. ☐ *She darted a glance at him and looked quickly away.* ☐ *He darted a glance at the door and looked even more uncomfortable.*

dart about to move about quickly. ☐ *The little fish were darting about everywhere.* ☐ *People were darting about, to and fro, during the noon rush hour.*

dart across something to run quickly over something. ☐ *A small animal darted across the road in front of the car.* ☐ *I tried to dart across the street, but the traffic was too heavy.*

dart in and out [for something moving] to move quickly between two things, or into a number of things, and move away again. ☐ *On the highway, a small car was darting in and out of the two right lanes of traffic.* ☐ *A small bird darted in and out of the bush, probably going into a nest inside.*

dart out (of something**) (at** someone or something**)** to move quickly out of something toward someone or something. ☐ *The ferret darted out of its burrow at the children.* ☐ *The snake darted out at the frog.* ☐ *The mouse darted out of its hole.*

dash a letter off† Go to next.

dash a note off† and **dash a letter off**† to write a note or letter quickly and send it off. ☐ *I have to dash this letter off, then I will be with you.* ☐ *I'll dash off a note to her.*

dash across something to run quickly across some area. ☐ *John dashed across the busy street and ran in the door.* ☐ *The dog dashed across the yard and confronted the meter reader.*

dash away and **dash off** to run away; to leave in a hurry. ☐ *I must dash away. See you tomorrow.* ☐ *Juan had to dash away to an appointment.* ☐ *Ken dashed off and left me behind to deal with the angry customer.*

dash cold water on something Go to pour cold water on something.

dash off Go to dash away.

dash out (for something**)** [for someone] to leave a place in a hurry to get something. ☐ *Harry dashed out for some cigarettes.* ☐ *Excuse me. I just have to dash out.*

dash over (for something**)** [for someone] to come by quickly for something such as a brief visit. ☐ *I just dashed over for a cup of sugar. Can you spare it?* ☐ *I needed some sugar, so I just dashed over.*

dash someone or something **against** someone or something to throw or fling someone or something at or against someone or something. ☐ *Sam dashed the bottle against the floor, shattering it.* ☐ *Alice dashed the box against Ed, throwing him off balance.*

dash someone's **hopes** *Fig.* to ruin someone's hopes; to put an end to someone's dreams or aspirations. ☐ *Mary dashed my hopes when she said she wouldn't marry me.*

dash something **off**† to make or do something quickly. ☐ *I will dash this off now and try to take more time with the rest of them.* ☐ *I will see if I can dash off a cherry pie before dinner.*

dash something **to pieces** to break something into small pieces. ☐ *She dashed the glass to pieces on the floor—she was so mad.* ☐ *The potter dashed the imperfect pot to pieces.*

date back (to someone or some time**)** to have origins that extend back to the time of someone or something. ☐ *This part of the palace dates back to Catherine the Great.* ☐ *This is old! It really must date back.*

date from something to have an existence that extends from a particular time. ☐ *This building dates from the beginning of the last century.* ☐ *These books date from the 1920s.*

daub something **on(to)** something and **daub** something **on†** to smear or paint something onto something else. ☐ *The painter daubed a bit of yellow onto the canvas.* ☐ *Daub on a bit of yellow here.* ☐ *She daubed the medicine on.*

daub something **with** something to smear or paint something with something sticky, such as paint, grease, makeup, etc. ☐ *The mechanic daubed the part with grease and put it back where it came from.* ☐ *The end of the chair leg was daubed with glue and set into place.*

Davy Jones's locker the bottom of the sea, especially when it is a grave. ☐ *They were going to sail around the world, but ended up in Davy Jones's locker.* ☐ *Most of the gold from that trading ship is in Davy Jones's locker.*

dawdle about to waste time in a place; to waste time talking idly. ☐ *Don't dawdle about. Get moving.* ☐ *Tim has been dawdling about all morning.*

dawdle along to move along slowly and casually. ☐ *The boys dawdled along on their way to school.* ☐ *We were just dawdling along, talking about life. We didn't know we were late.*

dawdle over something to waste time when one should be doing a particular task; to loaf while doing something. ☐ *Don't dawdle over your hamburger. The lunch period ends in two minutes.* ☐ *Don't dawdle over it. Get it done.*

dawdle something **away†** to waste a particular amount of time; to let a period of time slip away, wasted. ☐ *You didn't finish your work because you dawdled most of your time away.* ☐ *You dawdle away too much time daydreaming.*

dawn (up)on someone *Fig.* [for a fact] to become apparent to someone; [for something] to be suddenly realized by someone. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Then it dawned upon me that I was actually going to have the job.* ☐ *On the way home, it dawned on me that I had never returned your call, so when I got home I called immediately.*

day after day every day; daily; all the time. ☐ *He wears the same clothes day after day.* ☐ *She visits her husband in the hospital day after day.*

day and night and **night and day** all the time; around the clock. ☐ *The nurse was at her bedside day and night.* ☐ *The house is guarded night and day.*

day in and day out and **day in, day out** on every day; for each day. ☐ *She watches soap operas day in and day out.* ☐ *They eat nothing but vegetables, day in, day out.*

a **day late and a dollar short** late and ill-prepared. ☐ *Tommy, you seem to show up a day late and a dollar short all the time. You need to get organized.*

*****the **day off** a day free from working. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~; take ~**.) ☐ *The next time I get a day off, we'll go to the zoo.* ☐ *I have the day off. Let's go hiking.*

***day one** the very beginning; the very first day. (*Typically: **from ~; since ~**.) ☐ *You haven't done anything right since day one! You're fired!* ☐ *She was unhappy with her new car from day one.*

a **day person** a person who prefers to be active during the daytime. (Compare this with a **night person**.) ☐ *I am strictly a day person. Have to be in bed early.*

daydream about someone or something to have daytime fantasies about someone or something. ☐ *Poor Alice is always daydreaming about Albert.* ☐ *John is daydreaming about running away to Tahiti.*

daylight robbery *Fig.* the practice of blatantly or grossly overcharging. ☐ *It's daylight robbery to charge that amount of money for a hotel room!* ☐ *The cost of renting a car at that place is daylight robbery.*

days running and **weeks running; months running; years running** days in a series; months in a series; etc. (Follows a number.) ☐ *I had a bad cold for five days running.* ☐ *For two years running, I brought work home from the office every night.*

day-tripper a tourist who makes excursions lasting just one day. ☐ *At about 4:00 P.M. the day-trippers start thinning out.* ☐ *Being a day-tripper is hard on your feet sometimes.*

dead ahead straight ahead; directly ahead. ☐ *Look out! There is a cow in the road dead ahead.* ☐ *The farmer said that the town we were looking for was dead ahead.*

dead and buried 1. *Lit.* dead and interred, and soon to be forgotten. ☐ *Now that Uncle Bill is dead and buried, we can read his will.* **2.** *Fig.* gone forever. ☐ *That kind of old-fashioned thinking is dead and buried.*

dead and gone 1. *Lit.* [of a person] long dead. ☐ *Old Gert's been dead and gone for quite a spell.* ☐ *When I'm dead and gone, I hope folks remember me at my best.* **2.** *Fig.* [of a thing] gone long ago. ☐ *That kind of thinking is dead and gone.* ☐ *The horse-and-buggy days are dead and gone.*

***dead as a dodo** and ***dead as a doornail; deader than a doornail** dead; no longer in existence. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *That silly old idea is dead as a dodo.* ☐ *When I tried to start my car this morning, I discovered that the battery was deader than a doornail.*

dead as a doornail Go to previous.

dead broke completely broke; without any money. ☐ *I'm dead broke—not a nickel to my name.* ☐ *I've been dead broke for a month now.*

a **dead cat on the line** *Rur.* [for something to be] wrong. ☐ *I'm afraid there's a dead cat on the line over at Martha's place. I haven't heard from them for days.* ☐ *Bill has a kind of sixth sense. He can tell a dead cat on the line before anybody knows there's something wrong.*

dead center at the exact center of something. (See also **on dead center**.) ☐ *The arrow hit the target dead center.* ☐ *When you put the flowers on the table, put them dead center.*

dead certain very sure. (*Dead* means *absolutely*.) ☐ *I'm dead certain that horse will win. I bet two hundred on it myself.* ☐ *I didn't believe the rumor at first, but Bill's dead certain that it's true.*

dead drunk very intoxicated; totally inebriated. ☐ *They were both dead drunk. They could only lie there and snore.* ☐ *Marty stumbled off the bar stood dead drunk.*

a **dead duck** *Fig.* someone or something that is certain to die or fail. ☐ *If I fail that test, I'm a dead duck.* ☐ *When*

the outlaw drew his pistol, the sheriff knew he was a dead duck.

dead easy very easy. □ *This whole job is dead easy.* □ *It was so dead easy, Frank did it with one hand.*

dead from the neck up 1. *Fig.* stupid. (With a "dead" head.) □ *She acts like she is dead from the neck up.* **2.** *Fig.* no longer open to new ideas. □ *Everyone on the board of directors is dead from the neck up.*

a **dead giveaway** something that reveals a fact or an intention completely. □ *The car in the driveway was a dead giveaway that someone was at home.*

dead in someone's or an animal's **tracks** *Fig.* exactly where someone or something is at the moment; at this instant. (This does not usually have anything to do with death. The phrase is often used with *stop*.) □ *Her unkind words stopped me dead in my tracks.* □ *When I heard the rattlesnake, I stopped dead in my tracks.*

dead in the water stalled; immobile. (Originally nautical.) □ *This whole company is dead in the water.* □ *The project is out of funds and dead in the water for the time being.*

dead letter 1. a piece of mail that is returned to the post office as both undeliverable and unreturnable. □ *At the end of the year, the post office usually has bushels of dead letters.* □ *Some of the dead letters are opened to see if there is an address inside.* **2.** an issue, law, or matter that is no longer important or that no longer has force or power. □ *His point about the need for education reform is a dead letter. It is being done now.* □ *This point of law is a dead letter since the last Supreme Court ruling on this matter.*

a **dead loss** a total loss. □ *My investment was a dead loss.* □ *This car is a dead loss after the accident.*

dead meat *Fig.* dead; as good as dead. (Usually an exaggeration.) □ *If you don't do exactly as I say, you are dead meat!*

Dead men tell no tales. *Prov.* Dead people will not betray any secrets. □ *The club members liked to hold their secret meetings in a graveyard, since dead men tell no tales.* □ *Gangster: Mugsy is going to tell the police that we robbed the bank. How can we stop him? Henchman: Dead men tell no tales.*

dead on exactly right; on target. □ *That's a good observation, Tiffany. You are dead on.* □ *Your criticism is dead on!*

dead on one's **feet** and **dead on its feet** *Fig.* exhausted; worn out; no longer useful. □ *Ann is so tired. She's really dead on her feet.* □ *He can't teach well anymore. He's dead on his feet.* □ *This inefficient company is dead on its feet.*

*a **(dead) ringer (for** someone**)** *Fig.* very closely similar in appearance to someone else. (*Typically: **be ~; look like ~**.) □ *You are sure a dead ringer for my brother.* □ *Isn't he a ringer for Chuck?*

dead serious absolutely serious; not joking. □ *Tom: You're funning me. Bill: No, I'm dead serious.* □ *Mary has threatened divorce a hundred times, but this time she says she's dead serious.*

dead set against someone or something totally opposed to someone or something. □ *I'm dead set against the new tax proposal.* □ *Everyone is dead set against the mayor.*

dead to the world 1. sound asleep. □ *After all that exercise, he's dead to the world.* □ *He's dead to the world, and I can't rouse him.* **2.** intoxicated. □ *Six beers and he was dead to the world.* □ *By midnight almost everybody at the party was dead to the world.*

dead wrong completely wrong. □ *I'm sorry. I was dead wrong. I didn't have the facts straight.*

deaden something **with** something to dull or anesthetize pain with something. □ *The doctor deadened the area with an injection before she began to stitch.* □ *I will deaden the pain with a local anesthetic.*

deader than a doornail Go to **dead as a dodo**.

deadly dull very dull. □ *The lecture was deadly dull, and I went to sleep.* □ *Her story was really deadly dull. I am sorry I was awake for part of it.*

deaf and dumb unable to hear or speak. (Used without any intended malice, but no longer considered polite. Sometimes euphemized as "hearing and speech impaired.") □ *Fred objected to being called deaf and dumb.* □ *Aunt Clara—she was deaf and dumb, you know—lived to be over 100.*

***deaf as a post** deaf. (*Also: **as ~**.) □ *When my cousin was a teenager, she played her drum set without ear protection, and she was as deaf as a post by the age of twenty-five.* □ *Mark can't hear you even if you shout; he's deaf as a post.*

deal in something to buy and sell something. □ *My uncle is a stockbroker. He deals in stocks and bonds.* □ *My aunt deals in antiques.*

deal someone **in**† Go to **deal** someone **into** something.

deal someone **into** something and **deal** someone **in**† **1.** *Lit.* to pass out cards to someone, making that person a player in a card game. □ *Can you deal me into this hand?* □ *Deal in anyone who wants to play.* □ *Deal me in!* **2.** *Fig.* to permit someone to take part in something. □ *Let's deal him into this project.* □ *Yes, deal in this guy.* □ *Should we deal her in?*

deal someone **out of** something and **deal** someone **out**† **1.** *Lit.* to skip someone when dealing a hand of cards. □ *Please deal me out of the next hand. I have to go make a telephone call.* □ *They dealt out the old lady because she would not pay attention to the game.* **2.** *Fig.* to remove someone from participation in something. □ *They dealt me out at the last minute.* □ *They dealt out Fred, too.*

deal something **out**† to pass something out piece by piece, giving everyone equal shares. □ *The manager dealt the proposals out, giving each person an equal number to read.* □ *I'll deal out some more proposals.*

deal the race card Go to the **the race card**.

deal with someone *Sl.* to kill someone. □ *"Spike, you deal with that cop," said the crime boss.* □ *The agent planned how best to deal with the rebel leader without getting caught.*

deal with someone or something to manage someone or something. □ *This is not a big problem. I think I can deal with it.* □ *I am sure I can deal with Jill.*

dear departed *Euph.* a dead person, as referred to at a funeral. □ *Let's take a moment to meditate on the life of the dear departed.*

a **Dear John letter** a letter a woman writes to her boyfriend telling him that she does not love him anymore. ☐ *Bert got a Dear John letter today from Sally. He was devastated.*

Dear me! an expression of mild dismay or regret. ☐ *Sue: Dear me, is this all there is? Mary: There's more in the kitchen.* ☐ *"Oh, dear me!" fretted John, "I'm late again."*

Death is the great leveler. *Prov.* Death makes everyone equal, because it does not spare anyone, not even the wealthy, famous, or talented. (Also the cliché: **the great leveler,** death.) ☐ *The wealthy tycoon lived as though he were exempt from every law, but death is the great leveler and came to him the same as to everyone else.* ☐ *We hoped that the brilliant pianist would entertain us with her music for many decades, but death, the great leveler, did not spare her.*

death on something **1.** *Fig.* very harmful; very effective in acting against someone or something. ☐ *This road is terribly bumpy. It's death on tires.* ☐ *The sergeant is death on lazy soldiers.* **2.** *Fig.* accurate or deadly at doing something requiring skill or great effort. ☐ *John is death on curve balls. He's our best pitcher.* ☐ *The boxing champ is really death on those fast punches.*

debate on something to hold a long and disciplined discussion on a particular subject. ☐ *We can debate on this all night if you think we will settle anything in the end.* ☐ *Are they still debating on the question?*

debate (with someone**) about** something **1.** to enter into a long and disciplined discussion on a particular subject with someone. ☐ *Our team debated with the other team about the chances for world peace.* ☐ *The candidates debate about taxes tomorrow.* ☐ *We will debate with them about health care.* **2.** *Fig.* to argue with someone about something. ☐ *I do not intend to debate with you about that matter.* ☐ *Tom did not agree to debate about it.*

debit something **against** someone or something to record a charge for something against someone's account or against a particular category of an account. ☐ *I will have to debit this against your account.* ☐ *The clerk debited the charge against you.*

debit something **to** someone or something to make a charge for something to someone or something. ☐ *To whose account can we debit this charge?* ☐ *Let's debit it to Jane.*

debit something **with** something to charge something for something. ☐ *They debited Fred's account with the whole expense.* ☐ *The bank debited my checking account with the cost of the new checks.*

deceive someone **into** something to trick someone into doing something. ☐ *She deceived me into giving her my car keys.* ☐ *You can't deceive me into doing what I don't want to do.*

deceive someone **with** something to cheat someone with something or with deceptive words. ☐ *You cannot deceive me with your promises.* ☐ *You are just deceiving yourself with fancy talk.*

decide against someone or something to rule against someone or something; to make a judgment against someone or something. ☐ *We decided against Tom and chose Larry instead.* ☐ *Jane decided against the supplier.*

decide among someone **and** someone else and **decide among** something **and** something else to choose from three or more people; to choose from three or more things. ☐ *I couldn't decide among all the choices on the menu.* ☐ *I will decide among Fred, Tom, and Alice.*

decide between someone **and** someone else and **decide between** something **and** something else to choose one from two people; to choose one from two things. ☐ *I could not decide between Tom and Wally.* ☐ *We could not decide between those two.*

decide for someone or something to rule in favor of someone or something; to make a judgment for someone or something. ☐ *The jury decided for the plaintiff.* ☐ *The judge decided for me.*

decide in favor of someone or something to determine that someone or something is the winner. ☐ *The judge decided in favor of the defendant.* ☐ *I decided in favor of the red one.*

decide (up)on someone or something to choose someone or something; to make a judgment about some aspect of someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Will you please hurry up and decide upon someone to vote for?* ☐ *I decided on chocolate.*

deck someone or something **out† (in** something**)** and **deck** someone or something **out (with** something**)** to decorate someone or something with something. ☐ *Sally decked all her children out for the holiday party.* ☐ *She decked out her children in Halloween costumes.* ☐ *Tom decked the room out with garlands of flowers.*

declare (oneself**) against** someone or something to state one's opposition to someone or something publicly. ☐ *I must declare myself against the amendment.* ☐ *The politician declared himself against whatever the voters were already against.*

declare (oneself**) for** someone or something to state one's support of someone or something. ☐ *Susan declared herself for Mary's candidacy.* ☐ *I have not yet declared for any particular policy.* ☐ *Todd declared himself for the candidacy of Mary Brown for mayor.*

declare war against someone or something and **declare war on** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to formally announce that one will fight a war with someone or some country. ☐ *A group of countries declared war against the aggressor.* **2.** *Fig.* to announce a serious campaign against a type of person or a serious problem. ☐ *The president declared war against crime and criminals.* ☐ *The pressure group declared war on waste.*

decorate someone **for** something to award someone a medal or ribbon for doing something important or brave. ☐ *The town decorated her for her heroic act.* ☐ *She was decorated for her heroism.*

decorate something **with** something to adorn or ornament something with something. ☐ *I will decorate the cake with roses made of sugar.* ☐ *Can I decorate your car with streamers for the parade?*

dedicate someone or something **to** someone or something **1.** to reserve someone or something for the use of someone or something. ☐ *The manager dedicated new assistants to the exclusive use of the legal department.* ☐ *The committee dedicated a corner in the library to books on agri-*

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culture. **2.** to pledge someone or something to someone, something, a deity, or religious purposes. ☐ *The elders dedicated the building to the glory of God.* ☐ *He dedicated himself to the prosecution of justice.*

deduce something **from** something to infer or conclude something from a set of facts. ☐ *Can I deduce a bit of anger from your remarks?* ☐ *I deduce nothing from everything I have heard today.*

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deduct something **from** something else to subtract an amount from another amount. ☐ *Are you going to deduct this from your income taxes?* ☐ *Mr. Wilson deducted the discount from the bill.*

deed something **(over) to** someone to grant something, such as land, to someone; to transfer legal title to something to someone. ☐ *Grudgingly, he deeded the land over to Walter.* ☐ *He deeded the property to his niece.*

deem it (to be) necessary and **deem that it is necessary** to decide that something is necessary. ☐ *Mary deemed that it was necessary to leave town that night.* ☐ *Lisa deemed it necessary to go home.*

deep-six someone or something *Sl.* to get rid of someone or something; to dispose of someone or something. (Refers originally to burying someone or something six feet deep, the standard depth of a grave.) ☐ *Take this horrible food out and deep-six it.* ☐ *That guy is a pain. Deep-six him so the cops will never find him.*

deface something **with** something to mutilate or spoil the appearance of something with something. ☐ *Someone defaced the wall with spray paint.* ☐ *Please don't deface the facilities.*

default on something to fail to act in some way regarding something, such as failing to make a payment, thereby losing one's right to the thing in question. ☐ *You are not going to default on your loan, are you?* ☐ *She defaulted on her mortgage payments and lost the house.*

defect from something to run away from something; to forsake something. ☐ *Thousands of soldiers defected from the army.* ☐ *Roger would never think of defecting from the armed services.*

defect to something to forsake one group and take up with another. ☐ *Will he defect to the other side?* ☐ *David defected to a small East European country.*

defend someone or something **against** someone or something **1.** to stand against an attack; to provide a defense against attack. ☐ *Don't worry, I will defend you against any muggers.* ☐ *We defended ourselves against the attack.* ☐ *The army defended the town against the enemy soldiers.* **2.** to advocate the cause of someone or something against someone or something else. ☐ *The lawyer defended her against the plaintiff.* ☐ *She defended the company against the suit.*

defend someone **with** something to repel danger from someone with something. ☐ *Here, defend yourself with this club.* ☐ *Mary defended herself with karate.*

defer to someone or something **(on** something**)** to yield to someone or something on some question or point. ☐ *I will defer to Mary on that question.* ☐ *She would not defer to the committee on anything.*

define something **as** something to label something as being something. ☐ *I define that kind of behavior as just plain rude!* ☐ *We have to define that comment as careless and unthinking.*

Definitely not! and **Certainly not!** No, without any doubt at all. (Compare this with **Absolutely not!**) ☐ *Bill: Will you lend me some money? Bob: No way! Definitely not!* ☐ *Bob: Have you ever stolen anything? Fred: Certainly not!*

deflect something **away from** someone or something to divert someone or something away from someone or something; to cause someone or something to veer away from someone or something. ☐ *The press secretary deflected the reporter's questions from the candidate.* ☐ *The emergency deflected the boss's attention away from my mistake.*

defraud someone **out of** something to cheat someone out of something. ☐ *The crooked contractor defrauded the town out of a fortune.* ☐ *The clerk defrauded the employer out of a great deal of money.*

degenerate into something to decay into something; to break down into something. ☐ *The peace rally degenerated into a riot.* ☐ *I was afraid that the party would degenerate into a drinking contest.*

deign to do something to lower oneself to do something. ☐ *She will never deign to join in with us.* ☐ *I expect that he will not deign to have dinner with us.*

delegate someone **to** something to appoint someone to something; to appoint someone to be something. ☐ *I will delegate Jane to be our representative.* ☐ *Donna was delegated to attend the conference.*

delegate something **to** someone to assign a task to someone; to appoint someone to do a specific task. ☐ *I will have to delegate this job to Sam, who knows how to do these things.* ☐ *The job was delegated to Sally.*

delete something **from** something to remove something from something; to cross something out from something. ☐ *Will you please delete this paragraph from the contract?* ☐ *The line was deleted from the sales agreement.*

deliberate about someone or something and **deliberate on** someone or something to think about someone or something; to consider what to do about someone or something. ☐ *How long do you intend to deliberate about Carol?* ☐ *We will deliberate about this matter as long as it takes to do it right.* ☐ *Let's deliberate on this for a while.*

deliberate on someone or something Go to previous.

deliberate over someone or something to discuss and argue about someone or something. ☐ *We will deliberate over this question tomorrow.* ☐ *We have been deliberating over Karen long enough.*

delight in someone or something to take great pleasure in someone or something. ☐ *I delight in your interest in my work.* ☐ *We all delight in James. What a fine boy!*

delight someone **by** something to please someone with something; to please someone by doing something. (See also **delight** someone **with** something.) ☐ *You delighted me by agreeing to join us.* ☐ *I was delighted by your proposal.*

delight someone **with** something to please someone with something, such as a gift. ☐ *We delighted Alice with a gift of money.* ☐ *She was delighted with the gift.*

deliver someone **from** someone or something to save or rescue someone from someone or something. ☐ *The hero*

delivered the children from a fiery death. ☐ *Thank you for delivering me from a very boring meeting by calling me to the telephone.*

deliver someone **of** something to free someone from some burden or problem; to liberate someone from some confinement. ☐ *He was looking for someone to deliver him of his burdensome responsibility.* ☐ *He was delivered of his burden.*

deliver someone or something **to** someone or something to transfer someone or something to someone or something; to yield over someone or something to someone or something. ☐ *When will you deliver the deed to me?* ☐ *I will deliver the deed to you when I have your check.*

deliver something **under pressure** Go to under pressure.

deliver something **up† to** someone to render or yield something to someone. ☐ *Will you please deliver the documents up to Jane?* ☐ *Will you please deliver up the documents to Jane?*

delude someone **into** something to fool someone into thinking something. ☐ *You can't delude me into believing you.* ☐ *Todd deluded himself into believing he was back at home.*

delude someone **with** something to fool or trick someone with something. ☐ *She deluded us with her clever talk.* ☐ *Don't delude yourself with false hopes.*

deluge someone or something **with** something **1.** *Lit.* to flood someone or something with water or something similar. ☐ *The swollen river broke the dam and deluged the town with billions of gallons of water.* **2.** *Fig.* to overwhelm someone or something with something; to "flood" someone or something with something. ☐ *The reporters deluged us with questions.*

delve into something to examine or study something carefully; to enter into the examination or study of something. ☐ *He delved into the solution of the problem facing him.* ☐ *I am just now delving into a study of the Trojan War.*

demand something **from** someone or something and **demand** something **of** someone or something to command that something be received from someone or a group or something; to demand that someone or a group or something do something. ☐ *The muggers demanded money from everyone.* ☐ *The petitioners demanded a response from the board of directors.* ☐ *She demanded too much of her automobile.*

demand something **of** someone or something Go to previous.

demonstrate against someone or something to make a public show against someone or something. ☐ *The citizens demonstrated against the new policies.* ☐ *A number of protestors demonstrated against the mayor.*

demonstrate for someone or something to make a public show in favor of someone or something. ☐ *We will all demonstrate for Walter's candidacy.* ☐ *A number of supporters demonstrated for the mayor.*

demonstrate something **to** someone to show someone how something works. ☐ *Would you please demonstrate this DVD player to me? I may want to buy it.* ☐ *The new products were demonstrated to the board of directors in advance.*

demote someone **from** something **(to** something**)** and **demote** someone **(from** something**) to** something to lower someone's rank from one rank to another. ☐ *The manager demoted Bill from cashier to clerk.* ☐ *The army demoted her from lieutenant to sergeant.*

demur at something to dispute something; to challenge something. ☐ *I fear I must demur at your suggestion that I am aloof and condescending.* ☐ *Alice demurred at the suggestion that she was late.*

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a **den of iniquity** a place filled with criminal activity or wickedness. ☐ *The town was a den of iniquity and vice was everywhere.* ☐ *Police raided the gambling house, calling it a den of iniquity.*

denounce someone **as** something to criticize someone as something; to publicly call someone something bad. ☐ *The mayor denounced her opponent as a crook.* ☐ *Anne was denounced as a cheater.*

denounce someone **for** something to criticize someone publicly for doing something. ☐ *The candidate denounced the governor for raising taxes.* ☐ *Donna denounced the mayor for incompetence.*

dent something **up†** to mar or make depressions in something. ☐ *I don't want to dent my car up. It's still new.* ☐ *He dented up my new bike!*

denude someone or something **of** something to strip something from someone or something. ☐ *The prison guards denuded the new prisoner of his garments.* ☐ *The wind denuded the trees of their leaves.*

deny someone or something **to** someone to prevent someone from having someone or something. ☐ *Would you deny her children to her after all these long months?* ☐ *I would not deny food to a starving man.*

depart for some place to leave for some place. ☐ *When shall we depart for the airport?* ☐ *When do we depart for St. Petersburg?*

depart from some place to leave from some place or something; to set out from some place or something. ☐ *When will you depart from here?* ☐ *We departed from Moscow on time.*

depart this life *Euph.* to die. ☐ *He departed this life on April 20th, 1973.* ☐ *She departed peacefully, in her sleep.*

depend (up)on someone or something to rely upon someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Can I depend on you to do this right?* ☐ *You can depend upon me for help.*

depict someone **as** something to show someone as something; to make someone appear to be something. ☐ *He did report the fire, but it is going too far to depict him as a hero.* ☐ *The artist depicted himself as a much younger man than he really was.*

deplete something **of** something to use up all of a certain thing that something has. ☐ *They will deplete the soil of its nutrients by planting the same crop over and over.*

deport someone **(from** some place**) (to** some other place**)** to expel or exile someone from one place to another, usually back to their prior country of residence. ☐ *The government deported Jane from this country to her homeland.* ☐ *They deported Tom to Brazil from this country.*

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deposit something **in(to)** something to put something into something. □ *Please deposit your chewing gum into the wastebasket.* □ *You should deposit your money in the bank.*

deprive someone **of** something to take something away from someone. □ *If you don't behave, I will deprive you of your driving rights.* □ *They deprived themselves of a good time by pouting.*

deputize someone **as** something to assign someone the temporary power to act in some official capacity. □ *The sheriff deputized Chuck as an aid during the uprising.* □ *Chuck was deputized as an officer of the law.*

derive from something to come from something; to evolve from something. (Usually in reference to a word and its etymological history.) □ *This word derives from an ancient Celtic word.* □ *What does the English word* skirt *derive from?*

derive something **from** someone or something to draw or abstract something from someone or something. □ *She derives a lot of spiritual support from her religion.* □ *She derives her patience from her mother.*

derive something **from** something to show how something is descended from something else. □ *Is it possible to derive this word from Greek?* □ *Is this word derived from Latin?*

descend from someone or some group [for a living creature] to come from a particular set of ancestors. □ *I descend from a large family of Dutch traders.* □ *Wally is descended from Daniel Boone.*

descend from something to move down from something. □ *The bird descended from the top of the tree to a lower branch.* □ *Take care when you descend from the ladder.*

descend into something to go down into something. □ *The butler descended into the cellar for another bottle of wine.* □ *Fred descended into the canyon on an organized tour.*

descend to something **1.** *Lit.* to go down to something. □ *I must descend to the lower level to greet the guests.* □ *Gerald descended to the front door to see who was there.* **2.** *Fig.* to condescend to do something; to stoop to doing something; to lower oneself to do something bad. □ *I refuse to descend to the performance of such menial duties.* □ *I will not descend to a life of crime.*

descend (up)on someone or something **1.** *Lit.* [for something] to come down or fall upon someone or something. □ *Flakes of fluffy snow descended upon the gentle slopes.* **2.** *Fig.* [for people] to arrive or come to someone or something in great numbers. □ *The petitioners descended upon the mayor's office in droves.*

describe someone or something **as** something to describe or portray a person or a thing as something or as being in some particular state. □ *Would you describe her as a woman of average height?* □ *We described the building as a collection of contemporary architectural clichés.*

describe someone or something **to** someone to characterize or portray a particular person or thing to someone. □ *Will you describe her to me, please?* □ *Please describe yourself to me so I will know you.*

desensitize someone **to** something to make someone less sensitive to something. □ *The doctor wanted to desensitize the allergic child to pollen.* □ *I took injections to desensitize me to house dust.*

desert a sinking ship and **leave a sinking ship** *Fig.* to leave a place, a person, or a situation when things become difficult or unpleasant. (Rats are said to be the first to leave a ship that is sinking.) □ *I hate to be the one to desert a sinking ship, but I can't work for a company that continues to lose money.* □ *There goes Tom. Wouldn't you know he'd leave a sinking ship rather than stay around and try to help?*

Desert and reward seldom keep company. *Prov.* If you deserve a reward, you are not necessarily going to get it. □ *Jill: I worked so hard on that project, and Fred is taking all the credit for it. Jane: You know how it goes; desert and reward seldom keep company.*

desert someone or something **for** someone or something else to leave someone for someone else; to leave something or some place for some other thing or place. □ *She deserted her husband for another man.* □ *Many retirees have deserted northern states for the warmer climates of the South.*

desert someone or something **to** someone or something to abandon someone or something to someone or something; to let someone or something have someone or something. □ *Who deserted this child to her horrible fate?* □ *Sam deserted his land to the horde of grubby prospectors.*

deserve better from someone or something to merit better treatment from someone. □ *We deserve better from someone who is supposed to be our friend.* □ *I deserve better from Bill.*

deserve credit for something [for someone] to be owed recognition for doing something. □ *He certainly deserves credit for the work he did on the project.*

design something **for** someone to conceive of something for someone; to draw up plans of something for someone. □ *Ann designed a new kitchen for us.* □ *Would you design a book cover for me?*

design something **for** something to conceive of something that is to be part of something else; to draw up plans for something that is to be part of something else. □ *The engineers designed a cure for the rattling problem.* □ *Bob, the computer programmer, designed a fix for the bug in the program.* □ *She designed a system of shelving for the library.*

designate someone or something **as** something to choose or name someone or something as something. □ *Alice will designate Andrew as our representative.* □ *She designated herself as the head of the committee.*

Desires are nourished by delays. *Prov.* The longer you have to wait for something you want, the more eager you will be to get it. □ *The longer I had to postpone my trip to San Francisco, the more eagerly I wanted to go. Desires are nourished by delays.*

desist from something to stop doing something. □ *You must desist from further attempts to contact your wife.* □ *I wish you would desist from calling me Willie.*

despair of something to give up all hope of something. □ *Do not despair of his returning; I think we will see him again.* □ *I despair of ever seeing her again.*

Desperate diseases must have desperate remedies. *Prov.* If you have a seemingly insurmountable problem, you must do things you ordinarily would not do in

order to solve it. ☐ *Fred: All my employees have been surly and morose for months. How can I improve their morale? Alan: Why not give everyone a raise? Fred: That's a pretty extreme suggestion. Alan: Yes, but desperate diseases must have desperate remedies.*

despise someone **for** something to hate someone for something or for doing something. ☐ *I just despise him for running away!* ☐ *She despised herself for her dishonest actions.*

despoil something **of** something to make something, such as a town, tomb, or building, lose value by stealing from it; to rob something of something. ☐ *The vandals despoiled the castle of much of its furnishings.* ☐ *The land was despoiled of its fertility by overplanting.*

destine someone **for** something to determine that someone should receive or achieve something in the future. ☐ *Her many talents destined her for a distinguished career.* ☐ *Larry's intelligence destined him for big things.*

destined for something predetermined to achieve or become something. ☐ *I know I am destined for a job that is better than this.* ☐ *We are destined for death in the long run.*

detach someone or something **from** someone or something to separate or disconnect someone or something from someone or something. ☐ *The high command detached Wallace from his platoon.* ☐ *The technician detached the sensors from Harry's chest.*

detail someone **for** something to choose someone to do a particular task. (Originally military.) ☐ *Sam detailed Private Bailey for guard duty.* ☐ *Donna was detailed for some extra work.*

detail someone **to** someone or something to assign someone to someone or a group. (Military.) ☐ *I will detail Private Bailey to that job.* ☐ *The general detailed a lieutenant to the platoon that was going to the front.*

detect something **in** something to recognize or identify something in something. ☐ *Can you detect the anger in her voice?* ☐ *I detect a bit of sarcasm in your comments.*

deter someone or something **from** something to prevent or discourage someone or a group from doing something. ☐ *We can't seem to deter them from leaving.* ☐ *They were not deterred from their foolish ways.*

determine the root of the problem Go to the root of the problem.

detract from someone or something to lessen or diminish someone or something. ☐ *The large pieces of furniture detracted from the lovely design in the carpet.* ☐ *Alice's quiet demeanor did not detract from her grace and beauty.*

develop from someone or something **(into** someone or something**)** and **develop (from** someone or something**) into** someone or something to grow or evolve out of someone or something into someone or something else. ☐ *Her interest in music developed from a childlike curiosity to a full-fledged professional career.* ☐ *The flower developed from a little knot of a bulb.*

deviate from something to wander away from something, such as a path, road, etc.; to vary from the normal procedure. ☐ *Please do not deviate from the path. You will crush the wildflowers.* ☐ *I will not deviate one inch from the route you have prescribed.* ☐ *They did not deviate from her instructions.*

***the devil** *Fig.* a severe scolding. (*Typically: **get ~; catch ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Bill is always getting the devil about something.* ☐ *I'm late. If I don't get home soon, I'll catch the devil!*

The **devil can cite Scripture for his own purpose.** Go to next.

The **devil can quote Scripture for his own purpose.** and The **devil can cite Scripture for his own purpose.** *Prov.* Evil people sometimes try to win the confidence of good people by quoting persuasive passages of Scripture.; Just because someone can quote Scripture to support his or her argument does not mean that the argument is virtuous. (*Scripture* usually refers to the Bible, but it can refer to other religious writings.) ☐ *Sadie: Dad, you really ought to give me permission to go out with Nathan. He's such a polite boy, and he can even quote the Bible. Father: The devil can quote Scripture for his own purpose.*

The **devil finds work for idle hands to do.** *Prov.* If you do not have useful work to do, you will be tempted to do frivolous or harmful things to get rid of your boredom. ☐ *Knowing that the devil finds work for idle hands to do, Elizabeth always made sure that her children had plenty of chores to keep them occupied.*

The **devil is not so black as he is painted.** *Prov.* No one is as bad as people say he is. (Implies that people are saying too many bad things about someone.) ☐ *I can't believe that actress is as coldhearted as the gossip columns say she is. The devil is not so black as he is painted.*

The **devil looks after his own.** *Prov.* Evil people are often prosperous or well taken care of. (Implies that they must be getting their prosperity from the devil, since they are not earning it by being good and deserving.) ☐ *Jane: I don't understand why the corner store is still in business. They cheat everybody! Alan: Well, the devil looks after his own.*

a **devil of a job** and the **devil's own job** the most difficult task. ☐ *We had a devil of a job fixing the car.* ☐ *It was the devil's own job finding a hotel with vacancies.*

a **devil of a time** and the **devil's own time** a very difficult time. ☐ *I had a devil of a time with my taxes.* ☐ *This cold has been giving me a devil of a time.* ☐ *Fixing the car seemed easy, but I had the devil's own time doing it.*

The **devil's children have the devil's luck.** *Prov.* Evil people often seem to have good luck. ☐ *The police thought they had trapped the murderer, but he escaped. The devil's children have the devil's luck.*

the **devil's own job** Go to a devil of a job.

the **devil's own time** Go to a devil of a time.

devil someone or an animal **for** something *Fig.* to bother or harass someone or an animal for something. ☐ *The child kept deviling her mother for an ice-cream cone.* ☐ *The kittens continued to devil the mother cat for their dinner.*

Devil take the hindmost. Go to Every man for himself (and the devil take the hindmost).

devil-may-care attitude and **devil-may-care manner** a very casual attitude; a worry-free or carefree attitude. ☐ *You must get rid of your devil-may-care attitude if you want to succeed.* ☐ *She acts so thoughtless—with her devil-may-care manner.*

D

devil-may-care manner Go to previous.

devolve (up)on someone or something [for something, such as a task] to be passed on to someone or a group. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *This job, I am afraid, devolves upon you and you alone.* ☐ *The task of repairing the damage devolved on Diane.*

devote oneself **to** someone or something to dedicate or give oneself over to someone or something. ☐ *Do you agree to devote yourself to this task?* ☐ *She devoted herself to raising her children.*

devote someone or something **to** someone or something to dedicate someone or something to the use or benefit of someone or something. ☐ *I will devote a few of my people to your project.* ☐ *Sarah devoted all of her time to Roger.*

dial the wrong number Go to the wrong number.

dialogue with someone to talk with someone. ☐ *I look forward to dialoguing with you tomorrow.* ☐ *The supervisor sets aside time to dialogue with each and every person in the department once a week.*

a **diamond in the rough** *Fig.* a person who has good qualities despite a rough exterior; a person with great potential. ☐ *Sam looks a little scruffy, but he's a diamond in the rough.* ☐ *He's a diamond in the rough—a little hard to take at times, but very smart and helpful.*

diarrhea of the jawbone Go to next.

diarrhea of the mouth and **diarrhea of the jawbone** *Fig.* constant talking; a "disorder" involving constant talking. ☐ *Wow, does he ever have diarrhea of the mouth!* ☐ *You're getting diarrhea of the jawbone again.*

dibs on something a claim on something. (See also have dibs on something; put one's dibs on something.) ☐ *I've got dibs on the yellow one!* ☐ *Dibs on the front seat!*

dicker with someone **(for** something**)** and **dicker with** someone **(over** something**)** to bargain with someone for something; to haggle with someone for something. ☐ *I don't want to stand here dickering with you for a cheap trinket.* ☐ *I don't want to waste time dickering with them over a few dollars.*

dictate (something**) to** someone **1.** to speak out words to someone who writes them down; to speak words into a recording device to be written down later by someone. ☐ *Walter dictated a letter to his secretary.* ☐ *Please come in so I can dictate to you.* **2.** to lay out or spell out the exact terms of something to someone; to act as a dictator. ☐ *You can't dictate the rules to us.* ☐ *Please don't dictate to me.*

did everything he could 'cept eat us *Rur.* acted very hostilely. ☐ *When it came time to pass sentence on the criminal, the judge did everything he could 'cept eat him.*

did you hear? Go to have you heard?

diddle someone **out of** something to cheat someone into giving up something. ☐ *The boys diddled the old man out of a few bucks.* ☐ *He was diddled out of his last dime.*

diddle something **out of** someone *Sl.* to get something from someone by deception. ☐ *We diddled about forty bucks out of the old lady who runs the candy shop.* ☐ *They diddled Larry's last dime out of him.*

diddle with something to play with something; to toy with something. ☐ *Here, don't diddle with that watch.* ☐ *Stop diddling with your nose, Jimmy!*

didn't care a whit and **don't care a whit** didn't care at all. ☐ *Sally thought Joe liked her, but he didn't care a whit about her.* ☐ *I don't care a whit what you do with my old clothes.*

didn't care too hard *Rur.* didn't mind. ☐ *Dad said he didn't care too hard if I took the dog out with me.* ☐ *If you don't care too hard, I'll shut this window.*

didn't exchange more than three words with someone to say hardly anything to someone. (The number may vary.) ☐ *I know Tom was there, but I am sure that I didn't exchange more than three words with him before he left.* ☐ *We hardly exchanged more than two words the whole evening.* ☐ *Sally and Liz didn't have enough time to exchange more than five words.*

didn't invent gunpowder *Rur.* did not do anything terribly important. ☐ *He may be the class president, but he didn't invent gunpowder.* ☐ *What's all this fuss about a movie star? She didn't invent gunpowder!*

die a natural death 1. *Lit.* [for someone] to die by disease or old age rather than by violence or foul play. ☐ *I hope to live to 100 and die a natural death.* ☐ *The police say she didn't die a natural death, and they are investigating.* **2.** *Fig.* [for something] to fade away or die down. ☐ *I expect that all this excitement about the scandal will die a natural death.* ☐ *Most fads die a natural death.*

die away *Fig.* to fade away. ☐ *The sound of the waterfall finally died away.* ☐ *When the applause died away, the tenor sang an encore.*

die back [for vegetation] to die back to the stems or roots. ☐ *The hedge died back in the winter but regenerated leaves in the spring.* ☐ *This kind of grass dies back every year.*

die behind the wheel to die in an automobile accident in a car that one is driving. ☐ *Poor Fred died behind the wheel in a horrible collision.*

die by one's **own hand** *Euph.* to commit suicide. ☐ *Jane: I just heard that Bill died. I didn't know he was sick. Dan: He wasn't sick. He died by his own hand.* ☐ *She died at the age of fifty, by her own hand.*

die by something to perish by a particular cause or device. (Often refers to execution as a death sentence.) ☐ *He died by electrocution.* ☐ *She was condemned to die by hanging.*

die down to fade to almost nothing; to decrease gradually. ☐ *The fire died down and went out.* ☐ *As the applause died down, a child came on stage with an armload of roses for the singer.*

die for someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to perish for the benefit or glory of someone or something. ☐ *He said he was willing to die for his country.* ☐ *She would die for her child if necessary.* **2.** *Fig.* to experience great physical or emotional desire for someone or something. ☐ *He was just dying for Jane, but she would have nothing to do with him.* ☐ *Freddie was dying for a glass of water—he was so thirsty.*

die from curiosity Go to die of curiosity.

die from something Go to die of something.

die in one's **boots** and **die with** one's **boots on** *Fig.* to go down fighting; to die in some fashion other than in bed; to die fighting. (Popularized by western movies. Heroes and villains of these movies said they preferred death in

a gunfight to showing cowardice or giving up.) ☐ *I won't let him get me. I'll die in my boots.*

die in something to perish in a particular calamity or accident. ☐ *They both died in an automobile accident.* ☐ *Wally did not want to die in the war.*

The **die is cast.** *Prov.* A process is past the point of no return. (The *die* is one of a pair of dice. The *cast* means thrown. This phrase [in Latin] was said by Julius Caesar when he crossed the Rubicon with his legions, starting a civil war.) ☐ *After that speech favoring reform of the education system, the die is cast. This is now a campaign issue.* ☐ *The die is cast. There is no turning back on this point.*

die laughing 1. *Lit.* to meet one's death laughing—in good spirits, revenge, or irony. ☐ *Sally is such an optimist that she'll probably die laughing.* ☐ *Bob tried to poison his rich aunt, who then died laughing because she had taken Bob out of her will.* **2.** *Fig.* to laugh very long and hard. ☐ *The joke was so funny that I almost died laughing.* ☐ *The play was meant to be funny, but the audience didn't exactly die laughing.*

die of a broken heart *Fig.* to die of emotional distress. ☐ *I was not surprised to hear of her death. They say she died of a broken heart.* ☐ *In the movie, the heroine appeared to die of a broken heart, but the audience knew she was poisoned.*

die of boredom *Fig.* to be very bored. ☐ *No one has ever really died of boredom.* ☐ *We sat there and listened politely, even though we almost died of boredom.*

die of curiosity and **die from curiosity** *Fig.* to experience a strongly felt need to know about something. ☐ *I was just dying of curiosity!* ☐ *I almost died from curiosity to finish the book and see how the mystery was solved.*

die of something and **die from** something to perish from an injury or a particular disease. ☐ *The doctors did all they could, but he finally died of cancer.* ☐ *What did it die from?*

die of throat trouble *Sl.* to be hanged. (Old.) ☐ *He died of throat trouble after the posse caught up with him.* ☐ *The cattle rustler died of throat trouble.*

die off [for a living thing] to perish one by one until there are no more. ☐ *Most of the larger lizards died off eons ago.* ☐ *It would be really bad if all the owls died off.* ☐ *The cucumber blossoms all died off.*

die on someone **1.** *Lit.* [for a patient] to die under the care of someone. ☐ *Get that medicine over here fast, or this guy's gonna die on me.* ☐ *Come on, mister, don't die on me!* **2.** *Fig.* [for something] to quit running for someone. ☐ *My car died on me, and I couldn't get it started.* ☐ *My CD player died on me, and I had to listen to the radio.*

die on the vine Go to wither on the vine.

die out 1. *Lit.* [for a species or family] to perish totally because of the failure to produce offspring. ☐ *I am the last one in the family, so I guess our line will die out with me.* ☐ *The owls might die out if you ruin their nesting area.* **2.** *Fig.* [for an idea, practice, style, etc.] to fade away through time. ☐ *That way of doing things died out a long time ago.* ☐ *It died out like the horse and buggy.*

die with one's **boots on** Go to die in one's boots.

differ from something [for something] to be different from something else. ☐ *No, this one differs from the one you saw because it has a bigger handle.* ☐ *How does this one differ from that one?*

differ in something [for people or things] to be different in a specific way or in specific ways. ☐ *They differ only in the color of their eyes and the size of their shoes.* ☐ *They differ in size and shape.*

differ (with someone**) about** something and **differ (with** someone**) on** something **1.** [for someone] to disagree with someone about something. ☐ *I must differ with you about that.* ☐ *We differ about that.* ☐ *I don't differ with you on that point.* **2.** [for someone] to argue with someone about something. ☐ *Tom was differing with Terry rather loudly about which one of them was going to carry the flag.* ☐ *Let's stop differing with each other on these simple things!*

***different as night and day** *Cliché* completely different. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Although Bobby and Billy are twins, they are as different as night and day.* ☐ *Birds and bats appear to be similar, but they are different as night and day.*

Different strokes for different folks. *Prov.* Different people like different things.; Different people live in different ways. ☐ *My neighbor spends all his free time working in his garden. I would never want to do that, but different strokes for different folks.*

differentiate between someone or something **and** someone or something else **1.** to recognize the difference between people or things in any combination. (Usually refers to two entities.) ☐ *In your painting, I cannot differentiate between the costume of the figure in front and the flowers in the background.* ☐ *Can't you differentiate between Billy and his brother?* ☐ *I can't differentiate between a donkey and a burro.* **2.** to establish or create the difference between people or things. ☐ *Why don't you paint in some highlights to differentiate between the figure in the foreground and the flowers in the background?*

differentiate someone or something **from** someone or something **else 1.** to recognize the difference between people and things; to tell the difference between people and things. ☐ *How do you differentiate this one from that one?* ☐ *Can you differentiate Bill from Bob?* **2.** to make people and things different. ☐ *I will differentiate this one from that one by painting this one red.* ☐ *The twins' mother used different-colored clothing to differentiate Bill from Bob.*

The **difficult is done at once; the impossible takes a little longer.** *Prov.* Tasks that are only difficult are done immediately, harder tasks take longer. (Describes a very competent group or person.) ☐ *The secretary in our office is extremely capable. She has a little sign on her desk that says, "The difficult is done at once; the impossible takes a little longer." In her case, it's not a joke.*

difficult times Go to bad times.

diffuse something **through** something else to distribute or scatter something through something else. ☐ *The chemical process diffused the purple color through the liquid.* ☐ *Let us try to diffuse the medication through the bloodstream as rapidly as possible.*

diffuse through something to spread or scatter through something. ☐ *The smell diffused through the office through the ventilating system.* ☐ *The dye diffused through the water rapidly.*

dig at someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to poke or jab at someone or something. ☐ *Don't dig at me all the time. My side is getting sore where you jabbed me.* ☐ *Stop digging at the wall! Look at the hole you've made!* **2.** *Fig.* to make a cutting remark about someone or something. ☐ *She is always digging at her husband's laziness.* ☐ *Fred was digging at the company he works for.*

D

dig deep Go to next.

dig down and **dig deep 1.** *Lit.* to excavate deeply. ☐ *They are really having to dig deep to reach bedrock.* ☐ *We are not to the buried cable yet. We will have to dig down some more.* **2.** *Fig.* to be generous; to dig deep into one's pockets and come up with as much money as possible to donate to something. (As if digging into one's pocket.) ☐ *Please dig down. We need every penny you can spare.* ☐ *Dig down deep. Give all you can.*

dig for something **1.** *Lit.* to excavate to find something that is buried. ☐ *They are digging along the river bank for a special kind of clay.* ☐ *I want to dig for gold in Alaska.* **2.** *Fig.* to go to great pains to uncover information of some kind. ☐ *The police were digging for some important information while they questioned Mike "Fingers" Moran.* ☐ *There is no point in digging further for the name of the inventor. I have it right here.*

dig in(to something**) 1.** *Lit.* to use a shovel to penetrate a mass of something. ☐ *He dug into the soft soil and made a hole for the roots of the bush.* ☐ *He grabbed a shovel and dug in where he thought the tree ought to go.* **2.** *Fig.* to begin to process something; to go to work on something. ☐ *I have to dig into all these applications today and process at least half of them.* ☐ *Jed got out the stack of unanswered mail and dug in.* **3.** *Fig.* to begin to eat food. ☐ *We dug into the huge pile of fried chicken.* ☐ *I stuck the corner of my napkin in my collar and dug in.*

dig one's **heels in**† *Fig.* to refuse to alter one's course of action or opinions; to be obstinate or determined. ☐ *The student dug her heels in and refused to obey the instructions.* ☐ *I'm digging in my heels. I'm not going back.*

dig one's **own grave** *Fig.* to be responsible for one's own downfall or ruin. ☐ *If you try to cheat the bank, you will be digging your own grave.* ☐ *Those politicians have dug their own grave with their new tax bill. They won't be reelected.*

dig out (of something**)** to channel or excavate one's way out of something. ☐ *The miner had to dig out of the cave-in.* ☐ *They were too exhausted to dig out.*

dig some dirt up† **(on** someone**)** *Fig.* to find out something bad about someone. ☐ *If you don't stop trying to dig some dirt up on me, I'll get a lawyer and sue you.* ☐ *The citizens' group dug up some dirt on the mayor and used it against her at election time.*

dig someone or something **in** something to poke someone or something in something, such as the ribs, the side, the cheek, etc. ☐ *He dug Wally in the ribs as he finished telling the joke.* ☐ *Jed dug the cow in its side with a stick, trying to make it move into the barn.*

dig someone or something **out of** something and **dig** someone or something **out**† to excavate in order to get someone or something out of something; to dig about in order to get someone or something out of something. ☐ *She dug out the roots of the tree.* ☐ *The dog dug itself out of the rubble of the fallen building.*

dig someone or something **up**† *Fig.* to go to great effort to find someone or something. (There is an implication that the thing or person dug up is not the most desirable, but is all that could be found.) ☐ *Mary dug a date up for the dance next Friday.* ☐ *I dug up a recipe for roast pork with pineapple.* ☐ *I dug up a carpenter who doesn't charge very much.*

dig something **into** something and **dig** something **in**† to stab or jab something into something. ☐ *Dig your fork into that heavenly cake!* ☐ *He dug in his fork.*

dig something **out**† *Fig.* to work hard to locate something and bring it forth. ☐ *They dug the contract out of the file cabinet.* ☐ *I dug out an old dress and wore it to the Fifties party.*

Dig up! *Sl.* Listen carefully! ☐ *John: All right, you guys! Dig up! You're going to hear this one time and one time only!* ☐ *Bill: Dig up! I'm only going to say this once. Bob: What was that? Bill: I said listen!*

dig up one's **tomahawk** *Rur.* to get angry. (A jocular reversal of *bury the tomahawk*. Fixed order.) ☐ *When Joe saw the mess we made, he dug up his tomahawk and went looking for us.*

digress from something [for a speaker or writer] to stray from the subject. ☐ *I am going to digress from my prepared text.* ☐ *You will pardon me if I digress from my point a little.*

dilate on something *Fig.* to speak or write in great detail on some subject. ☐ *I am sure you do not wish me to dilate further on this matter.* ☐ *If you do not see my point, I would be pleased to dilate on this matter further.*

Diligence is the mother of good luck. *Prov.* If you work carefully and constantly, you will be far more likely to be successful, as if luck had come your way. ☐ *Mimi: I'll never get work as an actress; I always have such bad luck at auditions. Jane: Keep working at it. Diligence is the mother of good luck.*

dilly-dally (around) with someone or something to waste time frivolously with someone or something. ☐ *Stop dilly-dallying around with your friends.* ☐ *He is always dilly-dallying around with his work.*

dim down [for the lights] to go dim. ☐ *The lights dimmed down for a few seconds.* ☐ *Open the stage curtain when the house lights dim down.*

dim out [for a light] to grow dim and go out altogether. ☐ *The lights dimmed out twice during the storm.* ☐ *I was afraid that the lights would dim out completely.*

dim something **down**† to make lights dim; to use a dimmer to make the lights dimmer. ☐ *Why don't you dim the lights down and put on some music?* ☐ *Let me dim down the lights and put on some music.*

dim something **up**† to use a dimmer to make the lights brighter. (Theatrical. A dimmer is a rheostat, variable transformer, or something similar. The expression, a seeming contradiction, is the opposite of **dim** something **down**.) ☐ *As the curtain rose, the electrician dimmed the lights up on a beautiful scene.* ☐ *You dimmed up the lights too fast.*

a **dime a dozen** *Fig.* abundant; cheap and common. ☐ *People who can write good books are not a dime a dozen.* ☐ *Romantic movies are a dime a dozen.*

din something **into** someone and **din** something **in**† to repeat something over and over to someone. (As if one could "hammer" words into someone.) ☐ *The teacher dinned it into her constantly, but it did no good.* ☐ *He dinned in the same message over and over.*

dine at some place to eat at a place. ☐ *We really like to dine at the small cafe on the corner.* ☐ *I hope we can dine at a fine restaurant for our anniversary.*

dine in to eat at home rather than at a restaurant. ☐ *I think we will dine in tonight.* ☐ *I am tired of dining in. Let's go out.*

dine off something to make a meal of something; to make many meals of something. ☐ *Do you think we can dine off the leg of lamb for more than one meal?* ☐ *I hope we dine off the turkey only one more time.*

dine on something to eat something. ☐ *We are dining on roast beef tonight.* ☐ *What will we be dining on tonight?*

dine out Go to eat (a meal) out.

dinged out *Sl.* intoxicated. ☐ *Gary is dinged out and can't drive.*

dink someone **off**† *Sl.* to make someone angry. ☐ *Whatever you do, don't dink her off!* ☐ *Why did you have to start out your speech by dinking off the entire audience?*

Dinner is served. It is time to eat dinner. Please come to the table. (As if announced by a butler; often jocular.) ☐ *Sue: Dinner is served. Mary (aside): Aren't we fancy tonight?* ☐ *"Dinner is served," said Bob, rather formally for a barbecue.*

dip into one's **savings** *Fig.* to take out part of the money one has been saving. (See also dip in(to something).) ☐ *I had to dip into my savings in order to pay for my vacation.* ☐ *I went to the bank and dipped into savings. There wasn't much left.*

dip in(to something**) 1.** to reach into a liquid. ☐ *I dipped into the dishwater, looking for the missing spoon.* ☐ *I dipped in and there it was.* **2.** to reach into a substance, usually to remove some of the substance. ☐ *I dipped into the sour cream with a potato chip and brought out an enormous glob.* ☐ *He grabbed the jar of peanut butter and dipped in.* **3.** [for something] to sink or lower into a liquid. ☐ *The oars dipped into the water and came out again.* ☐ *The lower branches sagged down to the water and dipped in.*

dip something **in(to)** something and **dip** something **in**† to put something into a substance in order to take some of it. ☐ *Tom dipped some of the bread into the cheese sauce.* ☐ *Dip in the bread again and get some more cheese on it.*

dip to something to decline to a lower level quickly or briefly. ☐ *The temperature dipped into the lower twenties overnight.* ☐ *The stock market dipped to a very low level during the day Friday.*

direct someone's **attention to** someone or something to focus someone's regard or concern on someone or something; to cause someone to notice someone or something. ☐ *May I direct your attention to the young man in the purple costume?* ☐ *The announcer directed our attention to the magician who was coming on stage.*

direct something **against** someone or something to aim a critical remark or a weapon at someone or something. (Very close to direct something at someone or something.) ☐ *We directed the guns against the occupied village.* ☐ *Ted said he had directed his remark against Judy.*

direct something **at** someone or something to aim something at someone or something. (Very close to direct something against someone or something.) ☐ *Are you directing your remarks at me?* ☐ *Please direct the hose at the bushes.*

direct something **to** someone to address, designate, or send something to someone. ☐ *Shall I direct the inquiries to you?* ☐ *Please direct all the mail to the secretary when it is delivered.*

direct something **to(ward)** someone or something to send, throw, push, or aim something at someone or something. ☐ *Tom directed the ball toward Harry.* ☐ *Should I direct this inquiry to Alice?*

dirt cheap extremely cheap. ☐ *Buy some more of those plums. They're dirt cheap.* ☐ *In Italy, the peaches are dirt cheap.*

dirty crack a rude remark. ☐ *Who made that dirty crack?* ☐ *Another dirty crack like that and I'll leave.*

dirty deal an unfair deal. ☐ *That was a dirty deal. I feel cheated.* ☐ *I got a dirty deal at that shop, and I won't go back.*

dirty dog a low and sneaky person. ☐ *That dirty dog tried to cheat in the card game!*

*a **dirty look** *Fig.* an angry face or a frown. (*Typically: **get ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Anne gave me a dirty look.* ☐ *I got a dirty look from the teacher when I cracked a joke in class.*

dirty old man a lecherous old man. (Usually jocular.) ☐ *Jimmy, what you call flirting will make some girls call you a dirty old man!* ☐ *What a terrible joke. You are a dirty old man!*

dirty one's **hands** Go to get one's hands dirty.

dirty something **up**† *Rur.* to get something dirty. ☐ *Those pants are brand-new! Don't dirty them up!* ☐ *Don't dirty up your brand-new pants!*

a **dirty word 1.** a swearword; an obscene or blasphemous word; a four-letter word. ☐ *You are not allowed to use dirty words in your school essays.* ☐ *My aunt is offended by the use of dirty words.* **2.** something that is disliked or disapproved of. ☐ *Since Tom broke off his engagement, his name is a dirty word in the village.* ☐ Socialism *is a dirty word in that house.*

dirty work 1. *Fig.* unpleasant or uninteresting work. ☐ *My boss does all the traveling. I get all the dirty work to do.* ☐ *She's tired of doing all the dirty work at the office.* **2.** *Fig.* dishonest or underhanded actions; treachery. ☐ *She knew there was some dirty work going on when she saw her opponents whispering together.* ☐ *The company seems respectable enough, but there's a lot of dirty work that goes on.*

disabuse someone **of** something to rid someone of an incorrect idea. ☐ *Please allow me to disabuse you of that assumption.* ☐ *Please disabuse yourself of the notion that you are perfect.*

D

disagree with someone [for food or drink] to upset someone's stomach. ☐ *Milk always disagrees with me.* ☐ *Onions disagree with my husband, so he never eats them.*

disagree (with someone**) (about** someone or something**)** and **disagree (with** someone**) (on** someone or something**)** to hold views about someone or something that are opposed to someone else's views. ☐ *I take it you disagree with me about Tom.* ☐ *Don't disagree about Tom with me.* ☐ *I disagree about this with almost everyone.* ☐ *I disagree with you.*

D

disappear from something to vanish from something or some place, especially from *sight*, *view*, or *the face of the earth*; to have been taken away from something. ☐ *Jack disappeared all of a sudden last week, as if from the face of the earth.* ☐ *The car pulled away and disappeared from sight down the road.*

disappoint someone **with** someone or something to displease someone with someone or something. ☐ *I hope I haven't disappointed you with the modest size of the donation.* ☐ *I disappointed myself with my performance.*

disappointed at someone or something and **disappointed in** someone or something becoming sad because of someone or something. ☐ *I am really disappointed at what you did.* ☐ *I am very disappointed in you. That was a terrible thing to do.* ☐ *They were disappointed in the outcome.*

disappointed in someone or something Go to previous.

disapprove of someone or something to object to someone or something. ☐ *I disapprove of her choice for maid of honor.* ☐ *Do you disapprove of me?*

a **disaster of epic proportions** *Cliché* a very large disaster. (Often jocular.) ☐ *The earthquake was responsible for a disaster of epic proportions.* ☐ *Your late arrival caused a disaster of epic proportions.*

disbar someone **from** something to take the right to practice law away from a lawyer. ☐ *The state board disbarred Todd from practicing law in his own state.* ☐ *Sally was also disbarred from practicing law.*

discern between someone or something **and** someone or something to detect the difference between people and things. ☐ *I cannot discern between the dark trees and the dark sky behind them.* ☐ *I cannot discern between the person and the background.*

discern someone or something **from** something else to detect the difference between someone or something and something else. ☐ *I can hardly discern Tom from the busy background in this picture.* ☐ *I can't discern anything from that cluttered scene.*

discern something **from** someone or something to learn or determine something from someone or something. ☐ *We discerned a lot from the eyewitnesses.* ☐ *We discerned a lot from our discussions with the past president.*

discharge someone **from** something **1.** to fire someone from a job. ☐ *The manager discharged Walter from his position with the bank.* ☐ *Walter was discharged from his job.* **2.** to permit a person to leave a place, such as a hospital or the armed service. ☐ *They discharged her from the hospital today.* ☐ *She was well enough to be discharged from the hospital.*

discharge something **from** something to fire a round from a gun. ☐ *I discharged two bullets from the gun accidentally.* ☐ *Randy discharged about twenty rounds from his automatic rifle.*

discharge something **into** something to let something out of something into something else. ☐ *She discharged some nitrogen from the tank into the laboratory by accident.* ☐ *The technician discharged oxygen into the atmosphere.*

discipline someone **for** something to punish or chastise someone for doing something. ☐ *I will have to discipline you for fighting.* ☐ *Mary was disciplined for taking part in the fiasco.*

disclose something **to** someone to tell or reveal something to someone. ☐ *Tony refused to disclose the location of the papers to me.* ☐ *Please disclose the names to me at once.*

disconnect someone or something **from** someone or something to break the connection between things or people. ☐ *The telephone operator disconnected Larry from his caller.* ☐ *He disconnected himself from the cords of his parachute.*

discourage someone **from** something to dissuade someone from doing something. ☐ *I hope I can discourage Tom from leaving.* ☐ *I do not want to discourage you from further experimentation.*

discourse (up)on someone or something to lecture about someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *I would like to discourse upon this matter awhile.* ☐ *The committee chose to discourse on Tom and his latest fiasco rather than deal with the budgetary problems it faces.*

Discretion is the better part of valor. *Prov.* It is good to be brave, but it is also good to be careful.; If you are careful, you will not get into situations that require you to be brave. ☐ *Son: Can I go hang gliding with my friends? Father: No. Son: But they'll say I'm chicken if I don't go! Father: Discretion is the better part of valor, and I'd rather have them call you chicken than risk your life.*

discriminate against someone or something to single out a type of person or thing for special negative treatment or denial of equal treatment; to act in a prejudicial manner against someone or something. ☐ *This law discriminates against short people.* ☐ *You discriminate against people in wheelchairs.*

discriminate between someone **and** someone else or something **and** something else to distinguish between people or between things. ☐ *I find it hard these days to discriminate between my friends and my enemies.* ☐ *Can you discriminate between this shade of pink and that one?*

discuss someone or something **with** someone to talk about someone or something with someone. ☐ *I need to discuss Mickey with you.* ☐ *We need to discuss compensation with the boss.*

the **disease to please** an obsessive need to please people. ☐ *I, like so many, am afflicted with the disease to please. I am just too nice for my own good.*

disembark from something to get off a ship, plane, or train. ☐ *We disembark from the ship in Manaus.* ☐ *At what time do we expect to disembark from the plane?*

disengage (oneself**) from** someone or something to detach oneself from someone or something; to untangle oneself from someone or something. ☐ *I wanted to disengage*

myself from the person I was talking to and go home. ☐ *We disengaged from the argument.*

disengage something **from** something to detach something from something. ☐ *Sally disengaged the locking mechanism from the cupboard door and peeked in.* ☐ *The coupling was disengaged from the boxcar, and the car separated and rolled away.*

disentangle someone or something **from** someone or something to untangle someone or something from someone or something. ☐ *I helped disentangle Tony from the coils of ropes he had stumbled into.* ☐ *They worked feverishly to disentangle the dolphin from the net.* ☐ *He disentangled himself from the net.*

disguise someone **in** something to conceal someone's identity in a costume or makeup. ☐ *We disguised her in men's clothing and got her across the border.* ☐ *She disguised herself in a clown suit.*

disguise someone or something **as** someone or something to dress or make someone up to appear to be someone or something. ☐ *We disguised the child as a witch.* ☐ *We disguised Gerald as a pumpkin.*

***disgusted at** someone or something severely disappointed at someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; grow ~**.) ☐ *We were disgusted at her incessant lying.* ☐ *Sam was disgusted at her.*

***disgusted with** someone or something severely disappointed over someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; grow ~**.) ☐ *I am totally disgusted with Ellen.* ☐ *We are all disgusted with the fall in the company's profits.*

dish on someone *Sl.* to gossip about or slander someone. ☐ *Stop dishing on her. She never hurt you!* ☐ *They spent an hour dishing on Wally.*

dish something **out**† **1.** *Lit.* to serve up food to people. ☐ *I'll dish it out, and you take it to the table.* ☐ *Careful how you dish out the mashed potatoes. There may not be enough.* **2.** *Fig.* to distribute information, news, etc. ☐ *The press secretaries were dishing reports out as fast as they could write them.* ☐ *The company dishes out propaganda on a regular basis.* **3.** *Fig.* to give out trouble, scoldings, criticism, etc. ☐ *The boss was dishing criticism out this morning, and I really got it.* ☐ *The teacher dished out a scolding to each one who was involved in the prank.*

dish the dirt *Sl.* to spread gossip; to gossip. ☐ *Let's sit down, have a drink, and dish the dirt.* ☐ *David goes down to the tavern to dish the dirt.*

disinclined to do something unwilling to do something. ☐ *I am disinclined to allow you to leave class early.* ☐ *They were disinclined to allow us to enter the country.*

dislodge someone or something **from** someone or something to loosen and remove someone or something from someone or something. ☐ *We were unable to dislodge her from office.* ☐ *Gene was able to dislodge the bone from his throat.*

dismiss someone **(from** something**) (for** something**)** to discharge someone from employment for some reason; to fire someone from a job for some cause. ☐ *We will have to dismiss him from employment for absenteeism.* ☐ *She was dismissed from the bank for making many errors in one month.*

dismiss something **as** something to put something out of one's mind or ignore something as something. (The second *something* can be a noun or an adjective.) ☐ *I dismissed the whole idea as foolishness.* ☐ *It was not possible to dismiss the whole matter as a one-time happening.* ☐ *Molly dismissed the whole event as accidental.*

dismount from something to get down from something, such as a horse, bicycle, etc. ☐ *She dismounted from her horse and fled into the house.* ☐ *Please dismount from the bicycle and wheel it into the shed.*

dispatch someone **from** some place to send someone from some place. ☐ *I dispatched a messenger from here over an hour ago.* ☐ *A telegram will be dispatched from my office first thing in the morning.*

dispatch someone or something **to** someone or something to send someone or something to someone, something, or some place. ☐ *I will dispatch a new copy of the damaged book to you immediately.* ☐ *Gene will dispatch a messenger to you.*

dispense something **(to** someone**) (from** something**)** to distribute something to someone from something or some place. ☐ *The nurse dispensed aspirin to everyone from a large bottle.* ☐ *The nurse dispensed aspirin from a large bottle to anyone who asked for it.*

dispense with someone or something to get rid of someone or something; to brush someone or something aside. ☐ *I think we will dispense with that subject for the rest of the day.* ☐ *We will have to dispense with the expensive gifts this year.*

display something **to** someone to show something to someone. ☐ *The peacock displayed his tail feathers to the other birds.* ☐ *Would you please display the artwork to the committee?*

dispose of someone *Sl.* to kill someone. (See also **dispose of** someone or something.) ☐ *Max suggested that he would dispose of Lefty if Lefty continued to be a pest.* ☐ *The boss ordered Max to dispose of Lefty.*

dispose of someone or something to get rid of someone or something. (See also **dispose of** someone.) ☐ *How can I dispose of this bothersome customer?* ☐ *Where shall I dispose of this wastepaper?*

dispossess someone **of** something to separate someone from a possession. ☐ *Do you intend to dispossess us of our home?* ☐ *They were dispossessed of the only possessions they had.*

dispute something **with** someone to argue with someone about something, such as an amount of money. ☐ *The customer disputed the amount of the check with the waiter.* ☐ *Please don't feel like you have to dispute every bill with the supplier.*

disqualify someone or something **for** something and **disqualify** someone or something **from** something to invalidate someone's or something's claim to something. ☐ *Does being late for practice disqualify me for the team?* ☐ *This loss disqualifies our team, doesn't it?* ☐ *Does it disqualify us from competition?*

dis(s) (on) someone *Sl.* to belittle someone; to show disrespect for someone. (From either a nonstandard transitive verb *disrespect* or from *dismiss [as insignificant]*. *Dis* is also a slang transitive verb.) ☐ *Gary is such a complainer. All he does is diss on people.* ☐ *Please stop dissing my little sister. She didn't do any of those things.*

***dissatisfied with** someone or something unhappy with someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; grow ~**.) ☐ *We are quite dissatisfied with the service provided by the dealer.* ☐ *I am not dissatisfied with you.*

dissent from something to disagree with something. ☐ *We have chosen to dissent from the decision the rest of you made.* ☐ *Fred dissented from almost everything that everyone else agreed on.*

D

dissociate oneself **from** someone or something to break one's association or relationship with someone or something. ☐ *They decided to dissociate themselves from our organization.* ☐ *I was forced to dissociate myself from her.* ☐ *We advised her to dissociate herself from the gang.*

dissolve in something [for a substance] to break down in a liquid and disperse in the liquid. (Compare this with **dissolve into** something.) ☐ *Salt will dissolve in warm water.* ☐ *This material will not dissolve in oil.*

dissolve into something **1.** *Lit.* [for a substance to change from a solid state into another state; [for a substance] to melt or liquefy something. (Compare this with **dissolve in** something.) ☐ *In a hot pan, the sugar dissolved into syrup.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to begin suddenly to display laughter, tears, giggles, gales of laughter, etc. (See also **dissolve in** something.) ☐ *The children dissolved into tears.* ☐ *The clown's appearance made the audience dissolve into laughter.* **3.** *Fig.* [for a film or television picture] to fade away into some other picture. ☐ *The scene dissolved into a shot of the interior of the castle.* ☐ *At this point in the script, dissolve to a face shot of Walter.*

dissolve something **in** something to cause a substance to break down in a liquid and disperse in the liquid. (See also **dissolve in** something.) ☐ *First, dissolve the salt in some warm water.* ☐ *Dissolve this medicine in water.*

dissolve something **into** something to cause a film or television picture to fade away into some other picture. (See also **dissolve into** something ③.) ☐ *The director dissolved the picture into the next scene.* ☐ *At this point, the opening scene should be dissolved into a side shot of the exterior.*

dissuade someone **from** something to discourage someone from (doing) something. ☐ *I hope to dissuade her from getting married until she graduates.* ☐ *I could not dissuade him from his plan.*

Distance lends enchantment (to the view). *Prov.* Things that are far away from you appear better than they really are. ☐ *Jill: High school was the happiest time of my life. Jane: But that was fifteen years ago. I think distance lends enchantment to the view.*

distance oneself **from** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to separate oneself physically from someone or something. ☐ *She wanted to distance herself from the fighting in the corridor.* ☐ *I distanced myself from her from then on.* **2.** *Fig.* to "separate" oneself ideologically from someone or something. ☐ *She felt that he would want to distance himself from her radical politics.* ☐ *He had to distance himself from those policies if he wanted to be reelected.* ☐ *I will feel better when I can distance myself from that part of my life.*

distill something **from** something to derive product from something by heating and condensation. ☐ *They distilled the lighter components from the raw oil.* ☐ *The alcohol was distilled from fermented grain.*

distinguish between someone or something **and** someone or something else **1.** to perceive the difference between different people and things, in any combination. ☐ *Can't you distinguish between Tom and your real enemies?* ☐ *He can't distinguish between a good used car and that wreck over there!* **2.** to create or emphasize the difference between people and things, in any combination. ☐ *Try to distinguish between the figure in the foreground and the flowers in the background in your painting.* ☐ *I used red to distinguish between the new part and the old.*

distinguish oneself **among** someone to make oneself stand out from other people because of one's achievements. ☐ *I hope someday to distinguish myself among my peers.* ☐ *He distinguished himself among his classmates by his many talents.*

distinguish someone or something **from** someone or something else **1.** to tell the difference between different people and things, in any combination. ☐ *I cannot distinguish Billy from Bobby.* ☐ *She could not distinguish basil from oregano.* **2.** to delineate or emphasize the boundary between people and things, in any combination. ☐ *I cannot distinguish the blue scarf from the sky in the background.* ☐ *We could not distinguish the leaves of the bushes from the leaves of the trees as we moved farther away.*

distract someone **from** something to turn or divert someone's attention from something. ☐ *I hate to distract you from your work, but I have some important news.* ☐ *You haven't distracted me from anything.*

distribute something **(all) around** to give shares of something to people. ☐ *I distributed many gifts all around to everyone.* ☐ *We distributed the drinks around.*

distribute something **among** someone or something to give out shares of something to three or more people. ☐ *We must distribute the money among the various charities.* ☐ *The food was distributed among the people who showed up.*

distribute something **between** someone to give out shares of something to two people. ☐ *He distributed the remaining cake between Dave and Don.* ☐ *Please distribute the magazines between the two boys.*

distribute something **over** something to spread something over something or over an area. ☐ *Distribute the icing over the entire cake.* ☐ *Walter distributed the sand over the icy spots.*

distribute something **to** someone to give out something to someone. ☐ *Can you distribute this clothing to the needy people who live around here?* ☐ *I will distribute the ice cream to the party guests.*

dive in with both feet and **jump in with both feet** *Fig.* to become completely involved with something quickly, especially something new. ☐ *I had never done anything like this before, but I just jumped in with both feet and learned it in no time.*

dive in(to something**) 1.** *Lit.* to plunge into something; to jump into something headfirst. ☐ *Don't dive into that water! It's too shallow.* ☐ *David walked to the edge of the pool and dived in.* **2.** *Fig.* to start immediately on some business or activity with energy. ☐ *I can't wait to dive into the next project.* ☐ *Clara dives into her work eagerly every morning.*

dive off ((of) something) to jump off something headfirst. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Rachel dived off of the rock into the river.* ☐ *She dived off the high diving board.*

diverge from something to move in a different direction from something. ☐ *Her line of thinking diverged from generally accepted thought on this point.* ☐ *The driveway diverges from the main road beyond the fence, straight ahead.*

diverge to something to turn to a particular direction. ☐ *A narrow road diverged to the left.* ☐ *A narrower channel diverged to the left of the island.*

divert someone or something from someone or something to turn someone or something aside or away from someone or something. ☐ *We could not divert his attention from his mother.* ☐ *I could not divert the woman from her interest in the book.*

divert someone or something to someone or something to channel or redirect someone or something to someone or something. ☐ *The farmers diverted the stream to a different channel.* ☐ *The guards diverted the museum visitors to the great hall.*

divert something into something 1. to channel something into something. ☐ *We will have to divert the runoff water into the culvert.* ☐ *Let's divert this stream into the ditch.* **2.** *Euph.* to steal something and keep it some place. ☐ *He diverted the funds into a secret bank account.* ☐ *She diverted her clients' stock dividends into her own investment portfolio.*

divert something onto something to channel something onto the surface of something. ☐ *Temporarily, they diverted the southbound traffic onto the side streets.*

divest someone or something of something to take something away from someone or something. ☐ *The judge divested the company of its foreign holding.* ☐ *The court divested her of her stocks.*

divide and conquer to cause the enemy to divide and separate into two or more factions, and then move in to conquer all of them. ☐ *Mary thought she could divide and conquer the board of directors, but they had survived such tactics many times, and her efforts failed.* ☐ *Sam led his men to divide and conquer the enemy platoon, and his strategy succeeded.*

divide by something to perform mathematical division by a particular number. ☐ *Can you divide by sixteens?* ☐ *Add this figure to the next column and divide by twenty.*

divide someone against someone or something to cause people to separate into two groups, one of which opposes someone or something. ☐ *The issue divided the children against their parents.* ☐ *The argument divided the president against the board of directors.*

divide something between people or things to give shares of something to specific people or groups. (In a strict sense, only between two entities. Informally, between two or more.) ☐ *I will have to divide the toys between the two children.* ☐ *He divided the tasks between the day crew and the night crew.*

divide something by something to perform mathematical division on something, using a particular number. ☐ *Now, divide this sum by the figure in column seven.* ☐ *Can you divide 1,400 by 59?*

divide something fifty-fifty and **split something fifty-fifty** to divide something into two equal parts. (The *fifty* means 50 percent.) ☐ *Tommy and Billy divided the candy fifty-fifty.* ☐ *The robbers split the money fifty-fifty.*

divide something into something 1. and **divide something in something** to separate something into parts. ☐ *I will divide it into two parts.* ☐ *I will divide the cake in half.* ☐ *If you divide the pie in fourths, the pieces will be too big.* **2.** to do mathematical division so that the divisor goes into the number that is to be divided. ☐ *Divide seven into forty-nine and what do you get?* ☐ *If seven is divided into forty-nine, what do you get?*

divide something (off†) (from something or animals) 1. to separate something from something else. ☐ *Let's divide the chickens off from the ducks and put the chickens in the shed.* ☐ *We divided off the chickens from the ducks.* **2.** to separate something from something else, using a partition. ☐ *We divided the sleeping area off from the rest of the room.* ☐ *A curtain was used to divide off a sleeping area.*

divide something (up†) (between someone or something) and **divide something (up†) (among someone or something)** to give something out in shares to people or groups. (More informal with *up*. *Between* with two; *among* with more.) ☐ *Please divide this up between the visitors.* ☐ *Cut the birthday cake and divide it up among all the party guests.* ☐ *Please divide up this pie between the children.*

divide something with someone to share something with someone. ☐ *I will divide a piece of cake with you.* ☐ *They refused to divide the ice cream with us.*

divided between something separated into different categories. ☐ *The applicants for the job seemed to be divided between the overqualified and the underqualified.* ☐ *The dogs were divided evenly between terriers and poodles.*

divided on someone or something having differing opinions about someone or something. ☐ *Our opinions are divided on what is going to happen.* ☐ *We were divided on Ann. Some of us wanted to choose her; some did not.*

divorce oneself from something to separate oneself from something, such as an idea, policy, philosophy, etc. ☐ *She was not able to divorce herself from long-held prejudice.* ☐ *You should divorce yourself from those limiting ideas.*

divulge something to someone to reveal something to someone. ☐ *Promise that you will not divulge any of this to anyone.* ☐ *She refused to divulge their names to us.*

divvy something up (between someone) and **divvy something up (among someone); divvy something up†** to divide something up between two people or among three or more people. (*Between* is for two and *among* is for more than two.) ☐ *Would you like to divvy this money up?* ☐ *Please divvy up this money between you.* ☐ *Let's divvy up the leftovers among all the dinner guests.*

do a double take to react with surprise; to have to look twice to make sure that one really saw correctly. ☐ *When the boy led a goat into the park, everyone did a double take.* ☐ *When the nurse saw that the man had six toes, she did a double take.*

do a dump on someone or something Go to **dump on someone or something**.

D

D

do a fade *Sl.* to leave; to sneak away. ☐ *Richard did a fade when he saw heard the police siren.* ☐ *It's time for me to do a fade.*

do a flip-flop (on something**)** and **do an about-face** *Fig.* to make a total reversal of opinion. ☐ *Without warning, the government did a flip-flop on taxation.* ☐ *The candidate had done an about-face on the question of deductions last year.*

do a job on someone or something **1.** *Euph.* to defecate on someone or something. (Note the variation in the second example.) ☐ *The puppy did a job on the living-room carpet.* ☐ *It's supposed to do its job on the newspapers in the basement.* **2.** *Sl.* to damage someone or something; to mess up someone or something. ☐ *The robbers really did a job on the bank guard. They beat him when they robbed the bank.* ☐ *The puppy did a job on my shoes. They are all chewed to pieces.*

do a land-office business *Fig.* to do a large amount of buying or selling in a short period of time. ☐ *The ice-cream shop always does a land-office business on a hot day.* ☐ *The tax collector's office did a land-office business on the day that taxes were due.*

do a number on someone or something *Sl.* to damage or harm someone or something. ☐ *The teacher did a number on the whole class by giving them a pop quiz.* ☐ *Tom did a number on Mary when he went out with Ann.*

do a one-eighty and **turn one hundred and eighty degrees 1.** *Lit.*to turn around and go in the opposite direction. ☐ *When I hollered, the dog did a one-eighty and headed back to its own yard.* **2.** *Fig.* to radically reverse a decision or opinion. ☐ *His political philosophy turned one hundred and eighty degrees when he grew a little older.*

do a slow burn *Fig.* to be quietly angry. (See also burn with a low blue flame.) ☐ *I did a slow burn while I was waiting in line for a refund.*

do a snow job on someone *Sl.* to deceive or confuse someone. (As if to blind someone with snow.) ☐ *Don't try to do a snow job on me. I know all the tricks.* ☐ *She thought she did a snow job on the teacher, but it backfired.*

do a takeoff on someone or something to perform a parody on someone or something. ☐ *The comedian did a takeoff on the president, and everyone thought it was terribly funny.*

do a three-sixty and **turn three-hundred and sixty degrees 1.** *Lit.* to turn completely around. ☐ *I was really lost. I did a three-sixty in the middle of the street because I couldn't make up my mind which way to go.* **2.** *Fig.* to reverse a decision or an opinion and then return to one's original stance. ☐ *Over time, he did a three-sixty in his thinking about integration.*

do an about-face (on someone or something**)** Go to do a flip-flop (on something).

do an errand Go to run an errand.

Do as I say, not as I do. *Prov.* Take my advice, even though I am acting contrary to it. (Sometimes used as an apology for behaving hypocritically.) ☐ *Jill: Why are you walking on the grass when I told you not to? Jane: But you're walking on the grass. Jill: Do as I say, not as I do.*

do as something [for something] to serve as something; to be usable as something. ☐ *This spoon will do as a small shovel.* ☐ *This jacket will not do as formal wear.*

Do as you would be done by. Go to Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

do away with oneself *Euph.* to commit suicide. (See also do away with someone or an animal; do away with something.) ☐ *The doctor was afraid that Betty would do away with herself.* ☐ *I wouldn't think of doing away with myself.*

do away with someone or an animal *Euph.* to kill someone or an animal. (See also do away with oneself; do away with something.) ☐ *The crooks did away with the witness.* ☐ *I was there, too. I hope they don't try to do away with me.*

do away with something to get rid of something. ☐ *This chemical will do away with the stain in your sink.* ☐ *The time has come to do away with that old building.*

do business with someone to trade or bargain with someone; to conduct commerce with someone. ☐ *You sound reasonable. I think I can do business with you.* ☐ *I am sure we can do business with one another.*

do credit to someone and **do** someone **credit** to add positively to the reputation of someone. ☐ *Your new job really does credit to you.* ☐ *Yes, it really does you credit.*

do dope Go to next.

do drugs and **do dope** to take illegal drugs; to use illegal drugs habitually. ☐ *Sam doesn't do drugs, and he doesn't drink.* ☐ *Richard started doing dope when he was very young.*

do for someone **1.** to provide for someone; to take care of or serve someone. ☐ *Do you expect me to stay home and do for you for the rest of my life?* ☐ *I can't do for all of them!* **2.** to suffice for someone; to be sufficient for someone. ☐ *Will this amount of sweet potatoes do for you?* ☐ *Yes, this will do for me fine.* **3.** See also done for.

do for something to serve as something; to substitute as something. ☐ *I think that this stone will do nicely for a doorstop.* ☐ *This stick will just not do for a stirring spoon.*

(Do) have some more. a polite invitation to take more of something, usually food or drink. ☐ *Bill: Wow, Mrs. Franklin, this scampi is great! Sally: Thank you, Bill. Do have some more.* ☐ *Jane: What a lovely, light cake. Mary: Oh, have some more. Otherwise the boys will just wolf it down.*

Do I have to paint (you) a picture? Go to next.

Do I have to spell it out (for you)? and **Do I have to paint (you) a picture?; Do I need to paint you a picture?** *Fig.* What do I have to do to make this clear enough for you to understand? (Shows impatience.) ☐ *Mary: I don't think I understand what you're trying to tell me, Fred. Fred: Do I have to spell it out for you? Mary: I guess so. Fred: We're through, Mary.* ☐ *Sally: Would you please go over the part about the square root again? Mary: Do I have to paint you a picture? Pay attention!*

Do I make myself (perfectly) clear? Do you understand exactly what I mean? (Very stern.) ☐ *Mother: You're going to sit right here and finish that homework. Do I make myself perfectly clear? Child: Yes, ma'am.* ☐ *Sue: No, the answer is no! Do I make myself clear?*

Do I need to paint you a picture? Go to **Do I have to spell it out (for you)?**

do it *Euph.* to have sex. ☐ *I hear that Bill and Jane did it in the back of his car.* ☐ *He did it for the first time when he was seventeen.*

do justice to something **1.** *Fig.* to do something well; to represent or portray something accurately. ☐ *Sally did justice to our side in the contract negotiations.* ☐ *This photograph doesn't do justice to the beauty of the mountains.* **2.** *Fig.* to eat or drink a great deal. ☐ *Bill always does justice to the turkey on Thanksgiving.* ☐ *The party didn't do justice to the roast pig. There were nearly ten pounds left over.*

Do not let the sun go down on your anger. Go to next.

Do not let the sun go down on your wrath. and **Do not let the sun go down on your anger.** *Prov.* Do not stay angry with anybody; calm your anger by the end of the day. ☐ *Son: Billy broke my bicycle, and I'm never going to speak to him again. Mother: Now, now, don't let the sun go down on your wrath.* ☐ *I was very upset by what you did, but I don't want to let the sun go down on my anger. Let's make up.*

Do not wash your dirty linen in public. *Prov.* Do not talk about your private family problems in public. ☐ *Grandson: How are we going to make Dad stop drinking? Grandmother: Hush! Don't wash your dirty linen in public.*

do one's **bit** Go to **do** one's **part.**

do one's **business** *Euph.* to defecate or urinate. ☐ *Do you need to do your business before we get in the car?* ☐ *The cat did her business on the sofa again.*

do one's **duty 1.** to do one's job; to do what is expected of one. ☐ *Please don't thank me. I'm just doing my duty.* ☐ *Soldiers who fight in wars are doing their duty.* **2.** *Euph.* to defecate or urinate. ☐ *We're not leaving this restroom until you do your duty.* ☐ *She did her duty in the potty, just like a big girl!*

do one's **(level) best** to do something as well as one can. ☐ *Just do your level best. That's all we can ask of you.* ☐ *Tom isn't doing his best. We may have to replace him.*

do one's **(own) thing** to do what one wants; to do what pleases oneself no matter what others think. ☐ *She's going to start doing her own thing for a change.* ☐ *I've always done my thing, and I don't see any reason to change to your view now.*

do one's **part** and **do** one's **bit** to do one's share of the work; to do whatever one can do to help. ☐ *All people everywhere must do their part to conserve energy.* ☐ *I always try to do my bit. How can I help this time?*

do one's **utmost (to** do something**)** to make one's best effort at doing something. ☐ *We will do our utmost to make the guests to feel welcome.*

do oneself **proud** to have done a very fine job. ☐ *That's super! You've done yourself proud!* ☐ *I feel like I've done myself proud by earning high honors.*

do or die *Fig.* trying as hard as one can. ☐ *I was determined to get there—do or die.* ☐ (Used as an attributive) *He has the obsessive do-or-die attitude.*

do's and don'ts the rules; the things that should be done and those that should not be done. ☐ *I must admit that a lot of do's and don'ts at this company are hard for me to understand.* ☐ *Better learn the do's and don'ts immediately.*

Do sit down. Don't stand on ceremony.; Please sit down. (A polite phrase encouraging people to resume their seats after rising for an introduction or out of deference.) ☐ *Tom rose when Mary approached the table, but she said graciously, "Do sit down. I just wanted to thank you again for the lovely gift."* ☐ *Tom: Hello, Bill. Bill (rising): Hi, Tom. Tom (standing): Do sit down. I just wanted to say hello.*

do so Go to **do too.**

do some fine coin *Sl.* to make a large sum of money. ☐ *When I get my big break, I'm going to do some fine coin.* ☐ *Richard did some fine coin on that last housepainting job.*

do somehow **by** someone to treat someone in a particular manner. (Do not confuse this with a passive construction. The *someone* is not the actor but the object.) ☐ *Tom did all right by Ann when he brought her red roses.* ☐ *I did badly by Tom. I fired him without good reason.*

do somehow **for** someone to benefit or harm someone in some degree. ☐ *This jacket does fine for me. I don't need a different one.* ☐ *This meal does okay for me. I'm satisfied.*

do someone **a favor** and **do** someone **a good turn** to perform a helpful service to someone. ☐ *Would you please do me a favor and take this letter to the post office?* ☐ *My neighbor did me a good turn by lending me his car.*

do someone **a good turn** Go to previous.

do someone **a heap of good** Go to **do** someone **a power of good.**

do someone **a kindness** to do a kind deed for a person. ☐ *My neighbor did me a kindness when he cut my grass.* ☐ *I am always happy to have the opportunity of doing someone a kindness.*

do someone **a power of good** and **do** someone **a heap of good** *Rur.* to be very good for someone. ☐ *You should take a vacation. It'd do you a power of good.* ☐ *Just hearing your voice does me a heap of good.*

do someone **credit** Go to **do credit to** someone.

do someone **damage** *Fig.* to harm someone, physically or otherwise. ☐ *I hope she doesn't plan to do me damage.* ☐ *They did us damage by telling the whole story to the newspapers.*

do someone **dirt(y)** *Rur.* to do something bad or dishonest to someone. ☐ *He sure did his wife dirty, leaving her like that.* ☐ *She did me dirt when we divided up the things mother left us.*

do someone **(down)** *Rur.* to treat someone badly. ☐ *I ain't speaking to Mary. Not after the way she did me down.*

do someone **good** to benefit someone. ☐ *A nice hot bath really does me good.* ☐ *A few years in the army would do you good.*

do someone **in 1.** to make someone tired. ☐ *That tennis game really did me in.* ☐ *Yes, hard activity will do you in.* **2.** to cheat someone; to **take** someone **in.** ☐ *The scam artists did the widow in by talking her into giving them all the money in her bank account.* **3.** *Sl.* to kill someone. ☐ *The crooks did the bank guard in.* ☐ *They'll probably do the witnesses in soon.*

do someone **one better** Go to go (someone) one better.

do someone or something **up**† to make someone or something attractive; to decorate or ornament someone or something. ☐ *Sally did Jane up for the party.* ☐ *Would you do up this present for Jane? It's her birthday.*

do someone **out of** something to swindle something away from someone; to defraud someone of a right or of property. ☐ *Are you trying to do me out of what's mine?* ☐ *Max tried to do her out of everything she had.* ☐ *I did myself out of a week's vacation by quitting when I did.*

do someone **over**† and **make** someone **over**† to buy a new wardrobe for someone; to redo someone's hairstyle, makeup, etc. ☐ *Sally's mother did Sally over for the play tryouts.* ☐ *The designer made over Sally completely.*

do someone **proud** to make someone proud. ☐ *Bill's kids sure did him proud at the boat race.* ☐ *Mary resolved she would do her friends proud.*

do someone's **bidding** to do what is requested. ☐ *The servant grumbled but did his employer's bidding.* ☐ *Am I expected to do your bidding whenever you ask?*

do someone's **heart good** *Fig.* to make someone feel good emotionally. ☐ *It does my heart good to hear you two are back together.* ☐ *When she sent me a get-well card, it really did my heart good.*

do something **about** someone or something to manage or deal with someone or something. ☐ *Can you please do something about Bob? He is too noisy.* ☐ *We were not able to do anything about the excessive rent increase.*

do something **by hand** to do something with one's hands rather than with a machine. ☐ *The calculator was broken so I had to do the calculations by hand.* ☐ *All this tiny stitching was done by hand. Machines cannot do this kind of work.*

do something **by the book** Go to by the book.

do something **from scratch** Go to from scratch.

do something **hand in hand** Go to hand in hand.

do something **in**† to destroy something. ☐ *The huge waves totally did in the seaside community.* ☐ *The fire did the wooden building in.*

do something **over**† **1.** and **make** something **over**† to rebuild, redesign, or redecorate something. ☐ *We did our living room over for the holidays.* ☐ *We made over the family room because it was looking shabby.* **2.** and **do** something **over**† **(again)** to repeat something; to do something again. ☐ *I am afraid that you are going to have to do over the complete series again.* ☐ *Would you do this one over, please?*

do something **the hard way** to accomplish something in the most difficult manner, rather than by an easier way. ☐ *I made it to this job the hard way. I came up through the ranks.* ☐ *She did it the hard way. She had no help from her parents.*

do something **to excess** to do too much of something; to consume too much of something. ☐ *Anne often drinks to excess at parties.* ☐ *John smokes to excess when he works.*

do something **up**† **1.** to fasten, zip, hook, or button some item of clothing. ☐ *Would you do my buttons up in back?* ☐ *Please do up my buttons.* **2.** to wrap up something, such as a package, gift, etc. ☐ *I have to do this present up before the party guests get here.* ☐ *Do up the presents quickly. They are coming up the walk.* **3.** to arrange, fix, repair, cook, clean, etc., something. ☐ *I have to do the kitchen up before the guests get here.* ☐ *Do up the kitchen now, please.*

do something **up brown** to do something just right or with great effect. (Fixed order.) ☐ *Whenever they put on a party, they do it up brown.* ☐ *He was determined to cause a scandal, and he really did it up brown.*

do something **with a vengeance** *Fig.* to do something with vigor; to do something energetically as if one were angry. ☐ *Bob is building that fence with a vengeance.* ☐ *Mary is really weeding her garden with a vengeance.*

do something **with** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to use someone or something in some way. ☐ *Can you do something with this bracket, or shall I throw it away?* ☐ *We can't do anything with the new secretary. Find us another.* **2.** *Fig.* to improve or refresh someone or something. ☐ *I would like to do something with this room. It is so drab.* ☐ *I can't do anything with this child! Keep him at home.* **3.** *Fig.* to manage as well as possible with someone or something; to make do with someone or something. ☐ *We will just have to do whatever we can with what we have.* ☐ *We will do the best we can with this employee until you find a better one.*

Do tell. a response to one of a series of statements by another person. (The expression can indicate disinterest. Each word has equal stress. See also You don't say.) ☐ *Bill: The Amazon basin is about ten times the size of France. Mary: Do tell.*

do the dishes to wash the dishes; to wash and dry the dishes, knives, forks, glasses, etc., after a meal. ☐ *Bill, you cannot go out and play until you've done the dishes.* ☐ *Why am I always the one who has to do the dishes?*

do the honors to act as host or hostess and serve one's guests by pouring drinks, slicing meat, making (drinking) toasts, etc. ☐ *All the guests were seated, and a huge juicy turkey sat on the table. Jane turned to her husband and said, "Bob, will you do the honors?" Bob smiled and began slicing thick slices of meat from the turkey.* ☐ *The mayor stood up and addressed the people who were still eating their salads. "I'm delighted to do the honors this evening and propose a toast to your friend and mine, Bill Jones. Bill, good luck and best wishes in your new job in Washington."*

do the trick to do exactly what is needed. ☐ *This new paint scraper really does the trick.* ☐ *Is this envelope large enough to do the trick?*

do time *Sl.* to serve a sentence in prison; to serve a specific amount of time in prison. ☐ *Lefty had done time on a number of occasions.* ☐ *You'd better talk and talk fast if you don't want to do time.*

do too and **do so** to do something (despite anything to the contrary). (An emphatic way of saying *do.*) ☐ *Bob: You don't have your money with you. Bill: I do too!* ☐ *He does so! I saw him put it in his pocket.* ☐ *She did too take a cookie. I saw her do it.*

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. and **Do as you would be done by.** *Prov.* You should treat other people the way you want them to treat you. (From Luke 6:31; it is also known as "The Golden Rule.") ☐ *Mother: Don't call your playmates names. Child:*

Why not? Mother: Because you should follow the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. ☐ *It's hard to be kind to people sometimes, but I try to remember to do as I'd be done by.*

Do we have to go through all that again? Do we have to discuss that matter again? (Compare this with Let's not go through all that again.) ☐ *Bill: Now, I still have more to say about what happened last night. Sally: Do we have to go through all that again?* ☐ *Sally: I can't get over the way you treated me at our own dinner table. Fred: I was irritated at something else. I said I was sorry. Do we have to go through all that again?*

Do what? What did you say?; You want me to do what? ☐ *Charlie: My mama's coming to visit, so I want you to cook a fancy dinner. Mary: Do what?* ☐ *A: Let's perambulate. B: Do what? A: Let's take a walk.*

do with someone or something to do as well as possible with someone or something; to make do with someone or something. ☐ *I will just have to do with the car I now have.* ☐ *Can she do with just one chair for a while?*

do without Go to go without.

do without (someone or something**)** to manage or get along without someone or something that is needed or expected. ☐ *I guess I will have to do without dinner.* ☐ *Yes, you'll do without.*

(Do you) care if I join you? Go to Could I join you?

(Do) you eat with that mouth? and **(Do) you kiss your momma with that mouth?** *Sl.* Do you actually eat with the mouth you use to talk that filth?; Do you actually use that filthy mouth to kiss your mother? (A phrase said to someone who talks dirty all the time.) ☐ *That's a lot of foul talk. Do you eat with that mouth?* ☐ *After the suspect finished swearing at him, the police officer said, "Do you kiss your momma with that mouth?"*

Do you expect me to believe that? That is so unbelievable that you do not expect me to believe it, do you? (Said with impatience or strong doubt. Compare this with You can't expect me to believe that.) ☐ *Bill: I'm going to quit my job and open a restaurant. Mary: That's silly. Do you expect me to believe that?* ☐ *Mary: Wow! I just got selected to be an astronaut! Sally: Do you expect me to believe that? Mary: Here's the letter! Now do you believe me?*

Do you follow? *Fig.* Do you understand what I am saying?; Do you understand my explanation? ☐ *Mary: Keep to the right past the fork in the road, then turn right at the crossroads. Do you follow? Jane: No. Run it by me again.*

(Do you) get my drift? Do you understand what I mean?; Do you understand what I am getting at? ☐ *Father: I want you to settle down and start studying. Get my drift? Bob: Sure, Pop. Whatever you say.* ☐ *Mary: Get out of my way and stop following me around. Do you get my drift? John: I guess so.*

(Do you) get the picture? Do you understand the situation?; Do you know what this means you have to do? ☐ *Bill: I want to get this project wrapped up before midnight. Do you get the picture? Tom: I'm afraid I do. Bill: Well, then, get to work.* ☐ *Fred: I want you to straighten up and get moving. Get the picture? Bill: I got it.*

(Do) you hear? *Rur.* Do you hear and understand what I said? ☐ *John: I want you to clean up this room this instant! Do you hear? Sue: Okay. I'll get right on it.* ☐ *Bob: Come over here, Sue. I want to show you something, you hear? Sue: Sure. What is it?*

(Do) you kiss your momma with that mouth? Go to (Do) you eat with that mouth?

(Do you) know what? and **You know what?** an expression used to open a conversation or switch to a new topic. ☐ *Bob: You know what? Mary: No, what? Bob: I think this milk is spoiled.* ☐ *Bob: Know what? Bill: Tell me. Bob: Your hair needs cutting. Bill: So what?*

(Do you) know what I mean? Go to next.

(Do you) know what I'm saying? and **You know what I'm saying?; (Do you) know what I mean?; You know what I mean?** Do you understand me?; Do you agree? ☐ *Sue: This is, like, really great! You know what I'm saying? Mary: Yeah, I've been there. It's great.*

(Do) you mean to say something**?** and **(Do) you mean to tell me** something**?** Do you really mean to say what you said? (A way of giving someone an opportunity to alter a comment. The *something* represents a quote or a paraphrase.) ☐ *Mary: I'm leaving tomorrow. Sally: Do you mean to say you're leaving school for good? Mary: Yes.* ☐ *Bob: Do you mean to tell me that this is all you've accomplished in two weeks? Bill: I guess so. Bob: I expected more.*

(Do) you mean to tell me something**?** Go to previous.

Do you mind? 1. You are intruding on my space!; You are offending me! (Impatient or incensed. Essentially, "Do you mind stopping what you are doing?") ☐ *The lady behind her in line kept pushing against her every time the line moved. Finally, Sue turned and said sternly, "Do you mind?"* ☐ *All through the first part of the movie, two people in the row behind John kept up a running conversation. Finally, John rose and turned, leaned over into their faces, and shouted, "Do you mind?"* **2.** Do you object to what I am about to do? ☐ *Mary had her hand on the lovely silver cake knife that would carry the very last piece of cake to her plate. She looked at Tom, who stood next to her, eyeing the cake. "Do you mind?" she asked coyly.* ☐ *"Do you mind?" asked John as he bumped Sally and ran through the door.*

(Do you) mind if...? a polite way of seeking someone's permission or agreement. ☐ *Mary: Do you mind if I sit here? Jane: No, help yourself.* ☐ *Tom: Mind if I smoke? Bill: I certainly do. Tom: Then I'll go outside.*

(Do you) mind if I join you? Go to Could I join you?

Do you read me? 1. *Fig.* an expression used by someone communicating by radio, asking if the hearer understands the transmission clearly. ☐ *Controller: This is Aurora Center, do you read me? Pilot: Yes, I read you loud and clear.* ☐ *Controller: Left two degrees. Do you read me? Pilot: Roger, Sir, G'day.* **2.** *Fig.* Do you understand what I am telling you? (Said sternly, as when giving an instruction, and used in general conversation, not in radio communication.) ☐ *Mary: I want you to pull yourself together and go out and get a job. Do you read me? Bill: Sure. Anything you say.* ☐ *Mother: Get this place picked up immediately. Do you read me? Child: Yes, ma'am.*

(Do you) want to know something? and **(You want to) know something?** an expression used to open a conversation or switch to a new topic. ☐ *John: Do you want to know something? Sue: What? John: Your hem is*

torn. ☐ *Bill: Hey, Tom! Know something? Tom: What is it? Bill: It's really hot today. Tom: Don't I know it!*

(Do you) want to make something of it? and **You want to make something of it?** Do you want to start a fight about it? (Rude and contentious.) ☐ *Tom: You're really bugging me. It's not fair to pick on me all the time. Bill: You want to make something of it?* ☐ *Bob: Please be quiet. You're making too much noise. Fred: Do you want to make something of it?*

D

(Do) you want to step outside? an expression inviting someone to go outdoors to settle an argument by fighting. ☐ *John: Drop dead! Bob: All right, I've had enough out of you. You want to step outside?* ☐ *Bill: So you're mad at me! What else is new? You've been building up to this for a long time. Bob: Do you want to step outside and settle this once and for all? Bill: Why not?*

dock someone or something **for** something to subtract money from someone or someone's account for payment of a debt or as punishment; to withhold money from someone's pay in payment of a debt or for recompense. ☐ *I will have to dock you for any breakage you cause.* ☐ *I was docked for being absent for half a day.*

dock (something**) at** some place to bring a boat or ship to a dock. ☐ *Let's dock our boat at the left side of the pier.* ☐ *We docked at the marina overnight.*

dock something **from** something to withhold money from an amount due to someone. ☐ *I will have to dock this from your paycheck.* ☐ *The boss docked ten dollars from my monthly pay.*

Doctor Livingstone, I presume? *Jocular* You are who I think you are, are you not? ☐ *Oh, there you are. Doctor Livingstone, I presume?*

doctor's orders something that one is strongly advised to do as ordered or as if ordered by a doctor. ☐ *I have to spend a month in Arizona. Doctor's orders.* ☐ *I'm doing this on doctor's orders, but I don't like it.*

doctor someone **up**† to give someone medical treatment, especially first aid. ☐ *Give me a minute to doctor Fred up, and then we can continue our walk.* ☐ *I'll doctor up Fred with a bandage; you can go on ahead.*

dodder along to walk along unsteadily, as in old age. ☐ *Both of the elderly ladies doddered along very slowly.* ☐ *We dodder along because we can't go any faster.*

dodge behind something to duck behind something; to move quickly and evasively behind something. ☐ *She dodged behind a tree to hide from Mark.* ☐ *The turkey dodged behind a tree to elude the hunter.*

Does it work for you? Is this all right with you?; Do you agree? (Can be answered by **(It) works for me.**) ☐ *Bill: I'll be there at noon. Does it work for you? Bob: Works for me.* ☐ *Mary: We're having dinner at eight. Does it work for you? Jane: Sounds just fine.*

doesn't care who knows it doesn't try to conceal something. (Also with *don't*. *Don't* used with all persons is folksy.) ☐ *Jane dyes her hair, and she doesn't care who knows it.* ☐ *Yeah, my old man's in jail. I don't care who knows it!*

doesn't have enough sense to bell a cat and **doesn't have enough sense to come in out of the rain** acts foolish. (Also with *don't*. *Don't* used with all persons is folksy.) ☐ *I should've known Mary would mess things up completely. She doesn't have enough sense to bell a cat.* ☐ *Look after Joe and make sure he doesn't get into trouble. You know he doesn't have enough sense to bell a cat.* ☐ *I ain't surprised that Jim spends a hundred dollars a week on the lottery. Everyone knows he don't have enough sense to come in out of the rain.*

doesn't have enough sense to come in out of the rain Go to previous.

doesn't have the sense God gave geese and **doesn't have the sense God gave him (or her)** *Prov.* Doesn't have basic common sense. (Also with *don't*. *Don't* used with all persons is folksy.) ☐ *Mary's going out in this incredibly cold weather without a hat or gloves. She doesn't have the sense God gave geese.* ☐ *It was obvious that the man was a swindler, but George gave him all his money anyway. I swear, George doesn't have the sense God gave him.*

doesn't have the sense God gave him (or her) Go to previous.

doesn't know beans (about something**)** does not know anything. (Also with *don't*. *Don't* used with all persons is folksy.) ☐ *Bill doesn't know beans about car engines.* ☐ *Don't ask your daddy for advice about child rearing. He doesn't know beans.*

doesn't know his ass from a hole in the ground and **doesn't know his ass from his elbow** doesn't know anything; acts ignorant. (Use *ass* with caution. Also with *don't*. *Don't* used with all persons is folksy.) ☐ *That teacher doesn't know his ass from a hole in the ground.* ☐ *She's supposed to be an expert, but she doesn't know her ass from her elbow.*

doesn't know his ass from his elbow Go to previous.

dog and pony show *Fig.* a display, demonstration, or exhibition of something—such as something one is selling. (As in a circus act where trained dogs leap onto and off of trained ponies.) ☐ *Gary went into his standard dog and pony show, trying to sell us on an upgrade to our software.* ☐ *Don't you get tired of running through the same old dog and pony show at every trade show?*

The **dog ate my homework.** a poor excuse for something that someone has failed to do on time. (From an excuse a student might give for failing to turn in homework on time. Occurs in many variations.) ☐ *The dog ate my homework, so I have nothing to turn in.* ☐ (Used as an attributive.) *Bob was late with his report and had nothing but his typical dog-ate-my-homework excuses.*

dog days the hottest days of summer, usually during July and August. (Named for *Sirius*, the 'dog star.') ☐ *Bill spent the dog days lying out in his hammock.* ☐ *I hate doing yard work in the dog days.*

Dog does not eat dog. *Prov.* One disreputable person will not harm other disreputable people. ☐ *Ellen: My lawyer did such a bad job that I want to hire another lawyer to sue him. Jane: You'll never find a lawyer to take on that job. Dog does not eat dog.*

dog in the manger one who unreasonably prevents other people from doing or having what one does not wish them to do or have. (From one of Aesop's fables in which a

dog—which cannot eat hay—lay in the hayrack [manger] and prevented the other animals from eating the hay.) ☐ *Jane is a real dog in the manger. She cannot drive, but she will not lend anyone her car.* ☐ *If Martin were not such a dog in the manger, he would let his brother have that dinner jacket he never wears.*

Dog my cats! *Rur.* My goodness!; What do you know! (An exclamation of surprise.) ☐ *Dog my cats! Somebody painted my house green!* ☐ *Well, dog my cats—it hasn't rained once all month!*

dog-eat-dog *Fig.* a situation in which one has to act ruthlessly in order to survive or succeed; ruthless competition. ☐ *It is dog-eat-dog in the world of business these days.* ☐ *Universities are not quiet peaceful places. It's dog-eat-dog to get a promotion.*

dog-faced liar *Rur.* a terrible liar. ☐ *Suzy said Jimmy was a dog-faced liar.* ☐ *If Joe says that, he's a dog-faced liar.*

a **doggy bag** a bag or other container used to carry uneaten food home from a restaurant. (As if it is for the dog.) ☐ *I can't eat all of this. Can I have a doggy bag, please?*

dole something **out† (to** someone**)** to distribute something to someone. ☐ *The cook doled the oatmeal out to each camper who held out a bowl.* ☐ *Please dole out the candy bars, one to a customer.* ☐ *She doled it out fairly.*

doll someone **up†** to dress someone up in fancy clothes. ☐ *She dolled her children up for church each Sunday.* ☐ *She dolls up all her kids once a week.*

dollar for dollar considering the amount of money involved; considering the cost or value. (Often seen in advertising.) ☐ *Dollar for dollar, you cannot buy a better car.* ☐ *Dollar for dollar, this laundry detergent washes cleaner and brighter than any other product on the market.*

done and gone *Rur.* gone. ☐ *She's not here. She's done and gone.* ☐ *Jed was done and gone before dawn.*

done by mirrors and **done with mirrors** *Fig.* illusory; purposefully deceptive. (See also smoke and mirrors.) ☐ *The whole legislative budgetary process is done with mirrors.* ☐ *The company's self-review was done by mirrors and didn't come off too bad, despite our falling stock price.*

a **done deal** a completed deal; something that is settled. ☐ *It's too late. It's a done deal.* ☐ *The sale of the property is a done deal. There is nothing that can be done now.*

done for finished; dead. ☐ *I'm afraid that animal hit by the car is done for.* ☐ *The goldfish looked as if it was either done for or sunning its tummy.*

***done in** exhausted. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I'm really done in! I think I'll go to bed.* ☐ *After all that lifting, Gerald was done in and breathing hard.*

done 'n' did *Rur.* already did. ☐ *Tom: Guess I better take the garbage out. Bill: No need. I done 'n' did it.* ☐ *Mary done 'n' did the chores for you.*

done over *Sl.* beat; outscored. ☐ *The other team was done over, and they showed it in their lackluster play.*

done to a T cooked just right. ☐ *Yummy! This meat is done to a T.* ☐ *I like it done to a T, not too done and not too raw.*

done to a turn 1. well-cooked; nicely cooked. ☐ *The entire meal was done to a turn.* ☐ *The turkey was done to a turn.* **2.** *Inf.* beaten. ☐ *When Wilbur's opponent was done to a turn, Wilbur was declared the winner.*

done told you *Rur.* have already told you something. ☐ *I done told you not to touch that pan, and you went and did it anyhow.* ☐ *Sally done told you to leave that dog alone.*

done with mirrors Go to done by mirrors.

done with someone or something finished with someone or something. ☐ *Mary is done with Bill. She has found another boyfriend.* ☐ *I can't wait until I'm done with school forever.* ☐ *I agree. I'll be glad when we are done with all these exams.*

D

don't amount to a bucket of spit *Rur.* is not worth anything. ☐ *Joe's a shiftless cuss. He don't amount to a bucket of spit.* ☐ *All your pretty promises don't amount to a bucket of spit.*

Don't ask. It is so bad, I do not wish to be reminded or talk about it, so do not ask about it. ☐ *John: How was your class reunion? Alice: Oh, heavens! Don't ask.* ☐ *Tom: What was your calculus final exam like? Mary: Don't ask.*

Don't ask me. Go to How should I know?

Don't be gone (too) long. Good-bye. Hurry back here. ☐ *Tom: I've got to go to the drugstore to get some medicine. Sue: Don't be gone too long. Tom: I'll be right back.* ☐ *"Don't be gone long," said Bill's uncle. "It's about time to eat."*

Don't be too sure. I think you are wrong, so do not sound so certain.; You may be wrong. (Compare this with Don't speak too soon.) ☐ *Bill: I think I've finally saved up enough money to retire. John: Don't be too sure. Inflation can ruin your savings.*

Don't bite off more than you can chew. *Prov.* Do not commit yourself to doing more than you can actually do. ☐ *I don't think you ought to take dance lessons three times a week; you're already working two jobs. Don't bite off more than you can chew.*

Don't bother. Please don't do it. It is not necessary, and it is too much trouble. ☐ *Mary: Should I make some dinner for you? Bill: No, don't bother; it's late.* ☐ *Sue: Do you want me to save this spoonful of mashed potatoes? Jane: No, don't bother. It isn't worth it. Sue: I hate to waste it.*

Don't bother me! Go away!; Leave me alone! ☐ *Tom: Hey, Bill! Bill: Don't bother me! I'm busy. Can't you see?* ☐ *"Don't bother me! Leave me alone!" the child shouted at the dog.*

Don't breathe a word of this to anyone. This is a secret or secret gossip. Do not tell it to anyone. (*Breathing a word* is fig. for whispering.) ☐ *Bill: Have you heard about Mary and her friends? Sally: No. Tell me! Tell me! Bill: Well, they all went secretly to Mexico for the weekend. Now, don't breathe a word of this to anyone.*

Don't call us, we'll call you. *Cliché* a formulaic expression said to applicants who have just interviewed or auditioned for a job or part. ☐ *Thank you, Eddie Evans. Don't call us, we'll call you.* ☐ *Stupendous, Gloria, just stupendous. What glamour and radiance! Don't call us, we'll call you.*

don't care a whit Go to didn't care a whit.

Don't change horses in midstream. Go to change horses in midstream.

Don't count your chickens before they are hatched. *Prov. Cliché* Do not act as though something has turned out favorably for you until it has really turned

out that way. ☐ *Jill: When I get my raise, I'll use the extra money to go on vacation. Jane: But you don't know for sure that you're going to get a raise. Don't count your chickens before they are hatched.*

Don't cry before you are hurt. *Prov.* Do not be upset about a bad thing that might happen; only be upset when something bad really does happen. ☐ *Fred: What am I going to do? There's a possibility that my job will be eliminated! Jane: Don't cry before you are hurt. They haven't eliminated you yet.*

D

Don't cry over spilled milk. Go to It's no use crying over spilled milk.

Don't do anything I wouldn't do. an expression said when two friends are parting. ☐ *Bill: See you next month, Tom. Tom: Yeah, man. Don't do anything I wouldn't do.*

Don't even look like something**!** Do not even appear to be doing something! (The *something* can be thinking about something or actually doing something.) ☐ *Mary: Are you thinking about taking that last piece of cake? Bob: Of course not. Mary: Well, don't even look like you're doing it!* ☐ *John: You weren't going to try to sneak into the theater, were you? Bob: No. John: Well, don't even look like it, if you know what's good for you.*

Don't even think about (doing) it. Do not do it, and do not even think about doing it. ☐ *John reached into his jacket for his wallet. The cop, thinking John was about to draw a gun, said, "Don't even think about it."*

Don't even think about it (happening). Do not think about something like that happening, as the mere thought of it is so bad. (Compare this with Don't even think about (doing) it.) ☐ *Mary: Oh, those cars almost crashed! How horrible! Fred: Don't even think about it.* ☐ *Sally: If the stock market crashes, we'll lose everything we have. Sue: Don't even think about it!*

Don't forget to write. Go to Remember to write.

Don't get your bowels in an uproar! Do not get so excited! ☐ *Bill: What have you done to my car? Where's the bumper? The side window is cracked! Bob: Calm down! Don't get your bowels in an uproar!*

don't give a continental *Rur.* does not care at all. (Also with *doesn't*. *Don't* used with all persons is folksy.) ☐ *I don't give a continental if I never see him again.* ☐ *Mary's kids can do whatever they want. She doesn't give a continental.*

don't give a hoot (in hell's hollow) *Rur.* to not care one bit. (Also with *doesn't*. *Don't* used with all persons is folksy.) ☐ *Mary: Joe left town. Are you sorry to see him go? Tom: No! I don't give a hoot in hell's hollow.* ☐ *She's a devil-may-care young woman, doesn't give a hoot about anything.*

Don't give it a (second) thought. Go to Think nothing of it.

Don't give it another thought. Go to Think nothing of it.

Don't give me any of your lip! *Fig.* Don't talk back! ☐ *Do as I tell you and don't give me any of your lip!*

Don't give me that line! and **Don't hand me that (line)!** Don't tell me those lies! ☐ *Don't give me that line! I know the truth! You're lying to me!*

Don't give up! Do not stop trying!; Keep trying! ☐ *John: Get in there and give it another try. Don't give up! Bill: Okay. Okay. But it's hopeless.* ☐ *Jane: I asked the boss for a raise, but he said no. Tom: Don't give up. Try again later.*

Don't give up the ship! *Fig.* Do not give up yet!; Do not yield the entire enterprise! (Fixed order. Alludes to the words on a flag made by Captain Oliver Hazard Perry in the Battle of Lake Erie during the War of 1812.) ☐ *Bill: I'm having a devil of a time with calculus. I think I want to drop the course. Sally: Keep trying. Don't give up the ship!* ☐ *Bill: Every time we get enough money saved up to make a down payment on a house, the price of houses skyrockets. I'm about ready to stop trying. Sue: We'll manage. Don't give up the ship!*

Don't give up without a fight! *Fig.* Do not yield easily.; Keep struggling and you may win.; Do not give up too soon. (Also with *don't*. *Don't* used with all persons is folksy.) ☐ *Sue: She says no every time I ask her for a raise. Mary: Well, don't give up without a fight. Keep after her.*

Don't give up your day job. Go to Don't quit your day job.

Don't hand me that (line)! Go to Don't give me that line!

Don't have a cow! Calm down!; Don't get so excited! (Made famous in the television show, *The Simpsons*.) ☐ *Chill out, man! Don't have a cow!* ☐ *Aw, don't have a cow, Dad!*

don't have a pot to piss in (or a window to throw it out of) *Fig.* doesn't have anything of value; very poor. (Use with caution.) ☐ *When Ed was a young man, he didn't have a pot to piss in.* ☐ *Jane's folks don't have a pot to piss in or a window to throw it out of.*

Don't hold your breath. *Fig.* Do not stop breathing waiting for something to happen that won't happen. (Meaning that it will take longer for it to happen than you can possibly hold your breath.) ☐ *Tom: The front yard is such a mess. Bob: Bill's supposed to rake the leaves. Tom: Don't hold your breath. He never does his share of the work.* ☐ *Sally: Someone said that gasoline prices would go down. Bob: Oh, yeah? Don't hold your breath.*

Don't I know it! I know that very well! ☐ *Mary: Goodness gracious! It's hot today. Bob: Don't I know it!* ☐ *Sue: You seem to be putting on a little weight. John: Don't I know it!*

Don't I know you from somewhere? a way of striking up a conversation with a stranger, as at a party or other gathering. ☐ *Bill: Don't I know you from somewhere? Mary: I don't think so. Where did you go to school?* ☐ *Henry: Don't I know you from somewhere? Alice: No, and let's keep it that way.*

Don't judge a book by its cover. and **You can't tell a book by its cover.** *Prov.* Do not draw a conclusion about someone or something just from outward appearances. ☐ *Just because Sam dresses sloppy doesn't mean he's a bad person. Don't judge a book by its cover.* ☐ *Jill: How can you be so sure this will be a boring movie? Jane: The poster for it is so boring. Jill: Don't judge a book by its cover!*

Don't knock it. Don't criticize it. ☐ *You don't want any okra? Don't knock it.*

don't know whether to eat it or rub it on *Rur.* do not know what to do with something. (Used to describe a kind of food one does not recognize or that looks unusual.) (Also with *doesn't*. *Don't* used with all persons is folksy.) □ *That sure was a fancy dessert Mary served. I didn't know whether to eat it or rub it on.* □ *What kind of sauce is this? I don't know whether to eat it or rub it on!*

Don't let it go any further. and **Don't let it out of this room.** Don't tell this secret to anyone else. (Also literal.) □ *This is a strict secret. Don't let it go any further.* □ *I'll tell you what you what to know, but don't let it go out of this room.*

Don't let it out of this room. Go to previous.

Don't let someone or something **get you down.** Do not allow yourself to be overcome or disappointed by someone or something. □ *Don't let their constant teasing get you down.* □ *Don't let Tom get you down. He's not always unpleasant.*

Don't let the bastards wear you down. Don't let those people get the best of you. (Exercise caution with *bastard*.) □ *Bill: The place I work at is really rough. Everybody is rude and jealous of each other. Tom: Don't let the bastards wear you down.* □ *Jane: I have to go down to the county clerk's office and figure out what this silly bureaucratic letter means. Sue: You might call them on the phone. In any case, don't let the bastards wear you down.*

Don't look a gift horse in the mouth. *Prov.* Do not look for defects in a gift. □ *Jill: I wonder why Grandma gave me this table. Maybe it has one leg shorter than the others. Jane: Don't look a gift horse in the mouth.* □ *Mike: This letter says I just won a trip to Hawaii. I bet there's some kind of catch. Keith: Don't look a gift horse in the mouth.*

Don't make me laugh! That is a stupid suggestion! □ *You a judge? Don't make me laugh!* □ *Don't make me laugh. Tom could never do that.*

Don't make me say it again! and **Don't make me tell you again!** I have told you once, and now I'm mad, and I'll be madder if I have to tell you again. (Typically said to a child who will not obey.) □ *Mother: I told you thirty minutes ago to clean up this room! Don't make me tell you again!*

Don't make me tell you again! Go to previous.

Don't make two bites of a cherry. *Prov.* Do not leave a simple job half-done. □ *Tom: I washed the dishes and left them in the rack. I'll put them away tomorrow. Mary: Oh, come on. Don't make two bites of a cherry.*

Don't mention it. You are welcome and your thanks are not necessary. □ *A: Thank you so much! B: Don't mention it.*

Don't mind me. Don't pay any attention to me.; Just ignore me. (Sometimes sarcastic.) □ *Bill and Jane were watching television when Jane's mother walked through the room, grabbing the newspaper on the way. "Don't mind me," she said.*

Don't push (me)! 1. *Lit.* I can move on my own, so don't shove me! □ *I can't move any faster than this. Don't push me!* **2.** *Fig.* Don't put pressure on me to do something! □ *Sue: You really must go to the dentist, you know. John: Don't push me. I'll go when I'm good and ready.*

Don't put all your eggs in one basket. *Prov.* Do not risk everything on one undertaking. □ *Keep your day job while you pursue your acting career at night, just in case the acting doesn't go so well. You know—don't put all your eggs in one basket.*

Don't put off for tomorrow what you can do today. *Prov.* Do not procrastinate. □ *Father: Take out the garbage. Child: I'll do it in the morning. Father: It only takes a minute. Don't put off for tomorrow what you can do today.*

Don't put the cart before the horse. *Prov.* Do not do things in the wrong order. (This can imply that the person you are addressing is impatient.) □ *Tune the guitar first, then play it. Don't put the cart before the horse.*

Don't quit trying. Go to Keep (on) trying.

Don't quit your day job. and **Don't give up your day job.** Don't quit your regular job in hopes that you can support yourself doing this task that you do not do very well. □ *I saw your comedy act at the nightclub. Don't quit your day job!* □ *So, you laid the bricks in this wall. Well, don't quit your day job.*

Don't rush me! Don't try to hurry me! □ *Bill: Hurry up! Make up your mind! Bob: Don't rush me! Bill: I want to get out of here before midnight.* □ *Bill: The waiter wants to take your order. What do you want? Jane: Don't rush me! I can't make up my mind. Waiter: I'll come back in a minute.*

Don't say it! I don't want to hear it!; I know, so you don't have to say it. □ *John (joking): What is that huge pile of stuff on your head? Bill: Don't say it! I know I need a haircut.*

Don't speak too soon. I think you may be wrong. Don't speak before you know the facts. (Compare this with Don't be too sure.) □ *Bill: It looks like it'll be a nice day. Mary: Don't speak too soon. I just felt a raindrop.* □ *Tom: It looks like we made it home without any problems. Bill: Don't speak too soon, there's a cop behind us in the driveway.*

Don't spend it all in one place. *Prov.* a phrase said after giving someone some money, especially a small amount of money. □ *Fred: Dad, can I have a dollar? Father: Sure. Here. Don't spend it all in one place.* □ *"Here's a quarter, kid," said Tom, flipping Fred a quarter. "Don't spend it all in one place."*

Don't stand on ceremony. Do not wait for a formal invitation.; Please be at ease and make yourself at home. (Some people read this as "Don't remain standing because of ceremony," and others read it "Don't be totally obedient to the requirements of ceremony.") □ *Come in, Tom. Don't stand on ceremony. Get yourself a drink and something to eat and introduce yourself to everyone."*

Don't start (on me)! Do not complain! □ *Yes, I know it's a mess. Don't start!* □ *Don't start on me, I'm sorting it out.*

Don't stay away so long. *Rur.* Please visit more often. (Said upon the arrival or departure of a guest.) □ *John: Hi, Bill! Long time no see. Don't stay away so long! Bill: Thanks, John. Good to see you.* □ *Mary: I had a nice time. Thanks for inviting me. Sally: Good to see you, Mary. Next time, don't stay away so long.*

Don't sweat it! *Inf.* Don't worry about it! □ *No problem. Don't sweat it!* □ *Don't sweat it! We'll take care of it.*

D

Don't take any wooden nickels. *Prov.* Be careful and do not let anyone cheat you. (Often used as a jocular way of saying good-bye.) ☐ *Tom: So long. Bill: Don't take any wooden nickels.* ☐ *Good luck in college. Don't take any wooden nickels.*

Don't teach your grandmother to suck eggs. *Prov.* Do not try to instruct someone who is more experienced than you. (Extremely casual; potentially rude.) ☐ *Bob told the seasoned guitar player that she was holding the guitar incorrectly. "Don't teach your grandmother to suck eggs," she replied.*

Don't tell a soul. Please do not tell anyone this gossip. ☐ *Bill: Is your brother getting married? Sally: Yes, but don't tell a soul. It's a secret.* ☐ *Mary: Can you keep a secret? John: Sure. Mary: Don't tell a soul, but Tom is in jail.*

Don't tell me what to do! Do not give me orders. ☐ *Sue: Next, you should get a haircut, then get some new clothes. You really need to fix yourself up. Sally: Don't tell me what to do! Maybe I like me the way I am!*

Don't that (just) beat all! Go to **If that don't beat all!**

Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. *Prov.* Do not discard something valuable in your eagerness to get rid of some useless thing associated with it. ☐ *Jill: As long as I'm selling all the books Grandpa had, I might as well sell the bookcases, too. Jane: Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. You can use the bookcases for something else.*

Don't touch that dial! 1. *Lit.* Do not change your radio or television dial, but continue to listen to this station. (From broadcasts in the days when tuning was done with a dial.) ☐ *Don't touch that dial. Stay tuned for* The Adventures of Blondie. **2.** *Fig.* Do not change anything or divert your attention. ☐ *Don't touch that dial. Remember what you hear in today's lecture. It will be on the test.*

Don't waste my time. Do not take up my valuable time with a poor presentation.; Do not waste my time trying to get me to do something. ☐ *Bob: I'd like to show you our new line of industrial-strength vacuum cleaners. Bill: Beat it! Don't waste my time.* ☐ *"Don't waste my time!" said the manager when Jane made her fourth appeal for a raise.*

Don't waste your breath. You will not get a positive response to what you have to say, so don't even say it.; Talking will get you nowhere. ☐ *Alice: I'll go in there and try to convince her otherwise. Fred: Don't waste your breath. I already tried it.* ☐ *Sally: No, I won't agree! Don't waste your breath. Bill: Aw, come on. At least hear me out.*

Don't waste your time. You will not get anywhere with it, so don't waste time trying. ☐ *Mary: Should I ask Tom if he wants to go to the convention, or is he still in a bad mood? Sally: Don't waste your time. Mary: Bad mood, huh?* ☐ *Jane: I'm having trouble fixing this doorknob. Mary: Don't waste your time. I've ordered a new one.*

Don't work too hard. an expression said at the end of a conversation after or in place of *good-bye*. ☐ *Mary: Bye, Tom. Tom: Bye, Mary. Don't work too hard.*

Don't worry (about a thing). Do not become anxious about something.; Everything will be all right. ☐ *"Don't worry, Fred," comforted Bill, "everything will be all right."* ☐ *Bill: I think I left the car windows open. Sue: Don't worry, I closed them.* ☐ *"Don't worry about a thing," the tax collector had said. "We'll take care of everything." Or was it "We'll take everything?"*

Don't worry your (pretty little) head about it. *Rur.* Do not worry about it. (Said condescendingly, and can cause offense.) ☐ *Mary: How are you going to get another job if you don't start looking for one? Tom: Now don't worry your pretty little head about it. Just leave it to me.* ☐ *Tom: What are we going to do if we can't find an apartment? Sally: Don't worry your head about it. We'll find one, one way or another.*

Don't you know it! You can be absolutely sure about that!; You're exactly right, and I agree with you. (This is not a question.) ☐ *Alice: Man, is it hot! Fred: Don't you know it!* ☐ *Bob: This is the best cake I have ever eaten. The cook is the best in the world! Bill: Don't you know it!*

Don't you wish! Don't you wish that what you have just said were really true? ☐ *Mary: I'm going to get a job that lets me travel a lot. Sally: Don't you wish!* ☐ *Sally: Sorry you lost the chess game. It was close, but your opponent was top-notch. Bob: Next time, I'll do it! I'll win the next round. Sally: Don't you wish!*

doom someone or something **to** something to destine someone or something to something unpleasant. ☐ *The judgment doomed her to a life in prison.* ☐ *Your insistence on including that rigid clause doomed the contract to failure.*

doomed to something condemned to something; facing something as a future or as a consequence [of something]. ☐ *The project was doomed to failure from the start.* ☐ *I am doomed to a life of hard work and low pay.*

A **door must be either shut or open.** *Prov.* If you have only two alternatives, you must choose one or the other; you cannot have both. ☐ *Either you're going to marry that girl, or you're not. A door must be either shut or open.*

doors open up (to someone**)** opportunities become available to someone. ☐ *After Ann made a few inquiries, doors began to open up to me.* ☐ *An agent helps. After I got one, all sorts of doors opened up.*

door-to-door 1. *Lit.* having to do with movement from one door to another or from one house to another. ☐ *John is a door-to-door salesman.* ☐ *We spent two weeks making a door-to-door survey.* **2.** *Fig.* by moving from one door to another or one house to another. ☐ *Anne is selling books door-to-door.* ☐ *We went door-to-door, collecting money.*

dope someone or an animal **up**† to give drugs to someone or an animal. ☐ *Her parents doped her up with medicine so she would sleep through the night.* ☐ *It's dangerous to dope up a child night after night.* ☐ *The trainer got caught doping the horse up.*

dope something **out**† **1.** *Sl.* to figure something out. ☐ *He spent a lot of time trying to dope the assignment out so he could understand it.* ☐ *It's hard to dope out a physics assignment after midnight.* **2.** *Sl.* to explain something carefully. ☐ *He doped it all out to them very carefully so that no one would be confused.* ☐ *He doped out the information slowly and patiently.*

dork off *Sl.* to waste time; to **goof off**. ☐ *Stop dorking off and get busy.* ☐ *The whole class was dorking off and the teacher got furious.*

a **dose of** one's **own medicine** Go to **a taste of** one's **own medicine**.

dose someone or an animal **with** something to give medicine to someone or an animal. ☐ *You should dose the child with a little nonaspirin painkiller.* ☐ *She dosed the horse with a mild tranquilizer.*

doss down (for some time**)** *Sl.* to lie down to sleep for a period of time. ☐ *Chuck dossed down for a few hours before the evening performance.* ☐ *It's midnight: time to doss down.*

dot something **with** something to put little bits or dots of something on something. ☐ *She dotted her face with red marks to make it look as if she had measles.* ☐ *The chef dotted the cake with blobs of buttery icing.*

dote (up)on someone or something to adore or spoil someone or something; to like very much. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *His aunt simply dotes upon him.* ☐ *Mary dotes on vanilla ice cream.*

double as someone or something [for someone] to serve in two capacities. ☐ *The chairman will have to double as CEO until we find a new one.* ☐ *This table doubles as a desk during busy times.*

double back (on someone or something**)** [for a person or animal] to reverse motion, moving toward (rather than away from) someone or something. (Refers primarily to a person or animal that is being pursued by someone or a group.) ☐ *The deer doubled back on the hunter.* ☐ *The robber doubled back on the police, and they lost track of him.* ☐ *I doubled back on my own trail.*

double Dutch 1. language or speech that is difficult or impossible to understand. ☐ *This book on English grammar is written in double Dutch. I can't understand a word.* ☐ *Try to find a lecturer who speaks slowly, not one who speaks double Dutch.* **2.** a game of jumping rope using two ropes swung simultaneously in opposite directions. ☐ *The girls were playing double Dutch in the schoolyard.*

double in brass (as something**)** *Fig.* to serve in two capacities. (Alludes to a musician who could play the brass instruments as well as other instruments.) ☐ *Wally was our bookkeeper and doubled in brass as a clerk.*

double over [for a person] to bend at the waist. ☐ *Suddenly, he doubled over and collapsed.* ☐ *The people in the audience doubled over with laughter.*

double someone **over**† to cause someone to bend at the waist. ☐ *The blow to the back of the head doubled Steve over.* ☐ *The wind almost doubled over the children running for home.*

double something **over**† to fold something over. ☐ *Double the paper over twice, then press it flat.* ☐ *Double over the cloth a few times before you pack it away.*

double up (on someone or something**)** [for people] to deal with someone or something in pairs. ☐ *We are going to have to double up in this job.* ☐ *We will double up and get it done.*

double up (with laughter) *Fig.* to laugh so hard that one bends over. ☐ *We all just doubled up with laughter.* ☐ *I doubled up when I heard the punch line.*

double up (with pain) to bend at the waist with severe pain. ☐ *The man doubled up with pain when he was stabbed.* ☐ *He hurt so bad that he doubled up.*

double up (with someone**)** to share with someone. ☐ *We don't have enough books. Tom, will you double up with Jane?* ☐ *When we get more books, we won't have to double up anymore.*

a **double whammy** a double dose of something; a strong or powerful helping of something. ☐ *When the Federal Reserve Board raised the interest rates, I got a double whammy. My stocks went down and my bonds did too.*

double-cross someone to betray someone. (Originally a more complicated switching of sides in a conspiracy wherein the *double-crosser* sides with the victim of the conspiracy—against the original conspirator.) ☐ *Don't even think about double-crossing me!* ☐ *Richard double-crossed Mr. Big a few years back.*

a **double-edged sword** Go to a two-edged sword.

doubting Thomas someone who will not easily believe something without strong proof or evidence. (Can be said of a man or a woman. From the biblical account of the apostle Thomas, who would not believe that Jesus had risen from the dead until he actually touched the risen Christ.) ☐ *Mary won't believe that I have a dog until she sees it. She's such a doubting Thomas.*

douse someone or something **with** something to splash or drench someone with something. ☐ *She doused her brother with a bucket of cold water.* ☐ *They had to keep dousing the porpoise with cold water to keep it healthy.*

dovetail something **into** something *Fig.* to fit something neatly into something; to make something interlock nicely with something else. ☐ *She dovetailed her story into mine perfectly and the police let us go.*

dovetail with something **1.** *Lit.* to interlock tightly with something using a dovetail joint. ☐ *The side of the drawer dovetails with the front of the drawer.* **2.** *Fig.* to fit neatly into something. ☐ *Your story doesn't dovetail with mine very well.*

down and dirty 1. crude and carelessly done. ☐ *(Used as an attributive.) The last time he painted the kitchen, it was a down and dirty job because he thought we were moving. Fig.* coarse; mean-spirited. ☐ *The campaign for governor really got down and dirty in the final week.*

down by some amount having a score that is lower, by the specified amount, than someone else's score or the other team's score. ☐ *At halftime, the home team was down by 14 points.* ☐ *Down by one run, the team scored two runs in the ninth inning and won the game.*

down for something having one's name written down for something. ☐ *Am I down for an evening appointment?* ☐ *You are down for Friday.*

***down for the count 1.** and ***out for the count** [of a boxer] knocked down by an opponent's punching and remaining down until the last count, or even beyond. (*Typically: **be ~; go ~**.) ☐ *Wally is down for the count. Chris is the winner.* **2.** eliminated from something or an activity for a period of time, perhaps permanently. (*Typically: **be ~; go ~**.) ☐ *I can't continue with this course. I'm down for the count.* ☐ *I'm down for the count. I have the flu.*

***down in the dumps** *Fig.* sad or depressed. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I've been down in the dumps for the past*

few days. ☐ *Try to cheer Jane up. She's down in the dumps for some reason.*

down in the mouth *Fig.* sad-faced; depressed and unsmiling. ☐ *Since her dog died, Barbara has been down in the mouth.* ☐ *Bob has been down in the mouth since he was laid off from his job.*

down on one's **luck** without any money; unlucky. ☐ *Can you lend me twenty dollars? I've been down on my luck lately.* ☐ *The gambler had to get a job because he had been down on his luck and hadn't won enough money to live on.*

D

***down on** someone or something against someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *You've been down on us all lately.* ☐ *I'm down on computers lately.* ☐ *Everyone sure got down on fast food.*

down one for the road Go to one for the road.

***down pat** learned or memorized perfectly. (*Typically: **get** something **~; have** something **~**.) ☐ *I have practiced my speech until I have it down pat.* ☐ *Tom has his part in the play down pat. He won't make any mistakes.*

down South to or at the southeastern United States. ☐ *I used to live down South.* ☐ *We are going down South for the winter.*

down the chute *Fig.* gone; wasted; ruined. ☐ *A lot of money went down the chute on that deal, and all for nothing.* ☐ *I just hate to see all that effort go down the chute.*

down the drain *Fig.* gone; wasted. ☐ *Well, there's 400 bucks down the drain.* ☐ *A lot of money went down the drain in that Wilson deal.*

Down the hatch. I am about to drink this.; Let's all drink up. (Said as one is about to take a drink, especially of something bad-tasting or potent. Also used as a jocular toast.) ☐ *Bob said, "Down the hatch," and drank the whiskey in one gulp.* ☐ *Let's toast the bride and groom. Down the hatch!*

down the little red lane *Fig.* down someone's throat; down a child's throat. ☐ *This really tasty medicine has to go down the little red lane.* ☐ *The last spoonful of that stuff that went down the little red lane came right back up.*

down the road 1. *Lit.* farther along on this same road. ☐ *Just continue down the road until you come to a little church. Turn left there.* **2.** *Fig.* in the future. ☐ *We don't know what things will be like a few months down the road.*

down the road a piece and **down the road a stretch** *Rur.* a short distance down the road. ☐ *Smith's Dry Goods Store? It's down the road a piece, on the left-hand side.* ☐ *I'm not sure we're lost. Let's go on down the road a stretch and see if we recognize anything.*

down the road a stretch Go to previous.

down the street a short distance away on this same street. ☐ *Sally lives just down the street.* ☐ *There is a drugstore down the street. It's very convenient.*

down the tube(s) *Fig.* ruined; wasted. ☐ *His political career went down the tubes after the scandal. He's lost his job.* ☐ *The business went down the tube.*

down to a gnat's eyebrow *Fig.* down to the smallest detail. ☐ *He described what the thief was wearing down to a gnat's eyebrow.* ☐ *No use trying to sneak anything out of the refrigerator. Mom knows what's in there, down to a gnat's eyebrow.*

down to chili and beans *Rur.* very poor; down to one's last penny. ☐ *Mary and Tom aren't doing too well. They're down to chili and beans.* ☐ *Many's the time I was down to chili and beans, but I always pulled through.*

***down to the last** bit of money having only a small amount of money left. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I'm down to my last nickel.* ☐ *Lily is down to her last dollar.*

down to the last detail considering all of the details. ☐ *Jean planned the party very carefully, down to the last minute.* ☐ *Mary wanted to be in charge of everything right down to the last detail.*

down under Australia and New Zealand. ☐ *I've always wanted to visit down under.* ☐ *We spent Christmas down under.*

***down with a disease** ill; sick at home. (Can be said about many diseases. *Typically: **be ~; come ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Tom isn't here. He's down with a cold.* ☐ *Sally is down with the flu.*

***down (with** someone**)** *Sl.* friends with someone; okay or on good terms with someone. (*Down* = okay. *Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *It's okay. I'm down with Chuck.* ☐ *Chuck and I are down.*

Down with someone or something**!** Do away with someone or something!; I am opposed to someone or something! ☐ *Down with higher taxes! Down with corporate tax breaks!* ☐ *Down with tyrants!*

down-and-out 1. having no money or means of support. ☐ *There are many young people down-and-out in the city.* ☐ *John gambled away all his fortune and is now completely down-and-out.* **2.** someone who is impoverished. ☐ *There were a couple of down-and-outs sleeping under the railway bridge.* ☐ *The down-and-out touched Martin for a fiver.*

***down-at-the-heels 1.** *Lit.* [of shoes] worn on the bottom of the heels. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *This pair is a little down-at-the-heels, but I only use them for gardening.* **2.** *Fig.* worn down; showing signs of use or age. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *He is a little down-at-the-heels, but give him a new suit of clothes and he'll look just great.* ☐ *This jacket is a little down-at-the-heels.*

downgrade someone or something **to** something to decrease the status of someone or something to something. ☐ *In effect, this downgrades your project to unimportant.* ☐ *I didn't mean to downgrade you to the assistant status.*

downhill all the way *Fig.* easy the entire way. ☐ *Don't worry about your algebra course. It's downhill all the way after this chapter.* ☐ *The mayor said that the job of mayor is easy—in fact, downhill all the way.*

downhill from here on *Fig.* easy from this point on. ☐ *The worst part is over. It's downhill from here on.* ☐ *The painful part of this procedure is over. It's downhill from here on.*

down-home as one would find in rural, especially southern, America. ☐ *She speaks with a kind of down-home accent that sounds more friendly than the typical, urban northener.*

downtime the time when a computer or some other system is not operating. (Computer jargon.) ☐ *I can't afford a lot of downtime in the system I buy.* ☐ *We had too much downtime with the other machine.*

down-to-earth 1. *Fig.* direct, frank, and honest. ☐ *You can depend on Ann. She's very down-to-earth.* ☐ *It's good that she's down-to-earth and will give us a frank response.* **2.** *Fig.* practical; not theoretical; not fanciful. ☐ *Her ideas for the boutique are always very down-to-earth.* ☐ *The committee's plans for the village are anything but down-to-earth.*

***down-to-the-wire** *Fig.* waiting until the very last moment; right up to the deadline. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *It came down-to-the-wire before I turned the proposal in.* ☐ *We went right down-to-the-wire on that one.*

doze off (to sleep) to slip away into sleep. ☐ *I dozed off to sleep during the second act of the opera.* ☐ *I was so comfortable that I just dozed off.*

draft someone **for** something to select someone for something or to do something. ☐ *We drafted a bunch of the boys for moving tables.* ☐ *The committee drafted some of the members for kitchen work.*

draft someone **into** something **1.** *Lit.* to conscript someone into the armed services. ☐ *The draft board drafted Scott into the army.* ☐ *Todd was drafted into the army.* **2.** *Fig.* to convince someone to participate in something. ☐ *She drafted some of the boys into helping her move tables.* ☐ *They were drafted into helping.*

drag behind to follow along close behind someone. ☐ *His little brother came along, dragging behind.* ☐ *Stop dragging along behind!*

drag on and **drag out** to go on slowly for a very long time; to last a very long time. ☐ *The lecture dragged on and on.* ☐ *Why do these things have to drag on so?* ☐ *How much longer do you think his speech will drag out?*

a **drag (on** someone**)** a burden (to someone). ☐ *I wish you wouldn't be such a drag on your friends.* ☐ *I don't want to be a drag on the department.*

*a **drag (on** something**)** *Sl.* a puff or any kind of cigarette. (*Typically: **have ~; take ~**.) ☐ *She had a drag on her cigarette and crushed it out on the sidewalk.*

drag one's **feet (on** or **over** something**)** and **drag** one's **heels (on** or **over** something**)** to progress slowly or stall in the doing of something. ☐ *Why is she taking so long? I think she is just dragging her feet on this matter.* ☐ *I didn't mean to drag my feet on this decision.* ☐ *If the planning department had not dragged their heels, the building would have been built by now.* ☐ *You must not drag your heels over this; we must get finished.*

drag out Go to **drag on**.

drag someone **in† (on** something**)** to force someone to join something or participate in something. ☐ *Don't drag me in on this.* ☐ *Let's try to drag in some of the others on this.*

drag someone or something **down† 1.** *Lit.* to pull someone or something to the ground or to a lower level. ☐ *The lions dragged the antelope down and made dinner out of it.* ☐ *They dragged down the boxes from the closet shelf.* **2.** *Fig.* to debase someone or something; to corrupt someone or something. ☐ *The bad acting dragged the level of the performance down.* ☐ *The bad acting dragged down the level of the performance.*

drag someone or something **into** something and **drag** someone or something **in† 1.** *Lit.* to haul or pull someone or something into something or some place. ☐ *She dragged in the child to make him put on this jacket.* ☐ *Despite his broken leg, he dragged himself into the shelter.* **2.** *Fig.* to involve someone or a group in something. ☐ *Please don't drag me into your argument.* ☐ *Don't drag the committee into this discussion.* ☐ *It is a serious dispute, and please don't drag me in.*

drag someone or something **off of** someone or something and **drag** someone or something **off†** to pull or remove someone or something off someone or something. (The *of* is informal.) ☐ *The police officers dragged the boys off the top of the wall.* ☐ *The cops dragged off the boys and took them home.*

drag someone or something **off† (to** someone or something**)** to haul someone or something away to someone, something, or some place. ☐ *The cops dragged her off to jail.* ☐ *They dragged off the criminal to the judge.*

drag someone or something **on(to)** something and **drag** someone or something **on†** to pull or lead someone or something to a particular place, such as a stage, platform, dance floor, etc. ☐ *The master of ceremonies dragged her onto the stage for another bow.* ☐ *Then he dragged on the next performer.*

drag someone or something **over to** someone or something and **drag** someone or something **over†** to pull or haul someone or something to someone or something. ☐ *He dragged the chair over to the window so he could sit and watch the children.* ☐ *Drag over a chair and sit down.*

drag someone or something **through** something **1.** and **drag** someone or something **through** *Lit.* to pull someone or something through an opening. ☐ *I dragged my brother through the opening into the room.* ☐ *We dragged the sofa through the window because we couldn't get it through the door.* **2.** *Fig.* to debase someone or something. ☐ *I don't want you to drag me through a drawn-out divorce.* ☐ *She dragged herself through all sorts of trouble in her autobiography.*

drag someone **through the mud** *Fig.* to insult, defame, and debase someone. ☐ *The newspapers dragged the actress through the mud week after week.* ☐ *The columnist felt it was her duty to drag people through the mud.*

drag someone **up†** to force someone to come up or to come and stand nearby. ☐ *He wouldn't come on his own, so I dragged him up.* ☐ *You will have to drag him up. He is too tired to walk by himself.* ☐ *The reporter dragged up a homeless man to interview.*

drag something **away (from** something**)** and **drag** something **away†** to push or pull something away from something or some place. ☐ *He dragged the sofa away from the wall so he could clean behind it.* ☐ *He had to drag away the sofa in order to plug in the lamp.* ☐ *We worked together to drag it away.*

drag something **behind** one to pull something that is behind one. ☐ *The child dragged the wooden toy behind him.* ☐ *What is that you are dragging behind you?*

drag something **out† 1.** to make something last for a long time. ☐ *Why does the chairman have to drag the meeting out so long?* ☐ *Don't drag out the meetings so long!* **2** Go to next.

drag something **out of** someone and **drag** something **out†** to force someone to reveal something; to extract an answer or information out of someone laboriously. ☐ *Why don't*

you just tell me? Do I have to drag it out of you? ☐ *We had to drag out the information, but she finally told us.*

drag something **up**† to pull something close, such as a chair, stool, etc., to sit in. ☐ *Please drag a chair up and sit down.* ☐ *Drag up a chair and sit for a while.*

dragged out *Sl.* exhausted; worn out. ☐ *I feel so dragged out. I think I need some sleep.* ☐ *After the game, the whole team was dragged out.*

dragoon someone **into** something to force someone into doing something. ☐ *We dragooned the boys into helping us.* ☐ *She was trying to dragoon some of the men into setting up the banquet tables.*

drain away [for something] to flow away. ☐ *All the water drained away and exposed the mud and rocks on the bottom of the pond.* ☐ *When the water drained away, we found three snapping turtles in the bottom of the pond.*

drain from something to flow out of something. ☐ *All the dirty oil drained from the engine.* ☐ *The milk drained from the leaky container and covered the bottom of the refrigerator.*

drain out to flow out or empty. ☐ *All the milk drained out of the container onto the bottom of the refrigerator.* ☐ *All the oil drained out of the crankcase.*

drain someone or something **of** something *Fig.* to exhaust someone or something of something, such as energy, motivation, etc. ☐ *This day has drained me of all my motivation.* ☐ *The first performance drained the cast of all its energy.*

drain something **away**† **(from** something**)** to channel some liquid away from something. ☐ *Drain all of the standing water away from the foundation of the house.* ☐ *Drain away the water from the foundation.*

drain something **from** someone or something to cause something to flow out of someone or something. ☐ *The farmers drained the water from the flooded fields.* ☐ *The doctor drained the fluids from Roger after his operation.*

drain something **of** something to empty something out of something. ☐ *He drained the glass of the remaining beer.*

drain something **off** something and **drain** something **off**† to cause or permit something to flow from the surface or contents of something. ☐ *Drain some of the broth off the chicken.* ☐ *Drain off the fat at the bottom of the pan.*

drain something **out of** something and **drain** something **out**† to cause something to flow from something; to empty all of some liquid out of something. ☐ *She drained the last drop out of the bottle.* ☐ *She drained out all the water in the pot.*

drape oneself **over** something to sprawl on a piece of furniture. ☐ *He draped himself over the armchair and dropped off to sleep.* ☐ *He came in and casually draped himself over grandmother's antique chair.*

drape over (something**)** [for cloth] to cover something and hang down. ☐ *The robe draped over her knees, but she was still cold.* ☐ *The tablecloth draped over and reached down to the floor.*

drape someone or something **in** something to wrap or cover someone or something in something. ☐ *They draped her in golden silks, but she still looked like a country girl.* ☐ *They draped the tables in polka-dot cloth for the party.*

drape someone or something **with** something to hang something on or over someone or something. ☐ *They draped each guest with a makeshift toga.* ☐ *They draped the statue with a brightly colored loincloth.*

drape something **around** someone or something to wrap or hang something around someone or something. ☐ *She draped the shawl around her shoulders and felt a little warmer.* ☐ *Mother draped a towel around Timmy after his bath.*

draw a bead on someone or something and **get a bead on** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to locate someone or something in the sights of a gun. ☐ *Fred drew a bead on the target and pulled the trigger.* ☐ *The hunter drew a bead on the deer.* **2.** *Fig.* to prepare to deal with or obtain someone or something. ☐ *As soon as I get a bead on how widespread the problem really is, I will set up a meeting about it.*

draw a blank 1. *Fig.* to get no response; to find nothing. ☐ *I asked him about Tom's financial problems, and I just drew a blank.* ☐ *We looked in the files for an hour, but we drew a blank.* **2.** *Fig.* to fail to remember something. ☐ *I tried to remember her telephone number, but I could only draw a blank.* ☐ *It was a very hard test with just one question to answer, and I drew a blank.*

draw a line between something **and** something else and **draw the line between** something **and** something else *Fig.* to separate two things; to distinguish or differentiate between two things. (Also with *the*.) ☐ *I draw a line between just bumping into people and actually striking them.* ☐ *It's very hard to draw a line between slamming a door and just closing it loudly.*

draw a line in the sand *Fig.* to create or declare an artificial boundary and imply that crossing it will cause trouble. ☐ *Todd drew a line in the sand by giving his roommate an ultimatum about his sloppiness—he had to start cleaning up after himself or move out.*

draw against an amount of money to withdraw money from something in advance. ☐ *I can draw against my allowance—at least a small amount.* ☐ *You cannot draw against your salary.*

draw ahead (of someone or something**)** to pull or move ahead of someone or something in motion. ☐ *I drew ahead of the car in front of me.* ☐ *The horse I was racing against drew ahead.*

draw apart (from someone or something**)** and **draw away (from** someone or something**)** to pull back or away from someone or something. ☐ *Don't draw apart from the rest of us.* ☐ *Please don't draw away from me. I won't bite.* ☐ *She drew away slowly and left the room.*

draw away (from someone or something**)** Go to previous.

draw blood 1. *Lit.* to hit or bite (a person or an animal) and make a wound that bleeds. ☐ *The dog chased me and bit me hard, but it didn't draw blood.* ☐ *The boxer landed just one punch and drew blood immediately.* **2.** *Fig.* to anger or insult a person. ☐ *Sally screamed out a terrible insult at Tom. Judging by the look on his face, she really drew blood.* ☐ *Tom started yelling and cursing, trying to insult Sally. He wouldn't be satisfied until he had drawn blood, too.*

draw fire from someone Go to **draw** someone's **fire.**

draw for something and **draw lots** to choose lots for something, without looking; to draw a token for something from a set of tokens concealed in something. (The tokens are typically slips of paper, one of which is marked as the winner. See also **draw straws**.) ☐ *Let's draw for the prize. The winner gets it.* ☐ *We will draw for a winner from the five finalists.* ☐ *The players drew lots to determine who would go first.*

draw in one's **horns** and **pull in** one's **horns** *Fig.* to back down from a fight. ☐ *For a minute it looked like they were gonna start sluggin' each other, but then they drew in their horns.* ☐ *We tried to calm him down and get him to pull in his horns.*

draw interest 1. to appear interesting and get (someone's) attention. (Note the variation in the examples.) ☐ *This kind of event isn't likely to draw a lot of interest.* ☐ *What kind of show will draw public interest?* **2.** [for money] to earn interest while on deposit. ☐ *Put your money in the bank so it will draw interest.* ☐ *The cash value of some insurance policies also draws interest.*

draw lots Go to **draw for** something.

draw near 1. and **draw near (to** someone or something**)** *Lit. to come near to someone or something.* ☐ *Draw near to me, and let me look at you.* ☐ *Draw near to the table and look at this.* **2.** *Fig.* [for a particular time] to approach. ☐ *The time to depart is drawing near.* ☐ *As the time for her speech drew near, Ann became more and more nervous.*

draw on someone or something and **draw upon** someone or something to use someone or something in some beneficial way; to extract from a resource, reserve, etc. ☐ *I may have to draw on your advice in order to complete this project.* ☐ *If there is some way you can draw on me to your advantage, let me know.* ☐ *By the end of the contest I had drawn upon all the energy I had.*

draw (oneself**) aside** [for someone] to move aside. ☐ *I drew myself aside so the children could pass.* ☐ *He drew himself aside so Maggie could pass.*

draw oneself **up (to** something**)** to stand up straight to one's full height. (Fixed order.) ☐ *Walter drew himself up to his six-foot height and walked away.* ☐ *She drew herself up and walked away.*

draw people or things **together**† to pull people together; to pull things together. ☐ *She drew her toys together in preparation for leaving.* ☐ *She drew together all the people she wanted to talk to.*

draw some kind of attention **away**† **(from** someone or something**)** to capture attention or praise due to someone or something. ☐ *Her sterling performance drew attention away from the big star in one of the other roles.* ☐ *She drew away too much notice by her late arrival at the party.*

draw someone **aside**† to pull or steer someone aside. ☐ *The teacher drew Bob aside to have a word with him.* ☐ *Harry drew aside someone he could trust and expressed his fears.*

draw someone or an animal **out of** something and **draw** someone or an animal **out**† to lure someone or an animal out of something or some place. ☐ *I thought the smell of breakfast would draw him out of his slumber.* ☐ *The catnip drew out the cat from under the front porch.*

draw (someone or something**) from** something to sketch (someone or something) from a particular source, such as memory, real life, a photograph, etc. ☐ *He is a very good artist. He can draw from a photograph or a painting.* ☐ *I will try to draw him from memory.*

draw someone or something **into** something and **draw** someone or something **in**† **1.** *Lit.* to pull someone or something into something; to attract someone or something in. ☐ *She drew the child into the shoe store and plunked her down.* ☐ *Liz opened the door and drew in the children who were all bundled in their parkas.* **2.** *Lit.* to sketch a picture, adding someone or something into the picture. ☐ *She drew a little dog into the lower corner of the picture.* ☐ *I drew in a large tree and the ruins of an abbey.* ☐ *She drew herself into the scene.* **3.** *Fig.* to involve someone or something in something. ☐ *Don't draw me into this argument.* ☐ *This is not the time to draw that argument into the discussion.*

draw someone or something **out of** some place and **draw** someone or something **out**† to pull someone or something out of a place. ☐ *We drew him out of the crawl space where he lay hiding.* ☐ *We drew the concealed microphone out of the cabinet.*

draw someone or something **to(ward)** someone or something to pull someone or something to someone or something. ☐ *She drew him toward her and kissed him.* ☐ *Todd drew the child toward the light.*

draw someone **out on** someone or something and **draw** someone **out about** someone or something; **draw** someone **out**† to bring out someone's private thoughts about someone or something. ☐ *I tried to draw him out on this matter, but he would not say any more.* ☐ *I tried to draw out the speaker, but she would not elaborate on what she had said.* ☐ *Fred wanted to draw out information about the company's plans, but the controller had nothing to say.*

draw someone's **attention to** someone or something to attract someone to notice or focus on someone or something. ☐ *Now, I would like to draw your attention to Fred, the gentleman we have all heard so much about.* ☐ *Could I draw your attention to the statue standing at the entrance?*

draw (someone's**) fire (away) from** someone, something, or an animal and **draw (**someone's**) fire away**† to attract the attention of someone firing a gun away from the target, hoping to protect the target; to make oneself a target in order to protect someone or something. (Can be verbal "fire," such as questions, etc.) ☐ *The mother bird drew fire away from her chicks.* ☐ *The hen drew away the hunter's fire.* ☐ *The president drew fire away from Congress by proposing a compromise.*

draw someone **together** to make people seek one another for emotional support. ☐ *The tragic accident drew the family all together.* ☐ *Do you think the crisis actually will draw us closer together?*

draw something **apart**† to pull something, such as curtains or drapes, open or apart. ☐ *She drew the curtains apart and looked out the window.* ☐ *She drew apart the curtains a little bit.*

draw something **down**† to pull something down. ☐ *She drew the shades down to cut off the bright sunlight.* ☐ *She drew down the shades.*

draw something **forth**† to pull something forward or where it can be seen. ☐ *Carl drew a booklet forth and began to show it to the people sitting on either side of him.* ☐ *She drew forth her pocketknife and threatened the bandit.*

draw something **off**† **(from** something**)** to remove a portion of a liquid from something; to cause something to flow from something. ☐ *The steward drew some wine off from the cask.* ☐ *He drew off some wine.*

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draw something **out**† **1.** to make something have greater length. ☐ *Bill drew the taffy candy out into a long string.* ☐ *He drew out a long strand of melted cheese and tried to drop it into his mouth.* **2.** to extend something in time. ☐ *Do we have to draw this thing out? Let's get it over with.* ☐ *Stop drawing out the proceedings.* **3.** *Lit.* to draw a picture to make something more clear. ☐ *Here, I'll draw it out so you can see what I mean.* ☐ *Please draw out the concept on paper. I can't follow your explanation.* **4.** Go to next.

draw something **out of** someone and **draw** something **out**† to get some kind of information from someone. ☐ *He kept his mouth closed, and we couldn't draw anything out of him.* ☐ *We were able to draw out the information we wanted.*

draw something **over** someone or something to cover someone or something with something. ☐ *She drew the blanket over the sleeping baby.* ☐ *Polly drew some plastic over her work and left for the day.*

draw something **to** to close or nearly close something, such as curtains, drapes, etc. ☐ *She drew the drapes to and turned on the lights.* ☐ *Please draw the door to as you leave, but don't shut it all the way.*

draw something **to a close** to make something come to an end. ☐ *It is time we drew this evening to a close.* ☐ *Ann drew the meeting to a close with a few words of encouragement.*

draw something **to** someone's **attention** to make someone aware of something. ☐ *Please draw this error to the clerk's attention.*

draw something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to pull something close by, such as a chair, stool, etc. ☐ *Draw a chair up and sit down.* ☐ *She drew up a pillow and sat on the floor.* **2.** *Fig.* to draft a document; to prepare a document. ☐ *Who will draw a contract up?* ☐ *I will draw up a contract for the work.*

draw straws for something *Fig.* to decide who gets something or must do something by choosing straws from an unseen set of straws of different lengths. (The person who gets the shortest straw is chosen. See also **draw lots**.) ☐ *We drew straws for the privilege of going first.* ☐ *Let's draw straws for it.*

draw the line (at something**)** to set a limit at something; to decide when a limit has been reached. ☐ *You can make as much noise as you want, but I draw the line at fighting.* ☐ *It's hard to keep young people under control, but you have to draw the line somewhere.*

draw the line between something **and** something else Go to **draw a line between** something **and** something else.

draw to a close to end; to come to an end. ☐ *This evening is drawing to a close.* ☐ *It's a shame that our vacation is drawing to a close.*

draw up to pull up more tightly; to shrink up. ☐ *When they got wet, his trunks drew up and became very tight.* ☐ *This cheap underwear has a tendency to draw up.*

draw (up) alongside someone or something and **draw (up) alongside** to move up even with someone or something in motion. ☐ *The police officer drew up alongside us and ordered us to pull over.* ☐ *A car drew up alongside us.*

draw upon something Go to **draw on** someone or something.

a **drawing card** *Fig.* an attraction that helps bring patrons to a place of entertainment. ☐ *The comedian was a real drawing card at the night club.*

***drawn and quartered** *Fig.* to be dealt with very severely. (Now fig. except in historical accounts; refers to a former practice of torturing someone guilty of treason, usually a male, by disembowling and dividing the body into four parts. *Typically: **be ~; have** someone **~**. Fixed order.) ☐ *Todd was practically drawn and quartered for losing the Wilson contract.* ☐ *You were much too harsh with Jean. No matter what she did, she didn't need to be drawn and quartered for it!*

drawn like a moth to a flame *Fig.* attracted [to someone or some event] instinctively or very strongly, as a moth is drawn to the light of a flame. ☐ *Customers were drawn to the sale like a moth to a flame. They came from all over and bought up everything in the store.*

dream about someone or something and **dream of** someone or something to have mental pictures about someone or something, especially in one's sleep. ☐ *I dreamed about you all night last night.* ☐ *I dreamed of a huge chocolate cake.*

a **dream come true** *Fig.* a wish or a dream that has become a reality. ☐ *My vacation to Hawaii was like a dream come true.* ☐ *Having you for a friend is a dream come true.*

Dream of a funeral and you hear of a marriage. and **Dream of a funeral and you hear of a wedding.** *Prov.* If you dream that a person has died, you will learn that person is to be married. ☐ *Alan: I had a dream last night that my sister was killed. Jane: Dream of a funeral and you hear of a marriage.*

Dream of a funeral and you hear of a wedding. Go to previous.

dream of doing something *Fig.* to have a fantasy of doing something. (See also **dream about** someone or something.) ☐ *I dream of owning a house like that.* ☐ *Clara dreamed of sailing off into the sunset with Roger.*

dream of someone or something Go to **dream about** someone or something.

Dream on. What you are expecting or wanting to happen is nothing but fantasy. ☐ *You want to get promoted to general manager? Dream on.* ☐ *You, an opera singer? Dream on.*

dream something **away**† *Fig.* to waste away a period of time having fantasies. ☐ *I just want to sit in the sun and dream the day away.* ☐ *Don't dream away your life!*

dream something **up**† *Fig.* to invent something; to fabricate something. (The *something* can be the word *something*.) ☐ *I don't know what to do, but I'll dream something up.* ☐ *Please dream up a solution for this problem.*

dredge someone or something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to scoop something up from underwater. ☐ *The workers dredged the lifeless body up from the cold black water.* ☐ *They dredged up*

the mud from the riverbed. **2.** *Fig.* to use some effort to seek and find someone or something. □ *I will see if I can dredge a date up for Friday.* □ *Can you dredge up a date for me?* □ *I don't have a wrench here, but I'll see if I can dredge one up from the basement.*

drench someone or something **in** something and **drench** someone or something **with** something to soak someone or something in something. □ *A sudden summer shower drenched them in sheets of rain.* □ *My raincoat was drenched with droplets from the foggy night air.*

dress for someone to clothe oneself to please someone. □ *I don't dress for you! Don't tell me how I should look!* □ *Sally says she dresses for her friends, but she really dresses for herself.*

dress for something to clothe oneself suitably for some occasion or activity, or for success. □ *Finally, I learned to dress for success.* □ *I can wear my tuxedo if you want me to dress for the formal dinner.*

dress (oneself**) up** to dress in fancy dress. □ *They dressed themselves up in their finest.* □ *Please dress up for the dance.*

dress someone **down†** to bawl someone out; to give someone a good scolding. □ *The drill sergeant dressed down the entire squadron for failing inspection.* □ *I'm really late. I know my parents will dress me down when I get home.*

dress someone or something **up†** to make someone or something appear fancier than is actually so. □ *The publicity specialist dressed the actress up a lot.* □ *They dressed up the hall so it looked like a ballroom.*

dress someone or something **up† (in** something**)** to clothe, decorate, or ornament someone or something in something. □ *She dressed her dolls up in special clothing.* □ *She dressed up her dolls in tiny outfits.*

dress someone **up† (as** someone or something**) to dress someone to look like or impersonate someone or something.** □ *She dressed her little girl up as a witch for Halloween.* □ *She dressed up her little girl as a fairy.*

dress (up) as someone or something to dress in the manner of someone or something. □ *I am going to dress up as a ghost for Halloween.* □ *Larry will dress up as the pumpkin from Cinderella.*

dressed to kill and **dressed (up) fit to kill** *Fig.* dressed in fancy or stylish clothes. (See also **dressed (up) fit to kill**.) □ *Wow, look at Sally! She's really dressed to kill.* □ *A person doesn't go on vacation dressed to kill.* □ *When Joe came to pick Mary up for the movie, he was dressed up fit to kill and carrying a dozen roses.*

dressed to the nines and **dressed to the teeth** *Fig.* dressed very stylishly with nothing overlooked. □ *She showed up for the picnic dressed to the nines.* □ *Clare is usually dressed to the teeth in order to impress people.*

dressed to the teeth Go to previous.

dressed (up) fit to kill Go to **dressed to kill**.

a **dressing-down** a harsh scolding. □ *The boss gave the entire sales crew a powerful dressing-down for missing their forecast.*

drift along to float along; to be carried along on no particular course. □ *The boat just drifted along lazily with the current.* □ *The project drifted along until we received the leadership we needed.*

drift apart (from each other**) 1.** *Lit.* [for floating things] to separate as they drift. □ *The boats drifted apart from one another.* □ *The boats drifted apart in the waves.* **2.** *Fig.* [for people] to lead their lives without contact with each other having been together or friendly. □ *He drifted apart from his friends.* □ *As the years went by, they drifted apart.*

drift away (from someone**)** *Fig.* [for someone] to begin to be less of a friend and more like a stranger. (See also **drift away (from** someone or something**)**.) □ *He began drifting away from me a few months ago, and I haven't seen him at all in the last three weeks.*

drift away (from someone or something**)** [for floating people, animals, or things] to move away from a particular person or thing, on the surface of water. (See also **drift away (from** someone**)**.) □ *We watched the boat drift away from us.* □ *He was drifting away on the ice block and there was nothing we could do.*

drift back (to someone**)** *Fig.* [for someone] to return to one's friendship or romantic involvement slowly. (See also **drift back (to** someone or something**)**.) □ *Finally he drifted back to her and they made up.*

drift back (to someone or something**)** to move back to someone or something slowly, on the surface of water. □ *The canoe drifted back to shore.* □ *My little boat finally drifted back to me.*

drift in(to something**)** to move slowly and gradually into something. □ *The people drifted slowly into the hall.* □ *The boats drifted into the shore on the tide.*

drift off to move slowly away. □ *The boat slowly drifted off and was gone.* □ *The clouds drifted off and the sun came out.*

drift off course Go to **off course**.

drift off to sleep *Fig.* to fall asleep gradually. □ *At last, he drifted off to sleep.* □ *During that boring lecture, I drifted off to sleep a number of times.*

drift out to move out of a place slowly. □ *After there was no more food, the people drifted out, one by one.* □ *The boat drifted out and almost got away.*

drift toward someone or something to move slowly and gradually toward someone or something. □ *The clouds drifted toward us, and we could see that a storm was coming.* □ *As the clouds drifted toward us, we could feel the humidity increase.*

drift with something **1.** *Lit.* to float along with something; to be carried along at the same rate as something. □ *He paddled the canoe into the center of the stream and let it drift with the current.* **2.** *Fig.* to "move along" passively with events and ideas. □ *He is not very decisive and is as likely as not to drift with the tide of sentiment.*

drill down (to something**)** to bore downward to something or some distance. □ *We drilled down to a layer of water-bearing sand, hoping to make a well.* □ *They had to drill down to bedrock to make a base for the piers that hold the building up.*

drill in(to something**)** to bore into or penetrate something. □ *The worker drilled into the wall in three places.* □ *Please don't drill into the wall here, where it will show.*

drill someone **in** something to give someone practice in something. □ *Now, I am going to drill you in irregular*

verbs. ☐ *The teacher drilled the students in the use of the passive.*

drill something **into** someone or something and **drill** something **in**† *Fig.* to force knowledge into someone or something. ☐ *Learn this stuff! Drill it into your brain.* ☐ *Drill in this information so you know it by heart!*

drink like a fish *Fig.* to drink alcohol excessively; to be in the habit of drinking alcohol excessively. ☐ *Jeff really drank like a fish at the party on Saturday.* ☐ *I worry about Nancy; she drinks like a fish.*

drink someone **under the table** *Fig.* to be able to drink more alcohol than someone else. ☐ *I bet I can drink you under the table.*

drink something **down**† to drink something; to consume all of something by drinking it. ☐ *Here, drink this down, and see if it makes you feel better.* ☐ *Drink down this medicine.*

drink something **in**† *Fig.* to absorb something; to take in information, sights, a story, etc. ☐ *Terry and Amy drove up to the top of the hill to drink the sights in.* ☐ *They drank in the beautiful view.*

drink something **up**† to drink all of something that is served or that is on hand. ☐ *Who drank all the root beer up?* ☐ *I drank up the root beer.*

drink to excess *Euph.* to drink too much alcohol; to drink alcohol continually. ☐ *Mr. Franklin drinks to excess.* ☐ *Some people drink to excess only at parties.*

drink to someone or something to toast someone or something; to take an alcoholic drink in honor of someone or something. ☐ *I'll drink to that!* ☐ *Let us drink to our guest of honor, Wallace J. Wilson!*

Drink up! Finish your drink!; Finish that drink, and we'll have another! ☐ *Okay, drink up! It's closing time.* ☐ *Drink up, and let's get going.*

drip in(to something**)** [for a liquid] to fall into something drop by drop. ☐ *The water dripped into the bowl we had put under the leak.* ☐ *Is the water still dripping in the bathtub?*

drip something **into** something and **drip** something **in**† to make something fall into something drop by drop. ☐ *Alice dripped a little candle wax into the base of the candlestick.* ☐ *Don't pour it all into the jar. Drip in a little at a time.*

drip with something **1.** *Lit.* to be heavy or overloaded with something to the point of overflowing. ☐ *The foliage dripped with the heavy morning dew.* ☐ *Her clothing dripped with seawater as she climbed back onto the deck.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone's speech] to show certain states of mind or attitudes. ☐ *Her voice dripped with sarcasm.* ☐ *The old lady's voice dripped with sweetness and affection.*

drive a coach and horses through something *Fig.* to expose weak points or "holes" in an argument, alibi, or criminal case by [figuratively] driving a horse and carriage through them. (Formal. Emphasizes the large size of the holes or gaps in the argument.) ☐ *The barrister drove a horse and carriage through the witness's testimony.* ☐ *The opposition will drive a coach and horses through the wording of that government bill.*

drive a hard bargain to work hard to negotiate prices or agreements in one's own favor. ☐ *All right, sir, you drive a hard bargain. I'll sell you this car for $12,450.* ☐ *You drive a hard bargain, Jane, but I'll sign the contract.*

drive a price **down**† *Fig.* to force the price of something down. ☐ *The lack of buyers drove the price down.* ☐ *The lack of buyers drove down the price.*

drive a price **up** and **force** something **up**† to force the price of something upwards. ☐ *Someone is buying a lot of gold and driving the price up.* ☐ *They are driving up the price.*

drive a wedge between someone **and** someone else *Fig.* to cause people to oppose one another or turn against one another. ☐ *The argument drove a wedge between Mike and his father.*

drive at something to be making a point; to be hinting at something; to work up to making a point. ☐ *What are you driving at? What's the point?* ☐ *I could tell Mary was driving at something, but I didn't know what it was.*

drive away to leave some place driving a vehicle. ☐ *They got in the car and drove away.* ☐ *They drove away and left us here.*

drive back to go in a vehicle back to where it started. ☐ *Mary drove back and parked the car where it had been when she started.* ☐ *You drive us there and I'll drive back.*

drive between something **and** something else to go in a vehicle between things or places. ☐ *I can't drive between work and home in less than thirty minutes.* ☐ *The cab driver drove between the airport and downtown more than twelve times in one day.*

drive down (to some place**)** to go in a vehicle to a relatively lower place or to a place in the south. ☐ *We are going to drive down to Houston for the weekend.* ☐ *We were going to fly to Florida, but it will be nice to drive down.*

drive into someone or something to strike someone or something while driving. ☐ *She drove into the garage and damaged the wall.* ☐ *Accidentally, Fred drove into Max.*

drive in(to something**)** to enter something or some place by driving. ☐ *She drove right into the garage and stopped the car before she realized that she was not at her own house.* ☐ *She drove in and looked around.*

drive into the middle of nowhere Go to in the middle of nowhere.

drive off to leave somewhere, driving a vehicle. ☐ *She got in her car and drove off.* ☐ *Please don't drive off and leave me!*

drive on to continue driving; to continue with one's journey. ☐ *We drove on for a little while.* ☐ *The traffic jam is breaking up, so we can drive on.*

drive one **out of** one's **mind** *Fig.* to make someone go crazy; to frustrate someone. ☐ *You are driving me out of my mind with your nagging.* ☐ *Henry was driven out of his mind by all the negative comments.*

drive out (to some place**)** to go in a vehicle to a place that is away from one's home, away from a city, etc. ☐ *We drove out to a little place in the country for a picnic.* ☐ *Why don't you drive out this weekend? We would love to have you here.*

drive over (to some place**)** to go in a vehicle to some place that is neither close by nor far away. ☐ *Let's drive over to Larry's place.* ☐ *Yes, let's drive over. It's too far to walk.*

Drive safely. an expression used to advise a departing person to be careful while driving. ☐ *Mary: Good-bye, Sally. Drive safely. Sally: Good-bye. I will.* ☐ *"Drive safely!" everyone shouted as we left on our trip.*

drive someone **around** something to transport a person in a vehicle on a tour of something or some place. ☐ *Fred will drive you around the city to see the sights.* ☐ *He spent an hour driving himself around town.*

drive someone **around the bend** *Fig.* to make someone angry or very frustrated. ☐ *This tax stuff is about to drive me around the bend.* ☐ *Gert will drive us all around the bend with her constant complaining.*

drive someone **back on** something to force someone to tap reserves of something. ☐ *The hard times drove them back on their life savings.* ☐ *The challenges of being a corporate executive drove her back on all her personal resources.*

drive someone **back to** someone to force someone to return to someone, such as a spouse, lover, parent, etc. ☐ *Her bad experience with her new friend drove her back to her husband.* ☐ *Being homeless was no fun, and soon Wally was driven back to his parents.*

drive someone **batty** and **drive** someone **bonkers; drive** someone **nuts** *Fig.* to annoy or irritate someone. ☐ *You are certainly annoying! You're going to drive me batty.* ☐ *This cold is driving me bonkers.* ☐ *These tax forms are driving me nuts.*

drive someone **bonkers** Go to previous.

drive someone **crazy** and **drive** someone **insane; drive** someone **mad 1.** *Lit.* to force someone into a state of insanity or mental instability. ☐ *The sound of the wind howling drove me crazy.* ☐ *The dog's constant barking drove me insane.* **2.** *Fig.* to annoy or irritate someone. ☐ *This itch is driving me crazy.* ☐ *All these telephone calls are driving me mad.*

drive someone **down (to** some place**)** to transport someone to some place (as in town or away from home), or to a relatively lower place or to a place in the south. ☐ *She drove herself down to the hospital.* ☐ *We have to drive Andrew down to school in the fall.*

drive someone **insane** Go to **drive** someone **crazy.**

drive someone **into a corner 1.** *Lit.* to force someone into the place where two walls intersect. ☐ *They drove him into a corner and captured him there.* ☐ *When he is driven into a corner, he will fight.* **2.** *Fig.* to force someone into a position or state where there are few choices and no escape. ☐ *You have driven me into a corner, so I guess I have to give in.* ☐ *Todd was driven into a corner when everyone disagreed with him.*

drive someone **mad** Go to **drive** someone **crazy.**

drive someone **nuts** Go to **drive** someone **batty.**

drive someone **on† (to** something**)** to make someone move onward toward some kind of success. ☐ *She said her parents drove her on to finish law school.* ☐ *They drove on their daughter to great things.* ☐ *The thought of earning a large salary drove him on.*

drive someone or an animal **away† (from** something or some place**)** to repel someone or an animal from something or some place. ☐ *We drove the monkeys away from the pineapples.* ☐ *We drove away the monkeys from the fruit.*

drive someone or an animal **out of** something and **drive** someone or an animal **out†** to force or chase someone or an animal out of something or some place. ☐ *We drove them all out of the country.* ☐ *We drove out the troublesome kids.*

drive someone or something **back†** to force someone or something away; to force someone or something to retreat. ☐ *The infantry drove the attackers back into the desert.* ☐ *They drove back the invading army.* ☐ *We drove them back to the border.*

drive someone or something **off†** to repel or chase away someone or something. ☐ *The campers drove the cows off before the animals trampled the tents.* ☐ *They drove off the cows.*

drive someone **out†** Go to **force** someone **out of office.**

drive someone **out of office** Go to **force** someone **out of office.**

drive someone **to despair** *Fig.* to depress someone; to frustrate someone. ☐ *Sometimes raising an infant drives me to despair!* ☐ *The recent problems drove her to despair.*

drive someone **to distraction** *Fig.* to confuse or perplex someone. ☐ *Can't you see you're driving her to distraction?* ☐ *The problems I am having with my boss are driving me to distraction.*

drive someone **to** do something to force someone to do something. ☐ *Poverty drove him to steal.* ☐ *She drove herself to earn a living.*

drive someone **to drink** *Fig.* [for someone or something] to cause someone to turn to alcohol as an escape from frustration. ☐ *Being a Cubs fan is enough to drive you to drink.* ☐ *She was driven to drink by the problems she had with her teenage son.*

drive someone **to the brink** Go to next.

drive someone **to the edge** and **drive** someone **to the brink** *Fig.* to drive someone almost insane; to drive someone close to doing something desperate. ☐ *Your trouble with the police has driven me to the brink! The next time you are arrested, I will not get you out of jail.*

drive someone **to the wall** Go to **force** someone **to the wall.**

drive someone **up the wall** *Fig.* to annoy or irritate someone. ☐ *Stop whistling that tune. You're driving me up the wall.* ☐ *All his talk about moving to California nearly drove me up the wall.*

drive someone **up (to** some place**)** to transport someone to a place on a higher level or to a place in the north. ☐ *Ralph drove Sally up to the cabin.* ☐ *He was going to drive her up last week, but could not.*

drive something **around** something **1.** to steer or propel something around something. ☐ *Wally drove the small car around the post easily.* ☐ *Please drive your truck around the corner carefully.* **2.** to go in a vehicle through different parts of a place. ☐ *He drove his new car around town, hoping everyone would see it.* ☐ *We drove the car around the parade route twice so everyone could get a good look at it.*

drive something **down† (to** some place**)** to transport a vehicle to a place by driving it there. ☐ *I will drive the car down to the college and leave it there for you.* ☐ *I'll drive down*

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the car and meet you. ☐ *Do I have to drive the car down? Can't you fly up here and get it?*

drive something **home** and **drive** something **home**† **(to** someone**)** *Fig.* to emphasize an important point about something (to someone). ☐ *The teacher repeated the point three times just to drive it home.* ☐ *I hope this really drives the importance of safety home to you.* ☐ *The accident drove home the importance of wearing seatbelts to everyone concerned.*

D

drive something **into** someone or something to strike someone or something while driving. ☐ *He drove the truck right into the abutment.* ☐ *She drove the car into the side of the garage.*

drive something **into** something and **drive** something **in**† **1.** to steer or guide a vehicle into something. ☐ *Liz drove the car into the garage.* ☐ *She drove in the car.* **2.** to pound or hammer something into something. ☐ *Using a heavy mallet, he drove the stake into the hard earth.* ☐ *With a mighty hammer blow, she drove in the nail.*

drive something **into the ground** Go to run something into the ground.

drive through (something**)** to go in a vehicle from one side of something to the other; to pass through something while driving. ☐ *We drove through some nice little towns on the way here.* ☐ *We didn't stop. We just drove through.*

drive up (to some place**)** to arrive some place in a vehicle. ☐ *She drove up to the door and stopped.* ☐ *Sally drove up and honked.*

*the **driving force (behind** someone or something**)** the person or a thing that motivates or directs someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~; serve as ~**.) ☐ *Making money is the driving force behind most businesses.* ☐ *Ambition is the driving force behind Tom.* ☐ *Love can also be the driving force.*

drizzle down (on someone or something**)** to rain on someone or something. ☐ *The light rain drizzled down on the garden.* ☐ *The rain drizzled down and soaked us because we had no umbrella.*

drone on (about someone or something**)** to lecture or narrate in a low-pitched, dull, and boring manner. ☐ *The dull old professor droned on about Byron—or was it Keats?* ☐ *It was Shelley and, yes, he did drone on.*

drone something **out**† to make a loud and low-pitched noise; to say something in a low-pitched and monotonous manner. ☐ *The announcer droned the winning numbers out.* ☐ *She droned out the winning numbers.*

drool (all) over someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to drip saliva on someone or something. ☐ *You're drooling all over my plate!* ☐ *The dog drooled all over my hand.* **2.** *Fig.* to envy or desire someone or something. (Alludes to drooling from hunger.) ☐ *The boys stood there, drooling over the fancy sports car.* ☐ *Wally Wilson spent many hours drooling over photographs of Marilyn.*

drop a bomb(shell) and **explode a bombshell; drop a brick** *Fig.* to announce shocking or startling news. ☐ *They really dropped a bombshell when they announced that the mayor would resign.* ☐ *Friday is a good day to drop a bomb like that. It gives the business world the weekend to recover.* ☐ *They must choose their words very carefully when they explode a bombshell like that.* ☐ *They really dropped a brick when they told her the cause of her illness.*

drop a brick Go to previous.

drop a bundle (on someone**)** and **blow a bundle (on** someone**)** *Inf.* to spend a lot of money pleasing or entertaining someone. ☐ *I blew a bundle on the candidate, and it didn't help me at all.* ☐ *Over the years, I've dropped a bundle on clients at that restaurant.*

drop a bundle (on something**)** *Inf.* to pay a lot of money for something. ☐ *Pete dropped a bundle on this car.* ☐ *I always buy old used cars. I've never dropped a bundle on any car.*

drop a hint *Fig.* to give a tiny or careful hint about something. ☐ *Mary dropped a hint that she wanted a new ring for her birthday.*

drop across someone or something [for something long or wide] to fall on and lay on someone or something. ☐ *A snake dropped across the hood of the tourist bus as it passed under a tree.* ☐ *As I lay sleeping, a ceiling panel dropped across me and woke me up.*

drop around (for something**)** to come for a casual visit that includes something such as tea, dinner, a drink, etc. ☐ *Drop around for a drink sometime.* ☐ *Yes, please drop around.*

drop around (sometime**)** and **drop by (**sometime**)** to come and visit (someone) at some future time. (Similar to drop in (on someone).) ☐ *Nice to see you, Mary. You and Bob must drop around sometime.* ☐ *Please do drop around when you're out driving.*

drop away 1. *Lit.* to fall off; to fall away. ☐ *The leaves were still dropping away from the trees in November.* ☐ *The dead branches dropped away from the tree.* **2.** *Fig.* [for a group of people] to decline in number over time through disinterest or attrition. ☐ *His friends gradually dropped away as the years passed.* ☐ *As the other contenders dropped away, Mary's chances for election improved.*

drop back 1. to fall back to an original position. ☐ *His arm raised up and then dropped back.* ☐ *The lid dropped back to its original position as soon as we let go of it.* **2.** to go slowly and lose one's position in a march or procession. ☐ *He dropped back a bit and evened up the spacing in the line of marchers.* ☐ *He got tired and dropped back a little.*

drop behind (in something**)** to fail to keep up with a schedule. ☐ *I don't want to drop behind in my work.* ☐ *She is dropping behind and needs someone to help her.*

drop behind (someone or something**) 1.** *Lit.* to reduce speed and end up after someone or a group, at the back of a moving line. ☐ *I dropped behind the rest of the people, because I can't walk that fast.* ☐ *I dropped behind the speeding pack of cars and drove a little slower.* **2.** *Fig.* to fail to keep up with the schedule being followed by someone or a group. ☐ *My production output dropped behind what it should have been.* ☐ *I stayed later at work to keep from dropping behind.*

drop below someone or something to fall to a point lower than someone or something. ☐ *The gunman dropped below the cowboy's hiding place and got ready to take a shot.* ☐ *The temperature dropped below the freezing point.*

drop by (sometime**)** Go to drop around (sometime).

drop by the wayside and **fall by the wayside 1.** *Lit.* to leave a march or procession in exhaustion to recover beside the pathway. ☐ *A few of the marchers dropped by the wayside in the intense heat.* **2.** *Fig.* to fail to keep up with others. ☐ *Many of the students will drop by the wayside and never finish.* ☐ *Those who fall by the wayside will find it hard to catch up.*

drop dead 1. to die suddenly. ☐ *I understand that Tom Anderson dropped dead at his desk yesterday.* ☐ *No one knows why Uncle Bob suddenly dropped dead.* **2.** Go away and stop bothering me. (Usually **Drop dead!**) ☐ *If you think I'm going to put up with your rudeness all afternoon, you can just drop dead!* ☐ *Drop dead! I'm not your slave!*

drop down 1. [for someone] to fall down or stoop down. ☐ *Suddenly, Ted dropped down, trying not to be seen by someone in a passing car.* ☐ *I dropped down as soon as I heard the loud sounds.* **2.** [for something] to fall from above. ☐ *The tiles on the ceiling dropped down, one by one, over the years.* ☐ *The raindrops dropped down and gave the thirsty plants a drink.*

drop down (on someone or something**)** to fall on someone or something. ☐ *The leaves dropped down on the newly mowed lawn.* ☐ *The wind blew a mighty gust and a thousand leaves dropped down.*

drop everything *Fig.* to stop doing whatever you are doing. ☐ *Drop everything and go outside. The house is on fire.* ☐ *Do you expect me to drop everything and come and pick you up at school?*

drop in (on someone**)** and **drop in (to say hello)** to pay someone a casual visit, perhaps a surprise visit. ☐ *I hate to drop in on people when they aren't expecting me.* ☐ *You're welcome to drop in at any time.*

drop in one's **tracks 1.** to collapse from exhaustion. ☐ *I was so tired, I dropped in my tracks.* ☐ *Kelly almost dropped in her tracks from overwork.* **2.** to die instantly. ☐ *Finally, one day, he worked so hard that he dropped in his tracks.* ☐ *I know that someday I will just drop in my tracks.*

Drop in sometime. Visit my home or office sometime when you are nearby. ☐ *Bob: Bye, Bill, nice seeing you. Bill: Hey, drop in sometime. Bob: Okay.* ☐ *"Drop in sometime," said Bob to his uncle.*

a **drop in the bucket** and a **drop in the ocean** *Fig.* an insignificant contribution toward solving a large problem. ☐ *Jane: We need to stop spending so much. Alan: OK. I'll buy a cheaper brand of toothpaste. Jane: But that's just a drop in the bucket.* ☐ *Many companies donated food and medicine to help the survivors of the earthquake, but it was just a drop in the ocean of what was needed.*

a **drop in the ocean** Go to previous.

drop in (to say hello) Go to drop in (on someone).

Drop it! Go to Drop the subject!

drop like flies *Fig.* to faint, sicken, collapse, or die, in great numbers like houseflies dying in a large group. ☐ *It was a terrible year for the flu. People were dropping like flies.*

drop names and **drop** someone's **name** to mention a name or the names of important or famous people as if they were personal friends. (See also drop someone's name.) ☐ *Mary always tries to impress people by dropping the name of some big-time executives she claims to know.* ☐ *Bill's such a snob. Leave it to him to drop the names of all the local gentry.*

drop off 1. *Lit.* [for a part of something] to break away and fall off. ☐ *The car's bumper just dropped off—honest.* ☐ *I lifted boxes until I thought my arms would drop off.* **2.** *Fig.* to decline. ☐ *Attendance at the meetings dropped off after Martin became president.* ☐ *Spending dropped off as the recession became worse.*

drop off (to sleep) *Fig.* to go to sleep without difficulty; to fall asleep. ☐ *I sat in the warm room for five minutes, and then I dropped off to sleep.* ☐ *After I've eaten dinner, I can drop off with no trouble at all.*

drop one's **drawers** to lower one's pant or underpants. ☐ *The boys dropped their drawers and jumped in the creek.*

drop one's **teeth** *Fig.* to react with great surprise. ☐ *I almost dropped my teeth when she told me her news.* ☐ *They dropped their teeth when I told them I was married.*

drop out of sight 1. *Lit.* to fall behind something and be seen no longer. ☐ *The pen dropped out of sight behind the sofa nevermore to be seen.* **2.** *Fig.* to disappear from public view; [for someone] to go into hiding. ☐ *The robbers dropped out of sight and the crime was never solved.*

drop out (of something**) 1.** *Lit.* to fall out of something. ☐ *One by one, the skydivers dropped out of the plane.* ☐ *The marshmallows dropped out of the bag.* **2.** *Lit.* or *Fig.* [for the bottom of something] to break loose and drop. ☐ *The bottom dropped out of the box, spilling everything everywhere.* ☐ *The bottom dropped out of the stock market, and we lost a lot of money.* **3.** *Fig.* [for someone] to resign from or cease being a member of something; [for someone] to leave school. ☐ *Sally dropped out of school for some unknown reason.* ☐ *But why did she drop out?*

drop over to come for a casual visit. ☐ *We would love for you to drop over.* ☐ *I would really like to drop over soon.*

drop someone **1.** *Sl.* to knock someone down; to punch and knock down a person. ☐ *Fred dropped Willie with one punch to the jaw.* **2.** *Fig.* to stop being friends with someone, especially with one's boyfriend or girlfriend. ☐ *Bob finally dropped Jane. I don't know what he saw in her.* ☐ *I'm surprised that she didn't drop him first.*

drop someone **a few lines** Go to next.

drop someone **a line** and **drop** someone **a few lines; drop someone a note** to write a letter or a note to someone. (The *line* refers to lines of writing.) ☐ *I dropped Aunt Jane a line last Thanksgiving.* ☐ *She usually drops me a few lines around the first of the year.* ☐ *Drop me a note when you get a chance.*

drop someone or something **down**† to let someone or something fall. ☐ *He dropped his pants down, revealing the swimming trunks beneath.* ☐ *The rescuer dropped down the baby and the doctor caught it.* ☐ *Sam went to the well and dropped a rock down.*

drop someone or something **from** something **1.** *Lit.* to release someone or something from some higher point. ☐ *Galileo proved that two objects of different weights dropped from the same height will reach the ground at the same time.* **2.** *Fig.* to exclude someone or something from something. ☐ *We had to drop Sally from our guest list.* ☐ *The professor was forced to drop the failing students from the course.*

drop someone or something **into** something and **drop** someone or something **in**† to let someone or something fall into something. ☐ *He dropped a quarter into the slot and waited for something to happen.* ☐ *He dropped in a quarter.* ☐ *Johnny Green dropped a cat into a well.* ☐ *He went to the well and dropped a coin in.*

drop someone or something **like a hot potato** *Fig.* to disassociate oneself with someone or something instantly. ☐ *When we learned of the conviction, we dropped him like a hot potato.* ☐ *I dropped the idea like a hot potato when the big boss said he didn't like it.*

D

drop someone or something **off**† Go to **drop** someone or something **off** something.

drop someone or something **off**† **(**some place**) 1.** *Lit.* to let someone or a group out of a vehicle at a particular place; to deliver someone or something some place. ☐ *Let's drop these shirts off at the cleaners.* ☐ *Let's drop off Tom and Jerry at the hamburger joint.* **2.** *Fig.* to give someone or a group a ride to some place. ☐ *Can I drop you off somewhere in town?* ☐ *I dropped off the kids at the party.*

drop someone or something **off** something and **drop** someone or something **off**† to let someone or something fall from something; to make someone or something fall from something. ☐ *They dropped the feather off the top of the building.* ☐ *Jake dropped off a feather and it fell to the ground.*

drop someone or something **on** someone or something to release something so it falls on someone or something. ☐ *Poor Alice dropped an iron on her toe.* ☐ *I accidentally dropped the baby on the floor.*

drop someone or something **out of** something and **drop** someone or something **out**† to let someone or something fall out of something. ☐ *She dropped the paper out of the window.* ☐ *Max threatened to drop Lefty out of the open door of the plane.* ☐ *I opened the window and dropped out the caterpillar.*

drop someone's **name** Go to **drop names**.

drop something **across** something to let something fall in such a way that a span is bridged; to let something fall in such a way that a pathway is blocked. ☐ *Let's drop a little rug across the threshold.* ☐ *They dropped a huge boulder across the road so no one could pass.*

drop something **on** someone **1.** *Lit.* to let something fall on someone. ☐ *The bricklayer dropped some mortar on me.* **2.** *Fig.* to give someone some bad news. (As if dropping a burden on someone.) ☐ *Sally dropped some really bad news on Walter.* ☐ *I'm sorry I had to drop it on you like that.*

drop the ball 1. *Lit.* [in a ball game of some type] to let the ball get away or fall out of one's grasp. ☐ *Good grief! Bill dropped the ball, just as he was about to score!* **2.** *Fig.* to make a blunder; to fail in some way. ☐ *Everything was going fine in the election until my campaign manager dropped the ball.* ☐ *You can't trust John to do the job right. He's always dropping the ball.*

drop the other shoe *Fig.* to do the deed that completes something; to do the expected remaining part of something. (See also **wait for the other shoe to drop.**) ☐ *Mr. Franklin has left his wife. Soon he'll drop the other shoe and divorce her.* ☐ *Tommy has just failed three classes in school. We expect him to drop the other shoe and quit altogether any day now.*

Drop the subject! and **Drop it!** *Fig.* Do not discuss it further! ☐ *Bill: Sally, you're gaining a little weight. I thought you were on a diet. Sally: That's enough! Drop the subject!* ☐ *Bill: That house is a mess. I wonder who lives there. Mary: That's my aunt's house. Just what did you want to know about it? Bill: Oh, drop it! Sorry I asked.*

drop up (some place**)** to come for a visit to a place that is relatively higher or in the north. ☐ *Drop up and see us sometime.* ☐ *Please drop up when you can.*

drop-dead gorgeous *Sl.* very good-looking. ☐ *Perry's girlfriend is drop-dead gorgeous. How can a twit like him hold onto a looker like that?*

drown in something **1.** *Lit.* to be asphyxiated in some liquid. ☐ *Wouldn't you hate to drown in that nasty, smelly water?* ☐ *I am not choosy about what I don't want to drown in.* **2.** *Fig.* to experience an overabundance of something. ☐ *We are just drowning in cabbage this year. Our garden is full of it.* ☐ *They were drowning in bills, not money to pay them with.*

drown one's **sorrows** Go to next.

drown one's **troubles** and **drown** one's **sorrows** *Fig.* to try to forget one's problems by drinking a lot of alcohol. ☐ *Bill is in the bar, drowning his troubles.* ☐ *Jane is at home, drowning her sorrows.*

drown someone **in** something *Fig.* to inundate someone with something. (See also **drown in** something.) ☐ *I will drown you in money and fine clothes.* ☐ *Mike drowned the nightclub singer in fancy jewels and furs.*

drown someone or an animal **in** something to cause someone or an animal to die of asphyxiation in a liquid. ☐ *He accidentally drowned the cat in the bathtub.* ☐ *She drowned herself in the lake.*

drown someone or an animal **out**† [for a flood] to drive someone or an animal away from home. ☐ *The high waters almost drowned the farmers out last year.* ☐ *The water drowned out the fields.*

drown someone or something **out**† [for a sound] to be so loud that someone or something cannot be heard. ☐ *The noise of the passing train drowned out our conversation.* ☐ *The train drowned us out.*

A **drowning man will clutch at a straw.** *Prov.* When you are desperate, you will look for anything that might help you, even if it cannot help you very much. ☐ *Scott thinks this faith healer will cure his baldness. A drowning man will clutch at a straw.*

a **drug on the market** and a **glut on the market** something that is on the market in great abundance. ☐ *Right now, small computers are a drug on the market.* ☐ *Twenty years ago, small transistor radios were a glut on the market.*

drum on something to tap, thump, or beat on something in rhythm. ☐ *Who is drumming on the table?* ☐ *Please stop drumming on the wall.*

drum someone **out**† Go to next.

drum someone **out of** something and **drum** someone **out**† *Fig.* to expel or send someone away from something, especially in a formal or public fashion. ☐ *They drummed Bill*

out of the bridge club for having a bad attitude. ☐ *The corps drums out a few cadets each year.*

drum something **into** someone and **drum** something **into** someone's **head; drum** something **in**† *Fig.* to teach someone something intensely. ☐ *Her mother had drummed good manners into her.* ☐ *She drummed in good manners day after day.*

drum something **out**† to beat a rhythm, loudly and clearly, as if teaching it to someone. ☐ *Drum the rhythm out before you try to sing this song.* ☐ *Drum out the rhythm first.*

drum something **up**† to obtain something by attracting people's attention to one's need or cause. ☐ *I shall try to drum up support for the party.* ☐ *You shall have to drum up new business by advertising.* ☐ *I need to do something to drum some business up.*

drunk and disorderly a criminal charge for public drunkenness accompanied by bad or offensive behavior. ☐ *The judge fined Richard for being drunk and disorderly.* ☐ *In addition to being convicted for driving while intoxicated, Richard was found guilty of being drunk and disorderly.*

***drunk as a lord** and ***drunk as a skunk** very drunk. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *After his fifth cocktail, Michael was as drunk as a lord.* ☐ *Judy bought herself a case of beer and proceeded to get as drunk as a skunk.*

drunk as a skunk Go to previous.

dry as a bone Go to next.

***dry as dust** and ***dry as a bone 1.** *Cliché* very dry. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *The bread is as dry as dust.* ☐ *When the leaves are dry as a bone, they break into powder easily.* **2.** *Cliché* very dull; very boring. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *This book is as dry as dust. I am going to stop reading it.* ☐ *Her lecture was dry as dust—just like her subject.*

dry out 1. *Lit.* to become dry. ☐ *The clothes finally dried out in the wet weather.* **2.** *Fig.* to allow alcohol and the effects of drunkenness, especially if habitual, to dissipate from one's body. ☐ *He required about three days to dry out completely.* ☐ *He dried out in three days.*

dry run *Fig.* an attempt; a practice or rehearsal. ☐ *We had better have a dry run for the official ceremony tomorrow.* ☐ *The children will need another dry run before their procession in the pageant.*

dry someone or something **off**† to remove the moisture from someone or something. ☐ *Please dry your feet off before coming in.* ☐ *Dry off your feet before you come in here!*

dry someone **out**† *Fig.* to cause someone to become sober; to cause someone to stop drinking alcohol to excess. ☐ *If the doctor at the clinic can't dry him out, no one can.* ☐ *The hospital will dry out Mary and start treatment.*

dry something **out**† to make something become dry. ☐ *Dry this out and put it on immediately.* ☐ *Dry out your jacket in the clothes dryer.*

dry something **up**† **1.** to cause moisture to dry away to nothing. ☐ *Dry this spill up with the hair dryer.* ☐ *Will the hair dryer dry up this mess?* **2.** to cure a skin rash by the use of medicine that dries. ☐ *Let's use some of this to try to dry that rash up.* ☐ *This medicine will dry up your rash in a few days.*

dry spell *Rur.* a period with no rain. ☐ *The dry spell killed the crops.* ☐ *We ain't had such a long dry spell since 1988.*

dry up 1. *Lit.* [for something] to dry away to nothing. ☐ *Finally, the water on the track dried up, and the race was able to continue.* ☐ *When will the fields dry up so we can plant?* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to be quiet or go away. ☐ *Dry up, you jerk!* ☐ *I wish you would dry up!*

D

dry-gulch someone to ambush someone. ☐ *The outlaw dry-gulched the traveler and took everything he had.* ☐ *The posse planned to dry-gulch the outlaw by waiting outside his favorite saloon.*

dub something **in**† to mix a new sound recording into an old one. ☐ *The actor messed up his lines, but they dubbed the correct words in later.* ☐ *They dubbed in his lines.*

dub something **over**† to record a replacement sound over another sound in a recording. ☐ *They had dubbed over all the dialog in the movie.* ☐ *It doesn't matter if you say a word wrong on the tape. We can dub it over.*

duck and cover 1. *Lit.* to bend down and seek protection against an attack. ☐ *When the gunfire started, we had to duck and cover or get killed.* **2.** *Fig.* to dodge something, such as an issue or a difficult question, and attempt to shield oneself against similar issues or questions. ☐ *The candidate's first reaction to the question was to duck and cover.* ☐ *The debaters were ducking and covering throughout the evening.*

duck down to stoop down quickly, as if to avoid being hit. ☐ *He ducked down when he heard the gunshot.* ☐ *Duck down and get out of the way.*

duck out (of some place**)** *Fig.* to sneak out of some place. ☐ *She ducked out of the theater during the intermission.* ☐ *When no one was looking, she ducked out.*

duck out (of something**)** *Fig.* to evade something; to escape doing something. ☐ *Are you trying to duck out of your responsibility?* ☐ *Fred tried to duck out of going to the dance.*

duck soup *Fig.* very easy; an easy thing to do. ☐ *For Maria, knitting a sweater is duck soup.* ☐ *Jill: This jar is stuck. Could you open it for me? Jane: Sure. Duck soup.*

dude (oneself**) up** *Sl.* to dress in fancy or stylish clothing. ☐ *I have to go dude myself up for the party.* ☐ *I'm not going to dude up tonight.* ☐ *Why don't you dude yourself up so we can go out tonight?*

duded up *Sl.* dressed up. ☐ *She got all duded up in her fanciest dancing dress.* ☐ *He hates fancy clothes. He didn't even get duded up for his own wedding.*

duke it out *Sl.* to have a fistfight. ☐ *John told George to meet him in the alley so they could duke it out.*

duke someone **out**† *Sl.* to knock someone out. ☐ *Wilbur tried to duke the guy out first.* ☐ *Bob duked out the mugger with a jab to the cheek.*

***dull as dishwater** and ***dull as ditchwater** very uninteresting. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *I'm not surprised that he can't find a partner. He's as dull as dishwater.* ☐ *Mr. Black's speech was as dull as dishwater.*

dull as ditchwater Go to previous.

dummy up *Sl.* to refuse to talk. ☐ *Jill dummied up when they got her into the station.* ☐ *John dummied up right away when the police arrived.*

dump a load Go to **dump** one's **load**.

dump on someone or something **1.** to snow on someone or something. ☐ *Well, it dumped on us again last night.* ☐ *The cold front dumped on the northeast again today.* **2.** and **do a dump on** someone or something; **dump all over** someone or something *Sl.* to criticize someone or something; to destroy someone or something. ☐ *There is no need to do a dump on me. I didn't wreck your car.* ☐ *The boss—mad as a wet hen—dumped all over me.*

D

dump one's **load 1.** *Sl.* to empty one's stomach; to vomit. ☐ *He's had too much to drink and is dumping his load.* **2.** and **dump a load** *Sl.* to defecate. (Crude. Potentially offensive. Use only with discretion.) ☐ *He had to go dump a load.* ☐ *He dumped his load and settled back down to work.*

dump something **on** someone *Fig.* to pour out one's troubles to someone. ☐ *She dumped all her grief on her friend, Sally.* ☐ *I wish you wouldn't dump all your problems on me.*

dumped on 1. snowed on. ☐ *The entire Midwest was dumped on with about ten inches of snow.* ☐ *Our town really got dumped on last night.* **2.** *Sl.* maligned; abused. ☐ *I really feel dumped on by all the bad reviews in the press.* ☐ *The jerk who designed this stupid congested stairway hasn't been dumped on enough.*

dun someone **for** something to harass someone to pay a bill or deliver something. ☐ *If you don't pay the bill, they will dun you for it day and night.* ☐ *My job is to dun people for payment of their bills.*

dunk someone or something **into** something and **dunk** someone or something **in**† to submerge someone or something in something, fully or partially. ☐ *They dunked him into the pool as a way of celebrating.* ☐ *Liz pulled the cup of coffee toward herself and dunked in her doughnut.* ☐ *She dunked herself into the cold water for just a minute.*

a **dust bunny** and a **dust kitten;** a **turkey's nest** *Fig.* a clump of dust and lint. ☐ *She swept the dust bunnies out from under the bed.* ☐ *There's a huge dust kitten behind the chiffarobe.* ☐ *He hasn't cleaned in weeks. There are turkey's nests in every corner.*

a **dust kitten** Go to previous.

dust someone **off**† *Sl.* to punch or beat someone. ☐ *We dusted them off one by one.* ☐ *We had to dust off all those big guys.*

dust someone or something **off**† to wipe or brush the dust off someone or something. ☐ *Dust this vase off and put it on the shelf.* ☐ *Please dust off this vase.*

dust someone's **pants** *Sl.* to spank someone, usually a child. ☐ *My dad will dust my pants if he hears about this.* ☐ *I'm too old for somebody to dust my pants.*

dust something **out**† to brush the dust out of something. ☐ *Dust this cabinet out and put the china back in.* ☐ *Please dust out this cabinet.*

Dutch auction an auction or sale that starts off with a high asking price that is then reduced until a buyer is found. (Viewed by some as insulting to the Dutch.) ☐ *Dutch auctions are rare—most auctioneers start with a lower price than they hope to obtain.* ☐ *My real estate agent advised me to ask a reasonable price for my house rather than get involved with a Dutch auction.*

Dutch courage unusual or artificial courage arising from the influence of alcohol. (Viewed by some as insulting to the Dutch.) ☐ *It was Dutch courage that made the football fan attack the policeman.* ☐ *It will take a bit of Dutch courage to make an after-dinner speech.*

Dutch treat a social occasion where one pays for oneself. (Viewed by some as insulting to the Dutch.) ☐ *"It's nice of you to ask me out to dinner," she said, "but could we make it a Dutch treat?"* ☐ *The office outing is always a Dutch treat.*

Dutch uncle a man who gives frank and direct advice to someone. (In the way an uncle might, but not a real relative.) ☐ *I would not have to lecture you like a Dutch uncle if you were not so extravagant.* ☐ *He acts more like a Dutch uncle than a husband. He's forever telling her what to do in public.*

duty bound (to do something**)** forced by a sense of duty and honor to do something. ☐ *Good evening, madam. I'm duty bound to inform you that we have arrested your husband.* ☐ *No one made me say that. I was duty bound.*

dwell in an ivory tower Go to **in an ivory tower**.

dwell (up)on someone or something to remain on the [important] subject of someone or something for a long time. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *I can't dwell upon this subject anymore.* ☐ *There is no need to dwell on Sarah further.*

dwell (up)on something to live on something, such as the planet Earth. (*Upon* is more formal than *on*.) ☐ *This is the largest turtle that dwells upon the earth.* ☐ *Many creatures dwell on this earth.*

dwindle away (to something**)** and **dwindle down (to** something**)** to shrink, contract, or diminish to something. ☐ *The noise dwindled away to nothing.* ☐ *It just dwindled down and was gone.*

dwindle down (to something**)** Go to previous.

dyed-in-the-wool [of someone] permanent or extreme. ☐ *My uncle was a dyed-in-the-wool farmer. He wouldn't change for anything.* ☐ *Sally is a dyed-in-the-wool socialist.*

dying to do something *Fig.* very eager to do something. ☐ *I'm just dying to go sailing in your new boat.* ☐ *After a long hot day like this one, I'm just dying for a cool drink.*

dying to know (something**)** *Fig.* very eager to know something. ☐ *I'm just dying to know how your weekend went.*

Ee

eager beaver someone who is very enthusiastic; someone who works very hard. ☐ *New volunteers are always eager beavers.* ☐ *The young assistant gets to work very early. She's a real eager beaver.*

eagle eye acute eyesight; an intently watchful eye. (From the sharp eyesight of the eagle.) ☐ *The students wrote their essays under the eagle eye of the headmaster.* ☐ *The umpire kept his eagle eye on the tennis match.*

***an earful** *Fig.* a great amount of discussion, criticism, gossip, or complaint. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *She was really mad about something, and I sure got an earful.* ☐ *Sue was standing around the corner while Jim and Mary were arguing and got an earful.*

early bird 1. *Fig.* a person who gets up early. ☐ *I never miss sunrise. I'm an early bird.* ☐ *The early birds were up at dawn and ready for breakfast.* **2.** *Fig.* a person who arrives early. ☐ *The early birds get the best seats.* ☐ *There were some early birds who arrived before the party was set to start.* **3.** *Fig.* having to do with early arrival. (Usually hyphenated.) ☐ *Early-bird arrivals will be given a free cup of coffee.* ☐ *The early-bird special this week is a free six-pack of iced tea for the first 100 visitors.*

The **early bird catches the worm.** *Prov.* If you wake up and get to work early, you will succeed. (Sometimes used to remark that someone is awake and working surprisingly early, as in the first example.) ☐ *Fred: What are you doing in the office at 7:30* A.M.? Jane: *The early bird catches the worm.* ☐ *I didn't expect to see you studying at the library at this hour of the morning. The early bird catches the worm, huh?*

early on early; at an early stage. ☐ *We recognized the problem early on, but we waited too long to do something about it.* ☐ *This doesn't surprise me. I knew about it early on.*

Early ripe, early rotten. and **Soon ripe, soon rotten.** *Prov.* A child with extraordinary talent or intelligence will probably lose those qualities by the time he or she grows up. ☐ *Jill: Philip was such a fine young boy; I'm surprised he's become such a good-for-nothing adult. Jane: Early ripe, early rotten.* ☐ *Jane: You must be very proud of your little boy. He seems so mature for his age. Ellen: I'm afraid it won't last. You know what they say: "Soon ripe, soon rotten."*

Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise. *Prov.* Going to bed early and waking up early is good for success. ☐ *Grandmother: I don't think it's good for you to be staying out so late, dear. Early to bed and early to rise— Grandson: Makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise. Yeah, Grandma, I know.* ☐ *Host: Don't leave so soon! The party's just beginning. Guest: It's past my bedtime, I'm afraid. Host: Early to bed, early to rise, huh?*

earmark something **for** someone or something *Fig.* to reserve something for someone or something. ☐ *Tom earmarked the best of the steaks for his special guests.* ☐ *I have earmarked this chair for the family room.*

earn one's **keep** to help out with chores in return for food and a place to live; to earn one's pay by doing what is expected. ☐ *I earn my keep at college by shoveling snow in the winter.* ☐ *Tom hardly earns his keep around here. He should be fired.*

earn one's **spurs** *Fig.* to prove oneself. ☐ *After that rodeo, all the cowboys agreed that Sally had earned her spurs.* ☐ *He felt that he had earned his spurs when he received his Ph.D.*

ease away (from someone or something**)** to pull away from someone or something slowly and carefully. ☐ *The great ship eased away from the pier.* ☐ *The ship eased away slowly.*

ease back (on something**)** to move something back slowly and carefully. (Usually refers to a throttle or some other control on an airplane or other vehicle.) ☐ *Ann eased back on the throttle and slowed down.* ☐ *Please ease back on the volume control a little. You will deafen us.*

ease off [for something] to diminish. ☐ *The rain began to ease off.* ☐ *The storm seems to have eased off a little.*

ease off (from someone or something**)** to move away from someone or something, slowly and carefully. ☐ *Ease off carefully from the deer, so you don't frighten it.* ☐ *Ease off quietly.*

ease off (on someone or something**)** and **ease up (on** someone or something**)** to reduce the urgency with which one deals with someone or something; to put less pressure on someone or something. ☐ *Ease off on John. He has been yelled at enough today.* ☐ *Yes, please ease off. I can't stand any more.* ☐ *Tell them to ease up on the horses. They are getting tired.*

ease (on) out (of something**) 1.** *Lit.* to continue moving out of something, slowly and carefully. ☐ *I was able to ease on out of the parking space, but only with difficulty.* ☐ *I looked both ways and eased on out.* **2.** *Fig.* to leave something, such as an office or position, quietly and without much embarrassment. ☐ *The bum finally eased on out of office without much public notice.* ☐ *He eased out while the press was concerned with some other crisis.*

ease someone **(on) out (of** something**) 1.** *Lit.* to help someone continue to get out of something. ☐ *We helped ease her on out of the car.* ☐ *With care, we eased her on out.* ☐ *After taking a look around, Tom eased himself out of the opening.* **2.** *Fig.* to help someone decide to leave something, such as an office or position, quietly and without much embarrassment. ☐ *The scandal eased her on out of office in a way that an election might not have.* ☐ *The scandal eased her on out.*

ease someone or something **along** to help someone or something to move along, very carefully. ☐ *Just ease the piano along little by little.* ☐ *She eased the shy child along.*

ease someone or something **down† (from** something**)** to bring someone or something downward from something gently. ☐ *The rescuers eased the injured hiker down from the mountain.* ☐ *They eased down the hiker carefully.*

ease someone **out of** something and **ease** someone **out† 1.** *Lit.* to get someone out of something carefully. ☐ *The paramedics eased the injured man out of the wreckage.* ☐ *Please ease out the patient carefully.* **2.** *Fig.* to get someone out of an office or position quietly and without much embarrassment. ☐ *We eased the sheriff out of office without a fight.* ☐ *The board eased out the chairman by offering him a huge bonus.*

E

ease up (on someone or something**)** Go to ease off (on someone or something).

easier said than done *Cliché* said of a task that is easier to talk about than to do. ☐ *Yes, we must find a cure for cancer, but it's easier said than done.* ☐ *Finding a good job is easier said than done.*

East is East and West is West (and never the twain shall meet). *Prov.* Two things are so different that they can never come together or agree. (From Rudyard Kipling's poem, "The Ballad of East and West.") ☐ *I had hoped that Andrew and I could be friends in spite of our political differences. But, in our case, I'm afraid that East is East and West is West.*

East, west, home's best. and **East or west, home is best.** *Prov.* Home is the best place to be no matter where it is. ☐ *You may think that traveling all the time is fun, but eventually you'll discover that east or west, home is best.*

***easy as A, B, C** and ***easy as falling off a log; *easy as rolling off a log; *easy as (apple) pie; *easy as duck soup** very easy. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *If you use a cake mix, baking a cake is easy as A, B, C.* ☐ *Mountain climbing is as easy as pie.* ☐ *Finding your way to the shopping center is easy as duck soup.* ☐ *Getting out of jail was easy as rolling off a log.*

easy as (apple) pie Go to previous.

easy as duck soup Go to easy as A, B, C.

easy as falling off a log Go to easy as A, B, C.

easy as rolling off a log Go to easy as A, B, C.

easy as shooting fish in a barrel Go to like shooting fish in a barrel.

easy come, easy go *Cliché* said to explain the loss of something that required only a small amount of effort to acquire in the first place. ☐ *Ann found twenty dollars in the morning and spent it foolishly at noon. "Easy come, easy go," she said.* ☐ *John spends his money as fast as he can earn it. With John it's easy come, easy go.*

Easy does it. 1. Move slowly and carefully. ☐ *Bill (holding one end of a large crate): It's really tight in this doorway. Bob (holding the other end): Easy does it. Take your time.* ☐ *Nurse (holding Sue's arm): Easy does it. These first few steps are the hardest. Sue: I didn't know I was so weak.* **2.** Calm down.; Don't lose your temper. ☐ *John: I'm so mad I could scream. Bob: Easy does it, John. No need to get so worked up.* ☐ *Sue (frantic): Where is my camera? My passport is gone too! Fred: Easy does it, Sue. I think you have someone else's purse.*

easy money Go to soft money.

easy pickings [of things] easy to get or steal; [of people] easy to get or persuade. ☐ *The pickpockets found lots of easy pickings at the state fair.*

Easy, there! Calm down! ☐ *"Easy, there!" said Arizona Slim, patting his horse's neck.* ☐ *Easy, there! Before you start yellin', tell me what you're yellin' about.*

easy to come by easily found; easily purchased; readily available. ☐ *Please be careful with that phonograph record. It was not easy to come by.* ☐ *A good dictionary is very easy to come by.*

eat (a meal) out and **dine out** to eat a meal at a restaurant. ☐ *I like to eat a meal out every now and then.* ☐ *Yes, it's good to eat out and try different kinds of food.* ☐ *It costs a lot of money to dine out often.*

eat an animal **up†** Go to eat something up†.

eat and run *Fig.* to eat a meal or a snack quickly and then leave. ☐ *Well, I hate to eat and run but I have to take care of some errands.* ☐ *I don't invite John to dinner anymore because he always has some excuse to eat and run.*

eat (away) at someone *Fig.* [for a problem] to trouble someone constantly. ☐ *The nasty situation at work began to eat away at me.* ☐ *Nagging worries ate at me day and night.*

eat (away) at something *Fig.* to erode something. ☐ *The acid ate away at the metal floor.* ☐ *Fingers have a mild acid that eats at the metal of the door handle.*

eat crow 1. *Fig.* to display total humility, especially when shown to be wrong. ☐ *Well, it looks like I was wrong, and I'm going to have to eat crow.* ☐ *I'll be eating crow if I'm not shown to be right.* **2.** *Fig.* to be shamed; to admit that one was wrong. ☐ *When it became clear that they had arrested the wrong person, the police had to eat crow.* ☐ *Mary talked to Joe as if he was an uneducated idiot, till she found out he was a college professor. That made her eat crow.*

Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die. *Prov.* Enjoy yourself whenever you can, because you may die soon. ("Eat, drink, and be merry" by itself is simply a way of encouraging people to enjoy themselves.) ☐ *Fred: No cake for me, thank you. I'm on a diet. Jane: But, Fred, this is a birthday party. Eat, drink, and be merry.* ☐ *Natasha encouraged all her guests to eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die.*

eat high on the hog Go to live high off the hog.

eat humble pie to act very humble when one is shown to be wrong. ☐ *I think I'm right, but if I'm wrong, I'll eat humble pie.* ☐ *You think you're so smart. I hope you have to eat humble pie.*

eat in to eat a meal at home. ☐ *I really don't want to eat in tonight.* ☐ *Let's eat in. I'm tired.*

eat in(to something**)** to erode into something; to etch something. ☐ *The acidic water ate into the rocks on the shore.* ☐ *The acid ate in and weakened the structure.*

eat like a bird *Fig.* to eat only small amounts of food; to peck at one's food. ☐ *Jane is very slim because she eats like a bird.* ☐ *Bill is trying to lose weight by eating like a bird.*

eat like a horse *Fig.* to eat large amounts of food. ☐ *No wonder he's so fat. He eats like a horse.* ☐ *John works like a horse and eats like a horse, so he never gets fat.*

Eat my shorts! *Sl.* Leave me alone!; Nonsense!; **Drop dead!** ☐ *You're nuts! Eat my shorts!* ☐ *You think I'm going to clean up after you? Eat my shorts!*

eat one's **cake and have it too** Go to **have** one's **cake and eat it too.**

eat one's **fill** to eat as much as one can hold; to eat as much as one wants. ☐ *Please eat your fill. There's plenty for everyone.*

eat one's **hat** *Fig.* a phrase telling the kind of thing that one would do if a very unlikely event really happens. ☐ *If we get there on time, I'll eat my hat.* ☐ *I'll eat my hat if you get a raise.* ☐ *He said he'd eat his hat if she got elected.*

eat one's **heart out 1.** *Fig.* to grieve; to be sorrowful. (Fixed order.) ☐ *She has been eating her heart out over that jerk ever since he ran away with Sally.* ☐ *Don't eat your heart out. You really didn't like him that much, did you?* **2.** *Fig.* to suffer from envy or jealousy. (Usually a command.) ☐ *Yeah, the reward money is all mine. Eat your heart out!* ☐ *Eat your heart out! I won it fair and square.*

eat one's **words** *Fig.* to have to take back one's statements; to confess that one's predictions were wrong. ☐ *You shouldn't say that to me. I'll make you eat your words.* ☐ *John was wrong about the election and had to eat his words.*

eat out to eat a meal away from home, as at a restaurant. ☐ *I just love to eat out every now and then.* ☐ *Let's eat out tonight. I'm tired.*

eat out of someone's **hand** *Fig.* to do exactly as someone says; to grovel to someone. ☐ *I've got her eating out of my hand. She'll do anything I ask.* ☐ *He will be eating out of your hand before you are finished with him.*

eat someone **out†** Go to **chew** someone **out†.**

eat someone **out of house and home** *Fig.* to eat everything that someone has in the house. ☐ *That huge dog is eating us out of house and home.* ☐ *The entire football team came over and ate poor Sally out of house and home.*

eat someone's **lunch** *Sl.* to best someone; to defeat, outwit, or win against someone. (Like a school bully taking away children's lunches and eating them.) ☐ *The upstart ABC Computer Company is eating IBM's lunch.*

eat someone's **salt** *Rur.* to be someone's guest. ☐ *The least you can do when you're eating someone's salt is to help them out around the house.* ☐ *That good-for-nothing Jim was flirting with Bill's wife at the same time he was eating Bill's salt.*

eat someone **up† 1.** *Lit.* to consume the flesh of someone. ☐ *The big bad wolf said he was going to eat you up!* ☐ *The bear ate up the fish.* **2.** *Fig.* [for an idea] to consume a person. ☐ *The whole idea of visiting Australia was just eating her up.* ☐ *The obsession to own a car was eating up my brother and his friends.* **3.** *Fig.* [for insects] to bite a person all over. ☐ *These mosquitoes are just eating me up!* ☐ *The bugs literally ate up all the hikers.* **4.** *Fig.* [for someone] to overwhelm and devastate someone. ☐ *The guy is a devil! He just eats up people!* ☐ *Fred will just eat you up. He is a vicious administrator.*

eat something **away†** to erode something; to consume something bit by bit. ☐ *The acid ate the finish away.* ☐ *It ate away the finish.*

eat something **off†** Go to next.

eat something **off (of)** something and **eat** something **off†** to erode something off a larger part. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *The acidic rain ate the finish off the steeple.* ☐ *The acid ate off the finish.*

eat something **out† 1.** to eat some kind of meal or a particular food away from home, as at a restaurant. ☐ *We eat fish out, but we don't cook it at home.* ☐ *We may eat out a meal or two, but certainly not every meal.* **2.** [for something or an animal] to consume the inside of something. ☐ *The ants ate the inside of the pumpkin out.* ☐ *The ants ate out the pumpkin.*

eat (something**) out of** something to eat food directly from a container, such as a bag, box, can, etc. ☐ *You shouldn't eat out of the can.* ☐ *Maria was eating potato chips right out of the bag.*

eat something **up† 1.** and **eat** an animal **up†** *Lit.* to devour all of some food or an animal. ☐ *They ate the turkey up, and no one had to eat leftovers.* ☐ *The lion ate up the zebra very quickly.* **2.** *Fig.* to consume something rapidly, such as money. ☐ *Running this household eats my income up.* ☐ *The car really eats up gas.* **3.** *Fig.* to believe something. ☐ *Those people really eat that stuff up about tax reduction.* ☐ *They'll eat up almost anything you tell them.* **4.** *Fig.* to appreciate something. ☐ *The audience liked my singing; they really ate it up.* ☐ *The stuff about the federal budget went over well. They really ate up the whole story.*

eat through (something**)** to erode all the way through something. ☐ *The acid ate through the countertop and ruined everything in the drawers below.* ☐ *The vinegar ate through the top of the pickle jar.*

Eat to live, not live to eat. *Prov.* Do not be gluttonous.; Eating should not be your favorite activity, but something you do to maintain your health. ☐ *"Eat to live, not live to eat," was the doctor's advice to Gene, who was dangerously overweight.*

Eat up! to eat everything; to eat eagerly. (Usually a command to begin eating. Compare this with **Drink up!**.) ☐ *Come on, let's eat up and get going.* ☐ *Eat up, you guys, and get back to work!*

eat(en) up with something *Fig.* consumed with something, such as jealously. ☐ *Jed was so eaten up with hatred that he couldn't see straight.* ☐ *Effie was eaten up with jealously.*

eavesdrop on someone to listen in on people having a private conversation. ☐ *I saw her eavesdropping on them.* ☐ *Please don't eavesdrop on me.*

eavesdrop on something to listen in on a private conversation. ☐ *She was eavesdropping on their conversation.* ☐ *Maria was eavesdropping on the telephone call.*

Eavesdroppers never hear any good of themselves. and **Listeners never hear any good of themselves.** *Prov.* If you eavesdrop on people who are talking about you, chances are that you will hear them say unfavorable things about you. (This implies that you should not eavesdrop.) ☐ *Child: Mommy, I heard Suzy and Lisa talking about me, and they said I was a crybaby! Mother: That just goes to show you, dear, that eavesdroppers never hear any good of themselves.* ☐ *I knew that Mother and Dad had gone into the other room to discuss my situation, and I was tempted to put my ear to the door and*

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listen to them, but I remembered that listeners never hear any good of themselves.

ebb and flow to decrease and then increase, as with tides; a decrease followed by an increase, as with tides. ☐ *The fortunes of the major political parties tend to ebb and flow over time.* ☐ *The ebb and flow of democracy through history is a fascinating subject.*

ebb away to recede; to subside; to flow back. ☐ *His life ebbed away little by little.* ☐ *As the sunlight ebbed away, the sky took on a grayish color.*

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echo back to something [for something] to recall something similar in the past. ☐ *This idea echoes back to the end of the last century, when people thought this way.*

echo with something **1.** *Lit.* [for a large space] to resound with the echoing sounds of a loud noise. ☐ *The cathedral echoed with the sounds of the organ.* ☐ *The valley echoed with the sound of horses' hooves.* **2.** *Fig.* [for something] to have reminders of something. (Literary and very limited.) ☐ *My thoughts echoed with the sounds of spring.* ☐ *The room echoed with happier days.*

economical with the truth *Euph.* untruthful. ☐ *The mayor was known to be economical with the truth.* ☐ *I discovered that my boss had been economical with the truth when she said that the company was making money.*

economize on something to save money by cutting the cost of something. ☐ *We will have to economize on our food budget.* ☐ *We can only economize on a few things.*

edge away (from someone or something**)** to move cautiously away from someone or something. ☐ *We edged away from the dirty man in the ragged clothes.* ☐ *As others saw the gun, they edged away.*

edge by (someone or something**)** to move carefully past someone or something. ☐ *Try to edge by the portly gentleman carefully. He is very grumpy about being bumped.* ☐ *Edge by as carefully as you can.*

the **edge on** someone Go to the **advantage of** someone.

edge (one's **way) across (**something**)** to make one's way across something carefully. ☐ *The hikers edged their way across the narrow ledge.* ☐ *Now, edge your way across and don't look down.*

edge (one's **way) around** something to make one's way around something carefully. ☐ *I edged my way around the table, trying not to disturb anyone.* ☐ *Sam edged around the perimeter of the room.*

the **edge over** someone Go to the **advantage of** someone.

edge someone **out of** something to pressure someone gradually to leave something; to put gradual pressure on someone to retire from a job. ☐ *We grasped the child's hand and edged her out of the stable without frightening the horses.* ☐ *The board tried to edge him out of the job by limiting his staff and budget.*

edge something **out†** Go to next.

edge something **out of** something and **edge** something **out†** to move something out of something very carefully, bit by bit. ☐ *Sam edged the control rod out of the reactor, using the remote control device.* ☐ *Mary edged the car out of the parking place.* ☐ *Carefully, she edged out the car.*

edge something **with** something to put an edging or border of something onto something. ☐ *The tailor edged the hem with lace, making the skirt appear longer.* ☐ *The hem was edged with lace.*

edit something **out of** something and **edit** something **out†** to strike out words or sentences from something that is going to be published; to cut out textual material in the editing process. ☐ *She edited the foul language out of the essay.* ☐ *Frank edited out the misspelled words.*

educate someone **for** something to train someone for something or to do something. ☐ *I wasn't educated for doing this kind of thing.* ☐ *He had spent many years educating himself for just this kind of job.*

educate someone **in** something to train someone about something; to school someone in something. ☐ *Her parents educated her in the ways of the old country.* ☐ *She had educated herself in the ways of big business.*

egg someone **on** to encourage, urge, or dare someone to continue doing something, usually something unwise. ☐ *John wouldn't have done the dangerous experiment if his brother hadn't egged him on.* ☐ *The two boys kept throwing stones because the other children were egging them on.*

eighty-six something *Sl.* to throw something away. ☐ *Let's eighty-six this stew and go out and get some decent pizza.*

***(either) feast or famine** *Fig.* either too much (of something) or not enough (of something). (*Typically: **be ~; have ~**.) ☐ *This month is very dry, and last month it rained almost every day. Our weather is either feast or famine.* ☐ *Sometimes we are busy, and sometimes we have nothing to do. It's feast or famine.*

eject someone **from** some place to use force to make someone leave a place; to throw someone out of some place. ☐ *The management ejected Sam from the theater.* ☐ *He was ejected from the theater.*

eke something **out†** to extend something; to add to something. ☐ *He worked at two jobs in order to eke his income out.* ☐ *He managed to eke out a living.*

elaborate on someone or something to give additional details about someone or something. ☐ *Would you care to elaborate on that?* ☐ *I want to know more about Kelly. Could you elaborate on her?*

elbow grease *Fig.* hard scrubbing. ☐ *Tom: What did you use to get your car so shiny? Mary: Just regular wax and some elbow grease.* ☐ *Joe put a lot of elbow grease into cleaning the kitchen.*

elbow (one's **way) through (**something**)** to push or drive oneself through something, such as a crowd, perhaps using one's elbows or arms to move people out of the way. ☐ *She elbowed her way through the crowd.* ☐ *Jerry elbowed through the people gathered at the door.*

elbow someone **aside†** to push someone aside with one's elbow or arm. ☐ *She elbowed the other woman aside and there was almost a fight.* ☐ *The rude woman elbowed aside all the other people.*

elbow someone **out of** something and **elbow** someone **out†** *Fig.* to force or pressure someone out of something, such as an office, post, or status. ☐ *The board managed to elbow out the old head of the company.* ☐ *They tried to elbow me out, but I held on to what was mine.*

elect someone **(as)** something to select someone to be something by ballot. ☐ *We elected her as our representative.* ☐ *She was elected as our president.*

elect someone **to** something to select someone to be a member of something by ballot; to select someone to be an officer in something by ballot. ☐ *We elected you to office, so do your job.* ☐ *Tom was elected to the congress.*

an **elegant sufficiency** Go to a gracious plenty.

elevate someone or something **to** something to raise the status of someone to something; to promote someone to something higher, such as a job, a better status, etc. ☐ *The success elevated her to a new rank and higher pay.* ☐ *The boss's attention elevated the policy question to the highest priority.* ☐ *She sought to elevate herself to some sort of social goddess.*

eleventh-hour decision *Fig.* a decision made very late in a process, or at the last possible moment. ☐ *Eleventh-hour decisions are seldom satisfactory.* ☐ *The president's eleventh-hour decision was made in a great hurry, but it turned out to be correct.*

elicit something **from** someone to obtain information from someone. ☐ *I hoped to elicit a statement from the mayor, but I could not reach her.* ☐ *Larry was not able to elicit anything new from Jane.*

eliminate someone or something **from** something to remove someone or something from something. ☐ *We had to eliminate Jeff from the list.* ☐ *The cook eliminated veal from the menu.* ☐ *She sought to eliminate herself from consideration.*

elope with someone to sneak away with someone and get married without much ceremony. ☐ *Sally eloped with Tom, and everyone was surprised.* ☐ *I don't want to elope with Juan. I want a church wedding.*

emanate from someone or something to arise from or come out of someone or something. ☐ *A strange smell emanated from the basement.* ☐ *Some kind of eerie light emanated from the eyes of the statue.*

emancipate someone **from** someone or something to free someone from someone or something. ☐ *The president emancipated the slaves from their bondage.* ☐ *The planter emancipated Fred from slavery long before the law was written.*

embark for some place to leave for some place, usually in a ship or an airplane. ☐ *We are embarking for Denver tomorrow morning.* ☐ *Maria is embarking for Honolulu in just a few minutes.*

embark on something **1.** *Lit.* to begin a journey by boarding a ship, airplane, etc. ☐ *They embarked on their journey from San Juan.* **2.** *Fig.* to begin a project; to begin any process. ☐ *When will you embark on your new project?*

embarrass someone **about** someone or something to make someone feel bad or ashamed about someone or something. ☐ *Please don't embarrass me by mentioning my mistake again.* ☐ *There is no need to embarrass her about her unfortunate sister.*

embarrass someone **into** doing something to shame someone into doing something. ☐ *They tried to embarrass me into doing it, but I resisted.* ☐ *Juan tried to embarrass Fred into going home early.*

embarrass someone **with** something to use something to make someone feel bad or ashamed. ☐ *Please don't embarrass me with that old story again.* ☐ *Maria embarrassed Henry with a reminder of what had happened.*

embed someone or something **in** something to insert someone or something in something. ☐ *The team of oxen embedded their legs in the muddy river bottom.* ☐ *Laura embedded sequins in the candles and turned them into clever gifts.*

embed something **in** something to stick something into something. ☐ *The mugger only embedded his knife in the cloth of the victim's coat.* ☐ *A ring was embedded in the bread dough by accident.*

embellish something **with** something **1.** *Lit.* to ornament something with something. ☐ *He embellished the painting with too many little decorations.* ☐ *The room has been embellished with too many baroque sconces.* **2.** *Fig.* to add to a story with detail. ☐ *The storyteller embellished the tale with the names of people in the audience.* ☐ *I always try to embellish my tales with a little local color.* **3.** *Fig.* to add untrue things to a story. ☐ *He tends to embellish the truth with a few imaginative details.* ☐ *There is no need to embellish this story with anything untrue.*

embezzle something **from** someone or something to steal something from someone or a group. ☐ *They caught her embezzling funds from the bank.* ☐ *Jerry's business partner embezzled a large sum from their checking account.*

emblazon something **on(to)** something **1.** to decorate something with something. ☐ *The workers emblazoned wild decorations on the door.* ☐ *They emblazoned their name on the side of the building.* **2.** to put some writing or symbols that proclaim something onto something. ☐ *The knight emblazoned his crest onto his shield.* ☐ *The craftsman emblazoned the knight's crest on his shield.*

emblazon something **with** something to decorate something with writing or symbols. ☐ *They emblazoned the wall with pictures of past triumphs.* ☐ *His shield was emblazoned with the family crest.*

embody something **in** something to actualize something in something; to make something represent something else in actuality. ☐ *I tried to embody both good and evil in my painting.* ☐ *A strong sense of morality is embodied in her writing.*

embroil someone **in** something *Fig.* to entangle someone in something; to get someone involved in something. ☐ *Please do not embroil me in your squabbles.* ☐ *I wish I could keep from embroiling myself in this kind of mess.*

emerge (from something**) (as** something**)** to come out of something as something. ☐ *The caterpillar would emerge as a butterfly in a short time.* ☐ *A new man emerged from prison.*

emigrate (from some place**) (to** some place**)** to move away from a foreign land to a new land. ☐ *My family emigrated from England to this country over two centuries ago.* ☐ *They emigrated to this country from England.*

emit something **(from** something**) (into** something**)** to discharge something from something into something else. ☐ *The snake emitted poison from its fangs into the cup the man held.* ☐ *It emitted venom into the cup from its fangs.*

empathize with someone or something to have an understanding about the way someone feels; to feel emotional pain with someone. ☐ *I can really empathize with what you must be going through. I've been through the same thing.* ☐ *I empathize with people who have the same family problems that I have.*

employ someone **as** something to pay someone to work in some capacity. ☐ *I employed Fred as a personal secretary for about three months.* ☐ *Can you employ me as a stock clerk?*

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employ someone **for** something to hire someone for a particular purpose. ☐ *I employ him for special chores around the factory.* ☐ *Kelly employed Walter for emergency repairs on the night shift.*

employ someone **in** something to pay someone to work in a particular type of work. ☐ *I employ Tom in machine maintenance.* ☐ *Laura is employed in accounting.*

empower someone **to** do something to authorize someone to do something; to grant someone the power to do something. ☐ *I will empower you to collect the dues of the members.* ☐ *The prime minister empowered a special office to oversee tax collection.*

emptier than a banker's heart *Rur.* completely empty. ☐ *My wallet was emptier than a banker's heart.* ☐ *His pockets were emptier than a banker's heart.*

empty into something [for a river, stream, or man-made conduit] to pour its contents into something. ☐ *The Amazon River empties into the Atlantic Ocean.* ☐ *The drainage pipe empties into the river.*

An **empty sack cannot stand upright.** *Prov.* A poor or hungry person cannot function properly. ☐ *Sit down and have something to eat before you go back to work. An empty sack can't stand upright.*

empty someone **out**† to cause someone to empty the bowels, stomach, or bladder. ☐ *This medication will empty you out.* ☐ *This stuff could empty out an army!* ☐ *He fasted for two days to empty himself out.*

empty something **into** something and **empty** something **in**† to pour something into something else. ☐ *Now, empty the can of soup into the pan.* ☐ *Open the can and empty in the contents.*

empty something **out**† to remove or pour all of the contents from something. ☐ *Please empty this drawer out and clean it.* ☐ *She emptied out the aquarium and cleaned it well.*

Empty vessels make the most sound. *Prov.* Foolish people make the most noise. ☐ *I suspect Amy is not very smart. She chatters constantly, and as they say, empty vessels make the most sound.*

enable someone **to** do something to make it possible for someone to do something. ☐ *This money will enable me to open my own business.* ☐ *My uncle enabled me to open my own candy shop.*

***enamored of** someone or something to feel love for someone or something. (Often an exaggeration. *Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *She is hopelessly enamored of Tom.* ☐ *Tom is enamored of chocolate ice cream.*

encase someone or something **in** something to contain someone or something in something. ☐ *We encased her broken leg in a splint and raced to the hospital.* ☐ *Sammy encased the butterfly in a glass display box.*

enchant someone **with** something **1.** *Lit.* to bewitch someone or something with a magic spell. ☐ *The children were enchanted with a spell that made them forget.* **2.** *Fig.* to fascinate someone with some object. ☐ *She enchanted the children with the little drawings she made of them.* ☐ *We were enchanted with her drawings.*

enclose someone or something **(with)in** something to contain someone, something, or some space inside of something. ☐ *The police enclosed the people in a safe area while the accident was being cleaned up.* ☐ *The farmer enclosed the pig within a new pen.*

encompass someone or something **(with)in** something to surround or include someone or something within the domain or span of something. ☐ *We encompassed the group within our administrative area.* ☐ *They could not encompass our neighborhood in the new school district.*

encourage someone **in** something to give support to someone about something in particular. ☐ *We want to encourage her in her musical career.* ☐ *Ted encouraged me in my efforts to become a baseball player.*

encourage someone **to** do something to inspire or stimulate someone to do something; to give someone the courage to do something. ☐ *We encouraged her to develop her musical talents.* ☐ *He encouraged himself to study hard so he could make it into medical school.*

encroach (up)on someone or something to infringe or trespass on someone or something; to move into the space belonging to someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *I did not mean to encroach upon your property.* ☐ *I need lots of space. Don't encroach on me.*

encumber someone or something **with** someone or something to burden someone or something with someone or something. ☐ *Please do not try to encumber me with your debts.* ☐ *She encumbered the marriage with a number of children from a previous marriage.* ☐ *She encumbered herself with the weight of both children and her purse.*

*an **end in itself** existing for its own sake; existing for no clear purpose. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *For Bob, art is an end in itself. He doesn't hope to make any money from it.* ☐ *Learning is an end in itself. Knowledge does not have to have a practical application.*

end in something [for something, such as a play, film, opera, etc.] to end in a particular way. ☐ *The opera ended in a lengthy duet before the death of the heroine.* ☐ *The party ended in a champagne toast.*

end it (all) *Euph.* to kill oneself. ☐ *He had been depressed for months. He decided to end it all.* ☐ *I'm no good to anybody. I'm going to end it. Don't try to talk me out of it.*

The **end justifies the means.** *Prov.* You can use bad or immoral methods as long as you accomplish something good by using them. (Not everyone agrees with this idea.) ☐ *Lucy got money for the orphanage by embezzling it from the firm where she worked. "The end justifies the means," she told herself.* ☐ *The politician clearly believed that the end justifies the means, since he used all kinds of nefarious means to get elected.*

End of story. *Inf.* That completes the story, and I will say no more. ☐ *I did it because I wanted to. End of story.*

the **end of the ball game** *Fig.* the end of some process; the end of life. ☐ *Well, the car broke down. I guess that's the end of the ball game.* ☐ *It looked like the end of the ball game as we sped too fast around the curve.*

the **end of the line** Go to next.

the **end of the road** and the **end of the line 1.** *Lit.* the place where the road stops; the end of the route, such as a bus, train, or subway route. ☐ *Our house is at the end of the road.* ☐ *We drove to the end of the road and began our hike into the mountains.* **2.** *Fig.* the end of the whole process. ☐ *When we reach the end of the road on this project, we'll get paid.* ☐ *You've come to the end of the line. I'll not lend you another penny.* **3.** *Euph.* death. ☐ *When I reach the end of the road, I wish to be buried in a quiet place, near some trees.* ☐ *She was nearly ninety when she came to the end of the line.*

end something **up†** to terminate something; to bring something to an end. ☐ *He ended his vacation up by going to the beach.* ☐ *She ended up her speech with a poem.*

end up to come to an end. ☐ *When will all this end up?* ☐ *I think that the party will have to end up about midnight.*

end up (as) (something**)** to become something at the end of everything. ☐ *I always knew I would end up as a doctor.* ☐ *If I don't get a job, I will end up a beggar.*

end up at something to be at something or some place at the end. ☐ *The plane ended up at Denver airport because of a storm in Colorado Springs.* ☐ *We ended up at home for the evening because the car broke down.*

end up (by) doing something and **wind up (by)** doing something **1.** to conclude something by doing something. ☐ *We ended up by going back to my house.* ☐ *They danced until midnight and wound up by having pizza in the front room.* **2.** to end by doing something [anyway]. ☐ *I wound up by going home early.*

end up in the poorhouse Go to in the poorhouse.

end up (somehow**)** to end something at a particular place, in a particular state, or by having to do something. ☐ *I ended up having to pay for everyone's dinner.* ☐ *After paying for dinner, I ended up broke.* ☐ *We all ended up at my house.* ☐ *After playing in the rain, we all ended up with colds.*

end up (somewhere**)** and **wind up (**somewhere**)** to finish at a certain place. ☐ *If you don't get straightened out, you'll end up in jail.* ☐ *I fell and hurt myself, and I wound up in the hospital.*

end up with all the marbles Go to all the marbles.

end up with someone or something to finish with the possession of someone or something or in the company of someone or something. ☐ *Careful or you will end up with Johnny for the weekend.* ☐ *Do you want to end up with the bill?* ☐ *I thought my date was with Sally, but I ended up with her twin sister.*

end up with the short end of the stick Go to the short end of the stick.

end with something to make something the final element, just before the end. ☐ *We will end with the singing of the school song.* ☐ *The concert ended with a vigorous march.*

endear someone **to** someone or something to cause someone to be cherished by someone else or a group. ☐ *Her good humor endears her to all of us.* ☐ *Sally endears herself to everyone because she is so funny.* ☐ *She failed to endear herself to her husband's parents.*

endeavor to do something to try to do something. ☐ *Whenever I endeavor to console her, she breaks down again.* ☐ *Maria endeavored to comfort Henry.*

endow someone or something **with** something **1.** to give something to someone or something. ☐ *We endowed her with the courage she needed to do the job.* ☐ *Gerald endowed the proceedings with a distinctive atmosphere.* **2.** to provide someone or something with a large sum of money that will provide income. ☐ *I will endow my alma mater with some of my fortune.* ☐ *The family endowed a chair in the humanities at the university.*

enfold someone **in** something to wrap or contain someone in something. ☐ *He enfolded the tiny baby in a soft blanket.* ☐ *Sarah enfolded herself in the silk sheets and giggled with glee.*

enforce something **on** someone to make a law effective with regard to someone. ☐ *I can't enforce this on her if I don't enforce it on you.* ☐ *This law can't be enforced on anyone.*

engage in small talk to talk only about minor matters rather than important matters or personal matters. ☐ *All the people at the party were engaging in small talk.* ☐ *They chatted about the weather and otherwise engaged in small talk.*

engage someone **as** something to hire someone to serve as something. ☐ *Yes, I engaged her as a secretary just last month.* ☐ *Will you engage me as a general troubleshooter?*

engage someone or something **in** something **1.** to make someone or a group busy doing something. ☐ *She knew how to engage the boys in useful activity.* ☐ *The den mother engaged the scouts in a woodworking project.* **2.** to draw someone or something into something. ☐ *The enemy sought to engage our troops in battle but failed.* ☐ *I tried to engage Gerald in conversation.*

engage someone **to** someone to betroth someone to someone. ☐ *Her parents engaged her to the man she ended up marrying.* ☐ *She engaged herself to some guy she met at a singles bar.*

engorge (itself) on someone or something and **engorge (itself) with** something [for an animal] to drink its fill of blood. ☐ *The vampire bat engorged itself on a number of creatures last night.* ☐ *Mosquitoes engorge on human victims.* ☐ *The mosquitoes engorged themselves with my blood all night long.*

engorge (itself) with something Go to previous.

engrave something **into** something to cut symbols into something. ☐ *She engraves a lovely design into the soap that she puts out for guests.* ☐ *Todd engraved his initials into the bark of the tree.*

engrave something **on(to)** something to cut symbols into the surface of something. ☐ *She engraved her initials onto the side of the tree.* ☐ *Ted engraved her name on the bracelet.*

engrave something **(up)on** something **1.** *Lit.* to cut letters or a design into the surface of something; to engrave something on(to) something. ☐ *Todd engraved his initials*

into the bark of the tree. ☐ *Their names were engraved onto each of their wedding rings.* ☐ *He asked them to engrave his initials upon the back of his watch.* ☐ *He engraved his name on the desktop.* **2.** *Fig.* to imprint something firmly on someone's mind. ☐ *I engraved the combination to the safe upon my brain.* ☐ *The teacher engraved the definition of a noun into my memory.*

engrave something **with** something **1.** to carve something, such as letters, into something. ☐ *He engraved the soft pewter with an old motto.* ☐ *Can you engrave my watch with a date?* **2.** to carve on something, using some tool or device. ☐ *The worker engraved the watch with a sharp stylus.* ☐ *Can I engrave this bracelet with this tool? Is it sharp enough?*

engraved in stone Go to carved in stone.

engross someone **in** something to occupy someone's time or thinking with something. ☐ *You can't expect me to engross Tom in my work.* ☐ *We were all engrossed in what the speaker had to say.*

engulf someone or something **in** something [for the fog, a flood, or waves] to swallow up someone or something. ☐ *The fog engulfed the small town in heavy mist.* ☐ *The waves engulfed the small boat in thousands of gallons of water.*

enjoin someone or something **from** something [for a court] to order someone or something not to do something. ☐ *The judge enjoined her from further action in this matter.* ☐ *The company was enjoined from further dumping of waste.*

enjoin someone **to** do something to order someone to do something. ☐ *We sought to enjoin her to remain in office.* ☐ *Sally wants to enjoin the committee to finish its work on time.*

enjoy the best of both worlds Go to the best of both worlds.

Enjoy your meal. an expression used by food servers after the food has been served. ☐ *The waiter set the plates on the table, smiled, and said, "Enjoy your meal."* ☐ *Waiter: Here's your dinner. Jane: Oh, this lobster looks lovely! Tom: My steak looks just perfect. Waiter: Enjoy your meal.*

enlarge (up)on something Go to expand (up)on something.

enlighten someone **(about** someone or something**)** and **enlighten** someone **(on** someone or something**)** to tell someone the facts about someone or something. ☐ *Please enlighten me about this trip you are planning.* ☐ *Would you enlighten me on the current state of things?* ☐ *Enlighten me about Sarah.* ☐ *She enlightened herself about automobile engines.*

enlist (oneself**) for** something to sign up for something; to enroll for something. ☐ *Sam wouldn't enlist for service.* ☐ *Todd enlisted himself for the army last week.*

enlist (oneself**) in** something to join something; to join the armed services. ☐ *She decided not to enlist herself in the air force.* ☐ *Bill enlisted in the army.*

enlist someone **for** something to enroll someone for something; to seek help for something from someone. ☐ *I enlisted all of them for the understudy parts.* ☐ *Can I enlist you for the committee?*

enlist someone **in** something to recruit someone into something; to recruit someone into the armed services. ☐ *They tried to enlist me in the army, but I decided against it.* ☐ *David enlisted his brother in an organization that gave assistance to peasants in South America.*

enmesh someone or something **in** something **1.** *Lit.* to entangle someone or a group in something. ☐ *Don't enmesh yourself in these ropes and chains.* ☐ *I didn't mean to enmesh you in this net. I should have kept it out of the way.* ☐ *Jane enmeshed herself in the net that had been set out to dry.* **2.** *Fig.* to get someone or a group involved in some problem. ☐ *They enmeshed us in their problems even though we tried to avoid it.* ☐ *We enmeshed the entire committee in the lawsuit.* ☐ *Why do I always enmesh myself in someone else's business?*

enough and some to spare *Fig.* plenty. ☐ *Would you like some more pie? We've got enough and some to spare.* ☐ *Mary: Can I borrow a cup of milk? Tom: Don't worry about borrowing. Take it. I have enough and some to spare.*

Enough is as good as a feast. *Prov.* You do not need more than enough of anything. ☐ *We don't have much of a surplus of food for dinner tonight, but enough is as good as a feast.* ☐ *Jane: I wish I could offer you more lavish hospitality. Jane: Don't be silly. Enough is as good as a feast.*

Enough is enough. *Prov.* That is enough, and there should be no more.; Stop! ☐ *Stop asking for money! Enough is enough!* ☐ *I've heard all the complaining from you that I can take. Enough is enough!*

enough something **to plague a saint** and something **is enough to plague a saint** *Rur.* enough of something to annoy even a patient person. ☐ *That little boy has enough curiosity to plague a saint!* ☐ *Sally's a well-meaning woman, but her endless gossiping is enough to plague a saint.*

enough (something**) to go (a)round** enough to serve a need; enough to serve all who have a need. ☐ *There's not enough coffee to go around.* ☐ *Will there be enough chocolates to go around?*

enough to keep body and soul together *Fig.* very little; only enough to survive. (Usually refers to money.) ☐ *When he worked for the library, Marshall only made enough to keep body and soul together.* ☐ *Maria's savings were just enough to keep body and soul together while she looked for another job.*

enrich someone or something **with** something to improve or enhance someone or something with something. ☐ *You might want to enrich this soup with a little milk or cream.* ☐ *The teacher enriched her students with field trips and films.*

enroll (someone**) for** something to sign someone up for something; to allow someone to join something. ☐ *I intend to enroll myself for physics next year.* ☐ *Todd enrolled himself for a refresher course in algebra.*

enroll (someone**) in** something to sign someone up to be in something. ☐ *They enrolled me in calculus against my wishes.* ☐ *I want to enroll myself in the history class offered at the latest hour.*

ensconce oneself **in** something *Fig.* to establish oneself in something; to settle oneself into something; to place oneself firmly into something. ☐ *He ensconced himself in the*

most comfortable chair. ☐ *Sally ensconced herself in the huge throne and pretended she was a queen.*

enshrine someone **in** one's **heart** and **enshrine** someone's **memory in** one's **heart** *Fig.* to keep the memory of someone in a special place in one's heart or mind. ☐ *Bob enshrined Jill's memory in his heart.*

enshrine someone's **memory in** one's **heart** Go to previous.

enshrine something **in** something to honor someone or something by placement in a shrine. ☐ *Bill enshrined his grandfather's watch in a glass dome.*

ensnare someone or something **in** something **1.** *Lit.* to capture someone or something in something. ☐ *Dave ensnared the rabbit in his trap.* ☐ *Henry ensnared himself in the trap they had laid for deer.* **2.** *Fig.* to catch or "trap" someone in an act or pattern of deception. ☐ *She sought to ensnare him in his own framework of lies.* ☐ *He ensnared himself in his many lies.*

ensue from something to result from someone or something. ☐ *What ensued from the change in policy was not anticipated at all.* ☐ *A very serious problem ensued from the events of the day.*

entangle someone or something **in** something **1.** and **entangle** an animal **in** something *Lit.* to catch or tangle up someone, a group, or an animal in something. ☐ *Careful! Don't entangle your foot in the anchor chain.* ☐ *Somehow I entangled the dog in the fishing net.* **2.** *Fig.* to get someone or a group involved in something. ☐ *She was trying to entangle us in her latest cause.* ☐ *They entangled us in their lawsuit.*

entangle someone or something **with** something to get someone or something tangled up with something. ☐ *He sought to entangle the pursuing mugger with a mass of ropes and boards.* ☐ *Sam entangled the rabid dog with a net and got away.* ☐ *He entangled himself with the ropes on the deck.*

enter in something to enroll as a participant in something, such as a contest, competition, etc. ☐ *She was not ready to enter in the competition.* ☐ *I can't enter in that contest. I'm not prepared.*

enter into something **1.** *Lit.* to get into something. ☐ *She entered into the house and immediately went to work.* ☐ *As the people entered into the cathedral, they became quiet.* **2.** *Fig.* to join in something; to participate in something. ☐ *I couldn't get him to enter into the spirit of the party.* ☐ *She just loves to enter into things and have a good time with people.*

enter one's **mind** *Fig.* [for an idea or memory] to come into one's consciousness; to be thought of. ☐ *Leave you behind? The thought never even entered my mind.* ☐ *A very interesting idea just entered my mind. What if I ran for Congress?*

enter someone or something **in(to)** something to enroll someone or something in something; to make someone or something a competitor in something. ☐ *I will enter you into the contest whether you like it or not.* ☐ *The trainer entered his fastest horse in the race.*

enter (something**) by** something and **enter (**something**) through** something to enter something or some place by way of a certain entrance. ☐ *We entered the building by the west door.* ☐ *You should enter through the revolving door only.*

enter the fray Go to join the fray.

enter the lists *Fig.* to begin to take part in a contest or argument. ☐ *He had decided not to stand for Parliament, but entered the lists at the last minute.* ☐ *The family disagreement had almost been resolved when the grandfather entered the lists.*

enter (up)on something **1.** to come in at a particular point as marked by something. ☐ *We entered the theater upon the most delicate point of the story.* ☐ *We entered on the tail end of a live scene.* **2.** to begin something. ☐ *Todd entered upon a new phase of his life.* ☐ *He entered on the management of a new project.*

entertain someone **with** something to provide something for amusement or refreshment to someone. ☐ *Will you try to entertain the children with a game or two, please?* ☐ *She entertained herself with the puzzle.*

enthrall someone **with** something to charm or captivate someone with something. ☐ *They enthralled us with the beauty of their singing.* ☐ *The children enthralled us with their rustic dances.*

entice someone or an animal **into** doing something to lure or cajole someone or an animal into doing something. ☐ *We finally enticed him into running for office.* ☐ *Donna enticed the cat into coming down from the tree.*

entice someone or an animal **into** something to lure someone or an animal into something. ☐ *Can I entice you into the house for some cold lemonade?* ☐ *We were able to entice the squirrel into the box with nuts.*

entice someone or an animal **with** something to lure someone or an animal with something. ☐ *We tried to entice him with a description of the cake, but he was not interested in coming.* ☐ *If the cat won't come in, try enticing it with a bit of fish.*

entitle someone **to** do something [for something] to qualify someone to do something. ☐ *This ticket entitles you to go in and take a seat.* ☐ *Does this paper entitle me to get a discount?*

entomb someone or an animal **in** something to imprison someone or an animal in a tomblike enclosure. ☐ *Please don't entomb me in that huge, cold office.* ☐ *Unknowingly, when they closed the door, they had entombed a tiny mouse in the church.*

entrap someone **(in** something**) (with** something**)** *Fig.* to use something to deceive someone into involvement in something. ☐ *The investigators entrapped Max into breaking the law with promises to buy the goods he stole.* ☐ *They entrapped Max into breaking the law.*

entreat someone **to** do something to beg someone to do something. ☐ *They entreated us to come back as soon as we could.* ☐ *I entreat you to think it over again.*

entrust someone or something **to** someone to place someone or something into the protection of someone. ☐ *Can I entrust Johnny to you while I shop?* ☐ *I entrusted my share of the money to Fred until I returned to town.*

entrust someone **with** someone or something to trust someone to provide protection and care for someone or something. ☐ *Can I entrust you with Johnny while I go in and*

vote? ☐ *I entrusted Fred with my share of the money until I returned.* ☐ *I would not even entrust myself with the care of this priceless vase!*

entwine around someone or something to weave or wind around someone or something. ☐ *The snake entwined around the limb of the tree.* ☐ *The huge python entwined around the horrified farmer.*

entwine something **around** someone or something to weave or wind something around someone or something. ☐ *They entwined their arms around each other.* ☐ *Jack entwined the garland of flowers around Jill.*

E

enunciate something **to** someone to say something to someone very clearly and distinctly. ☐ *Now, enunciate it to everyone, because they probably did not understand you the first time.* ☐ *I will enunciate it to you one more time, slowly.*

envelop someone or something **in** someone or something to wrap someone or something in someone or something. ☐ *The fog enveloped us in its grasp.* ☐ *Mountains of fog rolled in and enveloped the house in dense vapor.*

envisage someone or something **as** someone or something to imagine or visualize someone or something as someone or something. ☐ *I envisaged you as a more graceful person than you are.* ☐ *We envisaged the living room as sort of a gathering place for the entire family.*

envision someone **as** someone else and **envision** something **as** something else to imagine or fantasize someone as someone else; to imagine or fantasize something as something else. ☐ *I envision her as the next company president.* ☐ *We envisioned this as larger than it turned out to be.*

envy someone **for** someone or something to regard one with jealousy or resentment because of someone or something one has. ☐ *I envy you for your lovely car.* ☐ *We all envy you for your beautiful children.*

equal someone or something **in** something to be even or identical with someone or something in something. ☐ *John equals Bill in strength and size, I think.* ☐ *This cake equals that one in texture but not in richness.*

equal to someone as good or as accomplished as someone else. ☐ *I certainly feel equal to Randy. He's nothing special.* ☐ *I don't think that Bill feels equal to Bob, even though they are twins.*

equal to someone or something able to handle or deal with someone or something. ☐ *I'm afraid that I'm not equal to Mrs. Smith's problem right now. Please ask her to come back later.* ☐ *That's a very difficult task, but I'm sure Bill is equal to it.*

equate someone or something **with** someone or something to compare people and things, in any combination. ☐ *I tend to equate Tom with trouble.* ☐ *I equate the Johnsons with a long boring evening.*

equate someone **to** someone else and **equate** something **to** something else to claim that someone is in some manner the same as someone else; to claim that something is in some manner the same as something else. ☐ *I would equate Tom to Wally when it comes to native ability.* ☐ *You cannot equate my car to that jalopy you drive!*

equip someone or something **(with** something**) (for** something**)** to outfit someone or something with something for something; to provide equipment for someone or something for some purpose. ☐ *We equipped everyone with a spade for digging.* ☐ *They equipped the rescuers with equipment for any conceivable occurrence.*

equip something **with** something to add a piece of equipment to something. ☐ *We will equip our truck with a plow blade and plow snow this winter.* ☐ *This car is equipped with air-conditioning.*

erase something **from** something **1.** *Lit.* to delete or wipe something from something. ☐ *Please erase the writing from the blackboard.* ☐ *I will erase the incorrectly spelled word from my paper.* **2.** *Fig.* to remove something from something. ☐ *Erase that smile from your face!* ☐ *I hope you will erase that thought from your mind.*

erupt from something to burst out of something or some place. ☐ *A billow of smoke erupted from the chimney.* ☐ *A mass of ashes and gasses erupted from the volcano.*

erupt into something [for something] to become a serious problem suddenly. ☐ *The argument erupted into a terrible fight.* ☐ *They were afraid the fight would erupt into a riot.*

escalate into something to intensify into something; to increase gradually into something. ☐ *This argument is going to escalate into something serious very soon.* ☐ *These cases of the flu could escalate into a real epidemic.*

escalate something **into** something to cause something to intensify. ☐ *He escalated the argument into a vicious fight.* ☐ *The dictator tried to escalate the disagreement into a cause for war.*

escape by the skin of one's **teeth** Go to **by the skin of** one's **teeth.**

escape (from someone or something**) (to** some place**)** to get away from someone, something, or some place to another place. ☐ *Max escaped from prison to a hideout in Alabama.* ☐ *He escaped to Alabama from one of the worst-run prisons in the land.*

escape someone's **notice** *Fig.* to go unnoticed; not to have been noticed. (Usually a way to point out that someone has failed to see or respond to something.) ☐ *I suppose my earlier request escaped your notice, so I'm writing again.* ☐ *I'm sorry. Your letter escaped my notice.*

escort someone or something **from** something to accompany or lead someone or something away from something or some place. ☐ *A police officer escorted them from the auditorium.* ☐ *A band of honorary pallbearers escorted the coffin from the chapel.*

escort someone or something **to** something to accompany or lead someone or something to something or some place. ☐ *We escorted the women to their seats.* ☐ *Claude escorted Harry to the exit and bade him farewell.*

establish someone or something **as** someone or something to validate or confirm someone or something as someone or something. ☐ *As soon as we establish her as a viable candidate, we will launch the publicity campaign.* ☐ *She established herself as an authority on rare books.*

establish someone or something **in** something to set someone or something up in something or some place; to install someone or something in something or some place. ☐ *We established a restaurant in the middle of downtown.* ☐ *My uncle established me in the candy business.*

estimate the cost at some amount to approximate the cost of something at a particular amount. ☐ *I estimate the cost at about one hundred dollars.* ☐ *The cost of repairing the car was estimated at over four thousand dollars!*

***estranged from** someone to be alienated from someone. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *Toward the end, they were estranged from each other, so a separation was perfectly natural.* ☐ *She had been estranged from her husband for a number of years.*

etch something **in(to)** something and **etch** something **in†** to erode a design or message into something, usually with acid. ☐ *They etched their family crest into their good crystal.* ☐ *He etched in his initials.*

eternal life *Euph.* life after death. ☐ *He passed on into eternal life, leaving us behind to mourn.* ☐ *She is now at rest in eternal life.*

the **eternal triangle** a sexual or emotional relationship involving two women and one man or two men and one woman. (Typically, a couple [man and woman] and another man or woman.) ☐ *Henry can't choose between his wife and his mistress. It's the eternal triangle.* ☐ *I'm surprised Jane doesn't get tired of the eternal triangle. She goes out with Peter at the weekend and Jim during the week.*

evacuate one's **bowels** *Euph.* to defecate. ☐ *After taking a jog around the block, Jill felt the need to evacuate her bowels.* ☐ *I am afraid my little boy is sick. He has not evacuated his bowels for several days.*

evacuate someone **(from** something**) (to** something**)** to remove someone from something or some place to another thing or place, as in an emergency. ☐ *They had to evacuate everyone from the subway station to a nearby building.* ☐ *The rescuers evacuated the people from the flames.*

evaluate someone **as** something to judge someone's performance as something. ☐ *I will have to evaluate you as a new student.* ☐ *We must evaluate ourselves as teachers and leaders.*

Even a worm will turn. *Prov.* Even a meek person will become angry if you abuse him or her too much. ☐ *You'd better stop maltreating Amy. She's a mild-mannered woman, but even a worm will turn.*

even as we speak Go to **as we speak**.

*an **even break** a fair chance; a fair judgment. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Please give me an even break! I need some help here!*

even if it kills me *Fig.* [pledging to do something] even if [doing it] is very difficult. ☐ *Don't worry. I will get it done even if it kills me.*

even in the best of times even when things are good; even when things are going well. ☐ *It is hard to get high-quality leather even in the best of times.* ☐ *John had difficulty getting a loan even in the best of times because of his poor credit record.*

even something **out†** to make something even or level. ☐ *Please even the gravel out.* ☐ *They evened out the surface of the road.*

even something **up†** to make something even, square, level, equal, balanced, etc. ☐ *I'll even the table up.* ☐ *See if you can even up the legs of this table. It wobbles.*

even steven to be even (with someone or something) by having repaid a debt, replied in kind, etc. ☐ *Bill hit Tom; then Tom hit Bill. Now they are even steven.* ☐ *Mary paid Ann the $100 she owed her. Ann said, "Good, we are even steven."*

(Even) the best of friends must part. *Prov.* Even very good friends cannot stay together forever. ☐ *Child: I don't want Debby to move away. She's my best friend. Mother: Sometimes the best of friends must part, honey, even if they don't want to.*

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***even (with** someone**)** not being indebted to someone for money; no longer needing to retaliate against someone. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I will get even with you for breaking my baseball bat!* ☐ *Jimmy got even with Bill by punching him in the nose.*

the **evening of life** *Euph.* old age. ☐ *As she approached the evening of life, Sarah looked back on her accomplishments with satisfaction.* ☐ *The residents of this rest home are all in the evening of life.*

ever and anon now and then; occasionally. (Literary and archaic.) ☐ *Ever and anon the princess would pay a visit to the sorcerer in the small walled garden directly behind the castle.*

Every cloud has a silver lining. *Prov.* You can derive some benefit from every bad thing that happens to you. (You can also refer to the silver lining of a particular cloud, the benefit you can derive from a particular misfortune.) ☐ *I'm sorry your business is going badly, but don't despair. Every cloud has a silver lining.* ☐ *When Mary's friends visited her in the hospital, they tried to cheer her up, but Mary never could find the silver lining in the cloud of her illness.*

Every dog has its day. and **Every dog has his day.** *Prov.* Everyone gets a chance eventually. ☐ *Don't worry, you'll get chosen for the team. Every dog has its day.* ☐ *You may become famous someday. Every dog has his day.*

every fool thing every ridiculous or insignificant thing. ☐ *Every fool thing seems to go wrong with this car.* ☐ *I don't want to hear about every fool thing you did on your vacation.*

Every horse thinks its own pack heaviest. *Prov.* Everyone thinks he or she has the hardest work to do or the most difficult problems to overcome. ☐ *When we were growing up, my sister and I each thought our own chores were harder than the other's. Every horse thinks its own pack heaviest.*

every inch a something and **every inch the** something completely; in every way. (Usually strengthening a following adjective.) ☐ *Mary is every inch the schoolteacher.* ☐ *Her father is every inch a gentleman.*

Every Jack has his Jill. *Prov.* Every man will eventually find a woman to be his romantic partner. ☐ *Bill: I'll never have a girlfriend. None of the girls I take out will agree to a second date. Fred: Cheer up; every Jack has his Jill.*

every last one every one; every single one. ☐ *You must eat all your peas! Every last one!* ☐ *Each of you—every last one—has to take some medicine.*

Every little bit helps. *Prov.* Even the smallest amount is helpful. ☐ *Tom: I can only give a dollar to your charity. Mary: That's OK. Every little bit helps.* ☐ *Jane gave me a*

pair of booties for my new baby. It's not much, but every little bit helps.

every living soul *Fig.* every person. ☐ *I expect every living soul to be there and be there on time.* ☐ *This is the kind of problem that affects every living soul.*

Every man for himself (and the devil take the hindmost). and **Devil take the hindmost** *Prov.* Everyone has to fight for his or her own survival. (You can use this to describe an extremely competitive situation.) ☐ *At first we tried to help each other study for the exam, but soon it was every man for himself, and the devil take the hindmost.* ☐ *The inventors tried to collaborate, agreeing to share the profits from their invention, but they grew so suspicious of each other that each began to work separately, and devil take the hindmost.* ☐ *When the ship began to sink, it was every man for himself.*

Every man has his price. *Prov.* It is possible to bribe anyone as long as you know how much or what to bribe him or her with. ☐ *Henchman: I've offered the judge half a million dollars to give you a light sentence, but he says he can't be bought. Gangster: Keep trying. Every man has his price.* ☐ *Every man has his price, and the townsfolk were shocked to discover just how low their mayor's price had been.*

Every man is the architect of his own fortune. *Prov.* Your own decisions and your own actions determine what your life will be like. ☐ *The teacher told us, "If you work hard, you can become whatever you want. Every man is the architect of his own fortune."* ☐ *You shouldn't blame other people for your problems. Every man is the architect of his own fortune.*

Every man to his taste. *Prov.* Everyone likes something different, and you should not condemn people because of what they like. (Can be used to remark that someone's tastes are different from yours, as in the first example.) ☐ *Jill: Why don't you get some decent neckties, Fred? Fred: What do you mean, decent? My ties are perfectly fine! Jill: Oh, well. Every man to his taste.* ☐ *Ellen: People who like cats are much more discerning than people who like dogs, don't you think? Jane: Not necessarily. Everyone to his taste.*

Every minute counts. and **Every moment counts.** *Fig.* time is very important. (Used especially in situations where time is very limited.) ☐ *Doctor, please try to get here quickly. Every minute counts.* ☐ *When you take a test, you must work rapidly because every minute counts.* ☐ *When you're trying to meet a deadline, every moment counts.*

Every moment counts. Go to previous.

every mother's son (of them) *Fig.* every one of them. ☐ *The scout leader said that unless the scouts told him who had stolen the money, he would punish every mother's son of them.* ☐ *When the football team won the championship, they were all crying, every mother's son of them.*

every nook and cranny *Fig.* every small, out-of-the-way place or places where something can be hidden. ☐ *We looked for the tickets in every nook and cranny. They were lost. There was no doubt.* ☐ *The decorator had placed flowers in every nook and cranny.*

(every) now and again Go to next.

(every) now and then and **(every) now and again; (every) once in a while** occasionally; infrequently. ☐ *We eat lamb every now and then.* ☐ *We eat pork now and then.* ☐ *I read a novel every now and again.*

every other person or thing every second or alternate person or thing. ☐ *The magician turned every other card over.* ☐ *Every other table had an ashtray on it.*

every time one **turns around** *Fig.* frequently; at every turn; with annoying frequency. ☐ *Somebody asks me for money every time I turn around.* ☐ *Something goes wrong with Bill's car every time he turns around.*

(every) Tom, Dick, and Harry and **any Tom, Dick, and Harry** *Fig.* everyone, without discrimination; ordinary people. (Not necessarily males.) ☐ *The golf club is very exclusive. They don't let any Tom, Dick, or Harry join.* ☐ *Mary's sending out very few invitations. She doesn't want every Tom, Dick, and Harry turning up.*

Every tub must stand on its own bottom. and **Let every tub stand on its own bottom.** *Prov.* People should be independent. ☐ *Emily did not want to join the other students, who were helping each other study for the exam. "Every tub must stand on its own bottom," she said.* ☐ *Don't ask me for help. Let every tub stand on its own bottom.*

every walk of life every status and occupation. ☐ *We invited people from every walk of life, but only those who could afford the long drive could possibly come.*

ever(y) which way *Rur.* in all directions. ☐ *When they heard me yell, the kittens ran off every which way.* ☐ *That mountain road kind of turns you ever which way before it finally gets you to the top.*

everybody and his brother and **everybody and his uncle** *Fig.* everybody; lots of people. ☐ *The state fair was packed. Everybody and his brother was there.* ☐ *Everybody and his uncle was asking me where you was today.*

everybody and his uncle Go to previous.

Everybody loves a lord. *Prov.* People are attracted to the wealthy and powerful. ☐ *Although the prince was vulgar and unpleasant, he always received plenty of invitations to social gatherings; everybody loves a lord.*

everything an' all *Rur.* everything. ☐ *The thieves broke into Mary's house and took the television, the silver, her jewelry, everything an' all.* ☐ *I had to write a report about my trip to Memphis, what I did, what I ate, what I saw, and everything an' all.*

everything but the kitchen sink *Cliché* almost everything one can think of. ☐ *When Sally went off to college, she took everything but the kitchen sink.* ☐ *John orders everything but the kitchen sink when he goes out to dinner, especially if someone else is paying for it.*

Everything comes to him who waits. Go to Good things come to him who waits.

everything from A to Z Go to next.

everything from soup to nuts and **everything from A to Z** *Cliché* almost everything one can think of. ☐ *For dinner we had everything from soup to nuts.* ☐ *In college I studied everything from soup to nuts.*

everything humanly possible everything that is in the range of human powers. ☐ *The rescuers did everything humanly possible to find the lost campers.* ☐ *The doctor tried everything humanly possible to save the patient.*

Everything's coming up roses. *Fig.* Everything is really just excellent. Life is prosperous. ☐ *Life is wonderful. Everything is coming up roses.* ☐ *Q: How are things going? A: Everything's coming up roses.*

Everything's going to be all right. and **Everything will be all right.; Everything will be okay.; Everything will be just fine.; Everything will be great.** Do not worry, everything will be okay. ☐ *"Don't worry, Fred," comforted Bill. "Everything will be all right."* ☐ *Mary: I just don't know if I can go on! Bob: Now, now. Everything will be just fine.*

Everything will be all right. Go to previous.

Everything will be great. Go to Everything's going to be all right.

Everything will be just fine. Go to Everything's going to be all right.

Everything will be okay. Go to Everything's going to be all right.

Everything will work out (all right). Go to Things will work out all right.

Everything will work out for the best. Go to Things will work out all right.

evict someone **from** some place to force someone to move out of something or some place. ☐ *They evicted the squatters from the building.* ☐ *They were evicted from their home for not paying their mortgage.*

Evil be to him who evil thinks. *Prov.* May bad things happen to anyone who thinks evil things. (A curse against those who wish you harm. This is the English version of the French *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, the motto of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, a British order of knighthood.) ☐ *The secret brotherhood took an oath of loyalty and finished their meeting by declaring, "Evil be to him who evil thinks."*

evolve (from something**) (into** something**)** and **evolve out of** something **(into** something**)** to develop from something to something else; to develop from a more primitive form to the present form. ☐ *This creature evolved from a smaller, horselike creature into what we know as a horse.* ☐ *The human brain evolved out of a smaller and less complex form into the brain of today.*

exact something **from** someone to demand something from someone; to take something from someone. ☐ *The bill collector sought to exact payment from them for a debt that had been paid off long ago.* ☐ *You cannot exact a single cent from me.*

examine someone **in** something to give someone an examination in a particular subject or covering certain material. ☐ *The committee examined her in her knowledge of history.* ☐ *I was examined in math.*

examine someone **on** something to give someone an examination covering certain material. ☐ *I will have to examine you on this chapter myself.* ☐ *The teacher examined Larry on his understanding of phonetics.*

examine someone or something **for** something to inspect someone or something for the presence of something. ☐ *I examined the child for signs of abuse.* ☐ *You had better examine this dog for ticks.* ☐ *Don't forget to examine yourself for ticks after you return from the hike.*

Example is better than precept. *Prov.* You will teach people more effectively by being a good example than you will by telling them what to do. ☐ *Mother never lectured us; she just tried her best to be a good person, and we tried hard to be like her. She was living proof that example is better than precept.*

exceed someone or something **by** something to surpass someone or something by some amount. ☐ *Wally exceeded his quota by two hundred.* ☐ *He exceeded Larry by a large amount.*

E

exceed someone or something **in** something to surpass someone or something in something. ☐ *Tom exceeds Walter in athletic ability.* ☐ *Ralph exceeded the Rock of Gibraltar in hardheadedness.*

excel at something and **excel in** something to do something in a superior fashion. ☐ *She really excels at running.* ☐ *Wally does not excel at anything.* ☐ *Frank always hoped he would excel in math.*

excel in something Go to previous.

The **exception proves the rule.** *Prov.* Something that does not follow a rule shows that the rule exists. (Often used facetiously, to justify some rule you have proposed but which someone else has listed exceptions to. From a Latin phrase meaning that an exception *tests* a rule.) ☐ *Ellen: Men are always rude. Jane: But Alan's always polite. And Larry and Ted are polite, too. Ellen: They're just the exceptions that prove the rule.* ☐ *Bill: All the shows on TV are aimed at people with low intelligence. Alan: What about that news program you like to watch? Bill: The exception proves the rule.*

excerpt something **from** something to select a part of something from the whole. ☐ *We excerpted a few short scenes from the play and performed them for the class.* ☐ *A few paragraphs had been excerpted from the film as an example.*

exchange no more than some number of **words with** someone and **not exchange more than** some number of **words with** someone**; hardly exchange more than** some number of **words with** someone**; scarcely exchange more than** some number of **words with** someone to say hardly anything to someone. (Always negative.) ☐ *I know Tom was there, but I am sure that I didn't exchange more than three words with him before he left.* ☐ *We hardly exchanged more than two words the whole evening.* ☐ *Sally and Liz didn't have enough time to exchange more than five words.*

exchange something **for** something to trade something for something else. ☐ *I will exchange this one for a larger size.* ☐ *Can this be exchanged for something more suitable?*

exchange something **with** someone to trade something with someone. ☐ *I exchange Christmas presents with him, but I never see him otherwise.* ☐ *Let's exchange coats with each other.*

excite someone **about** something to stimulate someone about something. ☐ *I thought our vacation stories would excite her about going, but they did not.* ☐ *She was excited about the trip to Moscow.*

excite something **in** someone to arouse something in someone; to arouse someone with something. ☐ *The horror*

movie excited a lot of fear in Mike. ☐ *The smell of jasmine in the warm air excited a romantic streak in me.*

***exciting as watching (the) paint dry** very, very dull. (Sarcastic. *Also: **about as ~; as ~**.) ☐ *This book is about as exciting as watching paint dry.* ☐ *Listening to you is exciting as watching the paint dry.*

exclude someone or something **from** something to leave someone or something out of something; to leave someone or something off a list. ☐ *Did you mean to exclude me from the party?* ☐ *I excluded chocolate cake from the shopping list.*

E

Excuse me. and **Excuse, please.; Pardon (me).; 'Scuse (me).; 'Scuse, please. 1.** an expression asking forgiveness for some minor social violation, such as belching or bumping into someone. (*'Scuse* is colloquial, and the apostrophe is not always used.) ☐ *John: Ouch! Bob: Excuse me. I didn't see you there.* ☐ *Mary: Oh! Ow! Sue: Pardon me. I didn't mean to bump into you.* ☐ *Tom: Ouch! Mary: Oh, dear! What happened? Tom: You stepped on my toe. Mary: Excuse me. I'm sorry.* **2.** Please let me through.; Please let me by. ☐ *Tom: Excuse me. I need to get past. Bob: Oh, sorry. I didn't know I was in the way.* ☐ *Mary: Pardon me. Sue: What? Mary: Pardon me. I want to get past you.*

Excuse my French. Go to Pardon my French.

excuse someone **1.** to forgive someone. (Usually with *me.* Said when interrupting or when some other minor offense has been committed. There are many mannerly uses of this expression.) ☐ *John came in late and said, "Excuse me, please."* ☐ *John said "excuse me" when he interrupted our conversation.* ☐ *When John made a strange noise at the table, he said quietly, "Excuse me."* ☐ *John suddenly left the room saying, "Excuse me. I'll be right back."* **2.** to permit someone to leave; to permit someone to remain away from an event. ☐ *The coach excused John from practice yesterday.* ☐ *The teacher excused John, and he ran quickly from the room.*

excuse someone **for** something to pardon someone for something or for (doing) something. ☐ *Please excuse me for this mess. I've not been able to clean the house.* ☐ *I can't excuse myself for not doing it.*

excuse someone **from** something to permit a person not to do something; to exempt someone from something. ☐ *Please excuse me from attending the meeting.* ☐ *I must excuse myself from the discussion.*

exemplify something **by** something to use something to explain or illustrate something. ☐ *He exemplifies wisdom by his decisions.* ☐ *Roger exemplifies virtue by the way he treats his employees.*

exempt someone **from** something to release someone from the obligation to do something; to allow a person not to be affected by a rule or law. ☐ *I cannot exempt anyone from this rule.* ☐ *The members of Congress exempted themselves from the wage freeze.*

exercise a firm hand Go to a firm hand.

exercise control over someone or something Go to next.

exercise power over someone or something and **exercise control over** someone or something; **exercise influence over** someone or something to have someone or something under one's control or influence. ☐ *The dictator exercised power over the island for many years.* ☐ *See if you can exercise some control over your appetite.* ☐ *I wish I could exercise some influence over the committee.*

exercise someone or an animal **in** something to give someone or an animal practice in doing something; to drill someone or an animal at something. ☐ *Please exercise the dog in obedience routines.* ☐ *I hope you will exercise me in my Spanish irregular verbs.*

exercised about something *Fig.* upset about something. ☐ *Mary: You lost a hundred dollars playing poker!? Bill: Now don't get exercised about it.* ☐ *I can't tell Ma I'm failing English class. She gets exercised about every dumb thing I do.*

exhort someone **to** do something to urge or pressure someone to do something. ☐ *She exhorted us to do better, but we only did worse.* ☐ *The boss exhorted the workers to increase productivity.*

exile someone **(from** something**) (to** something**)** to force someone to leave something or some place and go to something or some place, often as a punishment for political reasons. ☐ *The government exiled him from his hometown to an island off the coast of South America.* ☐ *They exiled Gerald to another country.*

exit (from something**) (to** something**)** to go out of something or some place to another. ☐ *The children exited from the school to the parking lot when the fire alarm rang.* ☐ *We exited to the main street from the parking lot.*

exorcise something **out of** someone and **exorcise** something **out** to remove or cast out evil from someone. ☐ *We saw a movie about a priest who exorcised a demon out of a young girl.*

expand into something to grow into something; to enlarge into something. ☐ *The little problem expanded into a big one in no time at all.* ☐ *In no time at all, the vegetable garden had expanded into a small farm.*

expand one's **horizons** *Fig.* to experience and learn new things. ☐ *Read more! Travel! Go out and expand your horizons!*

expand something **into** something to enlarge something into something; to make something grow into something. ☐ *She expanded her business into a national company.* ☐ *I would like to build on an addition to expand this room into a more usable space.*

expand (up)on something and **enlarge (up)on** something *Fig.* to add detail to a report about something; to say more about something. ☐ *Would you please expand upon that last remark?* ☐ *Would you care to enlarge upon your remarks?*

expatiate on someone or something to say or write many words about someone or something. ☐ *She expatiated endlessly on the evils of tobacco.* ☐ *I have heard you expatiate on Harry quite enough, thank you.*

expect someone or something **for** something to anticipate someone or a group to attend something. ☐ *I expect you for dinner on Thursday.* ☐ *We expected all of the board of directors for the meeting.*

expect something **from** someone or something **1.** to anticipate receiving something from someone or a group. ☐ *I expect a letter from you at least once a week while you are gone.* ☐ *We expect at least a postcard out of you.* **2.** and

expect something **(out) of** someone or something to demand something from someone or something. ☐ *I expect more effort from you. Get to work.* **3.** and **expect** something **(out) of** someone or something to anticipate a certain kind of behavior from someone or something. ☐ *We expected better from you. I'm very disappointed in your behavior.* ☐ *We really expected better behavior of you.*

expectant mother a pregnant woman. ☐ *The doctor's waiting room was filled with expectant mothers.* ☐ *The magazine has articles of interest to young parents and expectant mothers.*

expecting (a child) to be pregnant. ☐ *Tommy's mother is expecting a child.* ☐ *Oh, I didn't know she was expecting.*

expel someone **from** something to force someone to leave something or some place; to eject someone from something or some place. ☐ *The two men expelled the fighters from the tavern.* ☐ *Ken was expelled from school for disciplinary reasons.*

expel something **from** something to force or eject something out of something. ☐ *The machine expelled cup after cup from its opening.* ☐ *The volcano expelled huge globs of molten lava.*

expend something **for** something to pay a certain amount for something. ☐ *I expended an enormous amount for skin creams.* ☐ *How much money did you expend for this gaudy tie?*

expend something **in** something to use or consume something in some activity. ☐ *You expend too much energy in talking.* ☐ *Harry expended a lot of time in the preparation of his speech.*

expend something **on** someone or something to use something on someone or something. ☐ *Don't expend too much energy on him. He isn't worth it.* ☐ *There is no point in expending any more money on this car.*

Expense is no object. Go to Money is no object.

Experience is the best teacher. *Prov.* You will learn more from things that happen to you in real life than you will from hearing about or studying things that happen to other people. ☐ *I don't care how many books you read about how to run a business; experience is the best teacher.* ☐ *The nurse believed that experience was the best teacher when it came to developing a bedside manner, so she made sure that all her students spent a lot of time with patients.*

Experience is the father of wisdom. and **Experience is the mother of wisdom.** *Prov.* The more that happens to you, the more you will learn. ☐ *I never understood why supervisors got so frustrated with me until I became a supervisor and got frustrated with my subordinates. Experience was definitely the mother of wisdom, in my case.*

Experience is the mother of wisdom. Go to previous.

Experience is the teacher of fools. *Prov.* Only fools do not learn after seeing other people's mistakes and insist on repeating them. ☐ *Father: You should spend more time studying and less time having fun with your friends. If I had been a better student when I was your age, I'd have a better job now. Son: Oh, come on, Dad. School's worthless. Father: Don't make the same mistake I did! Experience is the teacher of fools.*

experiment in something to conduct research or experiments about something. ☐ *The research group is experimenting in the field of biomechanics.* ☐ *We want to experiment in thermodynamics.*

experiment (up)on someone or something to use someone or something as the subject of an experiment. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Do you think we should experiment upon people?* ☐ *The researchers were experimenting on a new drug that might cure rabies.*

experiment with someone or something to try different experiments on someone or something; to use different people or things as key variables in an experiment. ☐ *They are supposed to be experimenting with new drugs.* ☐ *We no longer experiment with animals.*

explain at great length Go to at great length.

explain oneself **1.** to explain what one has said or done or what one thinks or feels. (Formal and polite.) ☐ *Please take a moment to explain yourself. I'm sure we are interested in your ideas.* ☐ *Yes, if you will let me explain myself, I think you'll agree with my idea.* **2.** to give an explanation or excuse for something wrong that one may have done. (Usually said in anger.) ☐ *Young man! Come in here and explain yourself this instant.* ☐ *Why did you do that, Tom Smith? You had better explain yourself, and it had better be good.*

explain someone or something **to** someone to give information or instruction about someone or something to someone. ☐ *Please explain it to me.* ☐ *Can you explain Andrew to me?*

explain something **away**† to explain something so that it is no longer a problem. ☐ *You can try to explain it away if you want, but that won't solve the problem.* ☐ *You can't just explain away all your problems.*

explode a bombshell Go to drop a bomb(shell).

explode with something **1.** *Lit.* to make a loud noise upon exploding or releasing energy. ☐ *The bomb exploded with a thunderous roar.* ☐ *When the joke was finished, the audience exploded with laughter.* **2.** *Fig.* to burst out saying something; to be about to burst with eagerness to say something. ☐ *The children exploded with protests when their parents told them it was bedtime.* ☐ *Hanna was exploding with questions.* **3.** *Fig.* to produce a sudden abundance of something. (Alludes to buds bursting or a sudden blooming or sprouting of vegetation.) ☐ *The fields exploded with an enormous crop of wildflowers.* ☐ *The cherry trees exploded with blossoms.*

export something **to** some place to sell something abroad to a particular country. ☐ *They are now exporting their products to Hungary.* ☐ *We are exporting all our product line to Eastern Europe.*

export something **to** someone or something to sell something abroad to someone or some country. ☐ *The company exported alcohol to Brazil.* ☐ *We only export books to our agents abroad.*

expose someone or an animal **to a disease** to place someone or an animal near a source of a disease. ☐ *Try to expose your children to chicken pox while they are young. It's horrible when you are an adult.* ☐ *He accidentally exposed his sheep to an infected animal.*

E

expose someone or something **to** someone or something to show someone or something to someone or something. ☐ *You should not expose the children to violent movies at their age.* ☐ *Do not expose the film to the light.*

expose something **or** oneself **to** someone or something to disclose someone's or something's secrets to someone or a group. ☐ *He exposed his inner thoughts to everyone there.* ☐ *She refused to expose herself to the ears of the curious and ceased talking.* ☐ *He exposed himself to the public when he revealed his involvement in the arms sale.*

expostulate about someone or something and **expostulate on** someone or something to comment or argue intensely about someone or something. ☐ *He always seems to be expostulating on something. Why can't he simply say "Yes" or "No"?* ☐ *Sam is expostulating on Bill's many shortcomings again.*

expound ((up)on someone or something**) (to** someone**)** to speak at length about someone or something to someone. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Let me expound upon Tom to you for a while. I think you need all the details on his qualifications.* ☐ *Please do not expound on Bill anymore.*

express one's **anger** to allow a release or expression of anger, such as through angry words, violence, or talking out a problem. ☐ *Don't keep your emotions inside of you. You have to learn to express your anger.* ☐ *Bob expresses his anger by yelling at people.*

express oneself **(to** someone**) (on** something**)** to say what one thinks about something. ☐ *I will express myself to Karen on that matter at another time.* ☐ *She expressed herself on Karen to the entire group.*

express something **in round figures** Go to in round figures.

express something **in round numbers** Go to in round numbers.

expropriate something **(from** someone or something**) (for** someone or something**)** to seize something from someone or something for someone or something. ☐ *The government expropriated the land from the peasants for an airfield.* ☐ *They expropriated land for a highway.* ☐ *They expropriated land from the farmers.*

expunge something **from** something to erase something from something. ☐ *The judge ordered the clerk to expunge the comment from the record.* ☐ *Please expunge the lawyer's remark from the transcript.*

expurgate something **from** something to cleanse something by removing something. (Often refers to editing objectionable material from written or broadcast material.) ☐ *They expurgated the most graphic passages from the novel.* ☐ *We will expurgate the offensive matter from the article.*

extend across something to spread across something. ☐ *The shadows extended across the whole land.* ☐ *The fog extended across the low-lying land.*

extend credit (to someone or a company**)** and **extend** someone or a company **credit** to allow someone to purchase something on credit. ☐ *I'm sorry, Mr. Smith, but because of your poor record of payment, we are no longer able to extend credit to you.* ☐ *Look at this letter, Jane. The store won't extend credit anymore.*

extend (from something**) (to** something**)** to spread from one point to another point. ☐ *The cloud of smoke extended from one end of town to the other.* ☐ *It extended to the end of the road from our front gate.*

extend one's **sympathy (to** someone**)** to express sympathy to someone. (A very polite and formal way to tell someone that you are sorry about a misfortune.) ☐ *Please permit me to extend my sympathy to you and your children. I'm very sorry to hear of the death of your husband.* ☐ *Let's extend our sympathy to Bill Jones, who is in the hospital with a broken leg. We should send him some flowers.*

extend over someone or something to spread over someone or something. ☐ *The smoke extended over Tom and his friends, who were having a picnic.* ☐ *The cloud extended over the entire valley.*

extend someone or a company **credit** Go to extend credit (to someone or a company).

extend something **to** something **1.** to lengthen something to reach something. ☐ *We extended the antenna to its full length.* ☐ *Extend your arm to the wall and see how straight you can make it.* **2.** to push a stated deadline further into the future. ☐ *I will extend the deadline to Friday.* ☐ *We cannot extend the due date to next month.*

extend to someone or something to reach all the way to someone or something. ☐ *This policy extends to you also.* ☐ *The road extends to Los Angeles.*

extenuating circumstances special (but otherwise unspecified) circumstances that account for an irregular or improper way of doing something. ☐ *Mary was permitted to arrive late because of extenuating circumstances.* ☐ *Due to extenuating circumstances, the teacher will not meet with the class today.*

extol someone or something **as** something to praise someone or something as something. ☐ *We extolled her as a heroine.* ☐ *The salesman extolled the medicine as a cure-all.*

extort something **from** someone or something to steal something from someone by coercion; to force someone to give something by making threats. ☐ *The crook was trying to extort a lot of money from the widow by selling her a worthless insurance policy.* ☐ *The authorities caught the accounting firm trying to extort a great deal of money from the bank.*

extract something **from** someone or something to remove something from someone or something; to make someone or a group give something. ☐ *We extracted the juice from the oranges.* ☐ *The police questioning Maggie extracted the truth from her.*

extradite someone **from** some place **(to** some place**)** to have someone sent from some place to face criminal prosecution. ☐ *The state's attorney sought to extradite Max from Missouri.* ☐ *The gang leader was extradited from Indiana to New York to face assault charges.*

extrapolate something **from** something to reason out the answer from the known facts. ☐ *I cannot extrapolate what he meant from these notes.* ☐ *Can you extrapolate the annual total from the company's sales so far this year?*

extricate someone or something **from** someone or something to disentangle someone or something from someone or something; to free someone or something from someone or something. ☐ *I tried to extricate myself from her, but*

she made it hard for me to get away politely. ☐ *I managed to extricate the ring from the vacuum cleaner bag.*

exult at something and **exult over** something to rejoice because of something; to rejoice about something. ☐ *We exulted at the end of the hostilities.* ☐ *The citizens exulted over the downfall of the dictator.*

exult in something to take great pleasure in something; to enjoy something immensely. ☐ *I exult in the beauty of a spring day.* ☐ *We exulted in the glory of summer.*

exult over something Go to **exult at** something.

An **eye for an eye (and a tooth for a tooth).** *Prov.* If someone hurts you, you should punish the offender by hurting him or her in the same way. (An ancient principle of justice going back to biblical times.) ☐ *When they were children, the two brothers operated on the principle of an eye for an eye, so that if the older one hit the younger one, the younger one was entitled to hit him back just as hard.*

the **eye of the hurricane** and the **eye of the storm 1.** *Lit.* the area of calm in the center of a tornado, hurricane, or cyclone. ☐ *It is calm and peaceful in the eye of the storm.* **2.** *Fig.* a temporary peaceful time amidst more trouble and strife yet to come. ☐ *Don't relax. This is the eye of the storm. The lunch hour rush is over, but the dinner rush will start soon.*

the **eye of the storm** Go to previous.

eyeball-to-eyeball *Fig.* face-to-face and often very close; in person. ☐ *They approached each other eyeball-to-eyeball and frowned.* ☐ *Let's talk more when we are eyeball-to-eyeball.*

***an eyeful (of** someone or something**)** *Fig.* a shocking or surprising sight. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *The office door opened for a minute and I got an eyeful of the interior.* ☐ *Mary got an eyeful of the company's extravagant spending when she saw the bill for the executive board's catered lunch.*

eyes like saucers *Fig.* eyes opened widely as in amazement. ☐ *Our eyes were like saucers as we witnessed another display of the manager's temper.*

eyes like two burnt holes in a blanket *Rur.* eyes with dark circles around them. ☐ *I can tell you ain't slept. You got eyes like two burnt holes in a blanket.*

Ff

face away (from someone or something**)** to turn away from someone or something. ☐ *Please face away from me while I change clothes.* ☐ *I'll face away. You go right ahead.*

face off 1. to begin a hockey game with two players facing one another. ☐ *They faced off and the match was on.* **2.** to prepare for a confrontation. ☐ *The opposing candidates faced off and the debate began.* ☐ *They faced off and I knew there was going to be a fight.*

face on(to) something [for something] to have a view out onto something. ☐ *The house faced onto the sea and provided a beautiful view of the incoming ships.* ☐ *Our office building does not face onto the street.* ☐ *We asked for a room that faces on the main square.*

face someone **down**† to make a face-to-face stand with someone who eventually backs down. ☐ *Chuck succeeded in facing Tom down.* ☐ *Facing down Tom wasn't difficult for Chuck.*

face someone or something **forward** to turn someone or something to the front. (Also with many other directions—*backward, to the right, to the left,* etc.) ☐ *Please face your brother forward now.* ☐ *Face the book forward so we can read the title.*

face (someone or something**) into** something to turn (the face or front of) someone or something directly toward something. ☐ *Face the sail into the wind.* ☐ *Please face into the camera.*

face someone **with** something to present evidence of something to someone. ☐ *When I faced him with the evidence, he confessed immediately.* ☐ *The police faced Max with the witness's story.* ☐ *The CEO was faced with the problem of bringing the bankrupt firm back to profitability.*

face something **down** to turn something face downward. ☐ *Ted drew a card and faced it down.* ☐ *Face your cards down when you leave the card table.*

face something **head-on** *Fig.* to confront a problem directly and openly. ☐ *Let's face this problem head-on and try to solve it quickly and painlessly.*

face something **with** something to install something on the surface of something. ☐ *We faced the kitchen walls with yellow tile.* ☐ *The wall was faced with tile.*

a **face that could stop a clock** Go to next.

a **face (that) only a mother could love** and a **face that could stop a clock** *Fig.* a very ugly face. (Usually jocular. See also homely enough to stop a clock.) ☐ *The poor baby has a face only a mother could love.* ☐ *Look at that guy. That's a face that could stop a clock.*

face (the) facts to confront the truth about someone or something; to confront and accept the consequences of something. ☐ *Eventually, you will have to face the facts. Times are hard.*

face the music *Fig.* to receive punishment; to accept the unpleasant results of one's actions. ☐ *Mary broke a dining-room window and had to face the music when her father got home.* ☐ *After failing a math test, Tom had to go home and face the music.*

face up (to someone or something**)** to confront with courage someone or something representing a threat or unpleasantness. ☐ *You are simply going to have to admit your mistake and face up to the boss.* ☐ *You must face up to the authorities if you have done something wrong.*

face-to-face 1. *Fig.* in person; in the same location. (Said only of people. An adverb.) ☐ *Let's talk about this face-to-face. I don't like talking over the telephone.* ☐ *Many people prefer to talk face-to-face.* **2.** *Fig.* facing one another; in the same location. (Used as an attributive.) ☐ *I prefer to have a face-to-face meeting.* ☐ *They work better on a face-to-face basis.*

Fact is stranger than fiction. and **Truth is stranger than fiction.** *Prov.* Things that really happen are harder to believe or more amazing than stories that people invent. ☐ *Did you see the story in the newspaper about the criminal who attacks people with a toenail clipper? Fact is stranger than fiction!* ☐ *Jill: I can't believe someone's paying 900 dollars for Tom's broken-down old car—it doesn't even run. Jane: Truth is stranger than fiction.*

the **facts of life 1.** *Euph.* the facts of sex and reproduction, especially human reproduction. (See also the birds and the bees.) ☐ *My parents told me the facts of life when I was nine years old.* ☐ *Bill learned the facts of life from his classmates.* **2.** *Fig.* the truth about the unpleasant ways that the world works. ☐ *Mary really learned the facts of life when she got her first job.* ☐ *Tom couldn't accept the facts of life in business, so he quit.*

fade away (into something**) 1.** to diminish into something. ☐ *The light faded away into nothing.* ☐ *The sound of the drums faded away into the distance.* **2.** Go to fade out.

fade back (into something**)** to move back into a particular area. ☐ *He faded back to throw a pass.* ☐ *Quickly and unnoticed, he faded back.*

fade down [for sound] to diminish. ☐ *The roar of the train faded down as it passed and fled into the night.* ☐ *As the thunder faded down, the sun began to break through the clouds.*

fade from something [for something] to leave something gradually, such as one's consciousness, memory, view, etc. (See also fade from view.) ☐ *The image faded from her memory at last.*

fade from view [for a sight] to fade away, typically owing to loss of light or distance. ☐ *The scene faded from view as the stage lights dimmed.* ☐ *My house faded from view as we drove down the long road to town.*

fade into something to diminish or change into something. ☐ *The light of dusk faded into blackness.* ☐ *In the corner of the painting, the deep reds faded into lavender.*

fade out and **fade away** to diminish and go away altogether. ☐ *The light in the distance faded out as the sun began to set.* ☐ *The light faded out as the candles burned themselves out, one by one.* ☐ *As it got farther into the distance, the car faded away.*

fade something **down**† to turn down a sound. (Broadcasting.) ☐ *The radio engineer faded the music down and the announcer's voice began.* ☐ *She faded down the music.*

fade something **in**† to bring a picture, sound, or both into prominence. (Broadcasting.) ☐ *The technician faded the picture in and the program began.* ☐ *Fade in the picture a little faster next time.*

fade something **out**† to diminish something altogether. (Broadcasting.) ☐ *At the end, you should fade the music out completely.* ☐ *Fade out the music earlier.*

fade something **up**† to increase the sound gradually. (Broadcasting.) ☐ *The director faded the music up and then down again before the announcer spoke.* ☐ *Fade up the music when the announcer stops talking.*

fag someone **out** *Sl.* to tire someone out. ☐ *All that work really fagged me out.* ☐ *The hard climb fagged the hikers out.*

fagged out *Sl.* exhausted. ☐ *I'm really fagged out after all that running.* ☐ *John, you sure look fagged out.*

fail in something to have not earned passing or satisfactory grades in some school subject. ☐ *George is failing in geometry.* ☐ *I hope I do not fail in math.*

fail someone **on** something to give someone an unsatisfactory grade on an assignment or test. ☐ *She failed us all on the math assignment.* ☐ *The teacher failed half the class on the assignment.*

faint dead away *Fig.* to faint and fall unconscious. ☐ *I almost fainted dead away.* ☐ *David will faint dead away when he reads this.*

faint from something to faint because of something. ☐ *I nearly fainted from fear!* ☐ *Three people along the parade route fainted from the heat.*

Faint heart never won fair lady. *Prov.* A timid suitor never won his lady. (Used to encourage boys or men to be bold in courting women.) ☐ *Bill: I'd really like to go out with Alice, but what if she says no? Alan: You won't know till you ask her. Faint heart never won fair lady.* ☐ *Don't be so shy about talking to Edith. Faint heart never won fair lady.*

the **faint of heart** *Fig.* people who are squeamish; someone who is sickened or disturbed by unpleasantness or challenge. ☐ *The pathway around the top of the volcano, near the crater, is not for the faint of heart.*

fair and impartial just and unbiased. (Usually referring to some aspect of the legal system, such as a jury, a hearing, or a judge.) ☐ *Gary felt that he had not received a fair and impartial hearing.* ☐ *We demand that all of our judges be fair and impartial in every instance.*

fair and square completely fair(ly); justly; within the rules. ☐ *She won the game fair and square.* ☐ *The division of the money should be fair and square.*

fair game (for something**)** someone or something that it is considered permissible to attack or abuse in some way. ☐ *I don't like seeing articles exposing people's private lives, but politicians are fair game for that kind of criticism.* ☐ *Journalists always regard movie stars as fair game.*

*a **fair shake** an instance of fair treatment. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *He's unpleasant, but we have to give him a fair shake.* ☐ *He got a fair shake from us. Don't worry!*

fair something **out**† *Rur.* to distribute something fairly. ☐ *She faired the meager stew out the best she could.* ☐ *Walter faired out the pie.*

fair to middlin' *Rur.* mediocre; not bad but not good. (*Middling* means 'of average quality.') ☐ *Tom: How are you feeling today? Bill: Fair to middlin'.* ☐ *My sewing is excellent, but my cooking is only fair to middlin'.*

fair-haired boy *Fig.* a favored person. (Not necessarily young or a boy.) ☐ *The teacher's fair-haired boy always does well on tests.* ☐ *The supervisor's son was the fair-haired boy on the construction site.*

fair-weather friend *Fig.* someone who is your friend only when things are pleasant or going well for you. ☐ *Bill stayed for lunch but he wouldn't help me with the yard work. He's just a fair-weather friend.* ☐ *A fair-weather friend isn't much help in an emergency.*

Faith will move mountains. *Prov.* If you believe in what you are doing, you can overcome any obstacle. (Sometimes refers to faith in God.) ☐ *Jane's faith in her cause could move mountains.* ☐ *You may feel disheartened sometimes, but remember that faith will move mountains.*

fake it to pretend (to do something). ☐ *If you don't know the right notes, just fake it.* ☐ *I can't fake it anymore. I've got to be honest with you.*

fake off *Sl.* to waste time; to **goof off**. ☐ *Hey, you guys, quit faking off!* ☐ *All you clowns do is fake off. Now, get busy!*

fake someone **out**† to deceive someone; to fool someone. ☐ *You really faked me out. I never would have guessed it was you.* ☐ *The student tried to fake out the teacher.*

fake someone **out of** something *Sl.* to get something from someone by deception. ☐ *He faked Tom out of his place in line.* ☐ *She faked me out of a lot of money.*

fall (a)foul of someone or something and **run (a)foul of** someone or something to get into a situation where one is opposed to someone or something; to get into trouble with someone or something. ☐ *Dan fell afoul of the law at an early age.* ☐ *I hope that you will avoid falling afoul of the district manager. She can be a formidable enemy.* ☐ *I hope I don't run afoul of your sister. She doesn't like me.*

fall (all) over oneself **(to** do something**)** *Fig.* to rush eagerly and awkwardly to do something. ☐ *The boys fell all over themselves to open the door for Sarah.* ☐ *Larry fell over himself trying to help Sarah on with her coat.*

fall all over someone *Fig.* to give a lot of attention, affection, or praise to someone. ☐ *My aunt falls all over me whenever she comes to visit.* ☐ *I hate for someone to fall all over me. It embarrasses me.*

fall apart (at the seams) and **come apart at the seams 1.** *Lit.* [for something] to break apart where its

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parts are joined. ☐ *The dress fell apart at the seams.* ☐ *I wouldn't have thought that a coat that cost that much money would just come apart at the seams.* **2.** *Fig.* to break down mentally. ☐ *Tom works too much and finally fell apart.* ☐ *Poor Ralph simply fell apart at the seams.*

fall asleep *Fig.* to go to sleep. ☐ *I fell asleep while reading the very dull book.* ☐ *I got in bed and fell asleep at once.*

fall asleep at the switch Go to asleep at the switch.

fall away (from someone or something**)** **1.** *Lit.* [for something] to drop away from someone or something. ☐ *The paint is falling away from the sides of the house.* ☐ *Over the years, all the paint fell away.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to move back or retreat from someone or something. ☐ *The soldiers fell away from the line of battle.* **3.** *Fig.* to distance oneself from someone; to end an association with someone. ☐ *The candidate's supporters fell away from her when they heard about the scandal.*

fall away toward something to slant downward toward something. ☐ *The yard fell away toward the shore of the lake.* ☐ *The broad expanse of prairie land fell away toward the river bottomland, and beyond that, the river itself.*

fall back to move back from something; to retreat from something. ☐ *The gang members fell back, and I took that opportunity to get away.* ☐ *The troops fell back to regroup.*

fall back on(to) someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to fall backwards onto someone or something. ☐ *She stumbled and fell back onto the lady behind her.* ☐ *She fell back on the couch.* **2.** *Fig.* to begin to use someone or something held in reserve. ☐ *We fell back on our savings to get us through the hard times.* ☐ *We had to fall back on our emergency generator.*

fall behind (in something**)** and **fall behind (on** something**); fall behind (with** something**); get behind (in** something**); get behind (on** something**); get behind (with** something**)** to lag behind schedule in some kind of work or some other scheduled activity. ☐ *You are falling behind in your car payments.* ☐ *I tried not to get behind on them.* ☐ *Please don't fall behind with your payments.* ☐ *I won't fall behind again.*

fall behind schedule Go to behind schedule.

fall behind (someone or something**)** to lag behind someone or something. ☐ *You have fallen behind everyone else in class.* ☐ *Our production fell behind that of the other production line.*

fall behind (with something**)** Go to fall behind (in something).

fall below something to drop to a lower level than something. ☐ *The temperature has fallen below freezing again.* ☐ *When the audience fell below two hundred a night, they closed the play.*

fall beneath something to drop under something. ☐ *The thimble fell beneath the sofa.* ☐ *The gift that Bob had purchased for Maggie fell beneath the wheels of a truck.*

fall between something **and** something else to drop between things. ☐ *My loose change fell between the cushions of the sofa.* ☐ *I hope that my wallet doesn't fall between the table and the wall. I would never be able to move the table to get it.*

fall between two stools *Fig.* to come somewhere between two possibilities and so fail to meet the requirements of either. ☐ *The material is not suitable for an academic book or for a popular one. It falls between two stools.* ☐ *He tries to be both teacher and friend, but falls between two stools.*

fall by some amount [for an asset] to drop in value by a certain amount. ☐ *The gas stocks fell by nearly 10 percent today.* ☐ *If the stock market falls by four hundred points, I'm going to jump off a cliff.*

fall by the wayside Go to drop by the wayside.

fall down to drop or topple. ☐ *The baby fell down.* ☐ *Walk carefully on this ice or you will fall down.*

fall (down) at something to prostrate oneself before or at the feet of someone or something. ☐ *She fell down at the feet of the horrid man who held her child.* ☐ *She fell at his feet.*

fall down on someone or something to fall and drop onto someone or something. ☐ *Bits of the ceiling paint fell down on us and into our food.* ☐ *The leaves fell down on the lawn.*

fall down on the job *Fig.* to fail to do something properly; to fail to do one's job adequately. ☐ *The team kept losing because the coach was falling down on the job.* ☐ *Tom was fired because he fell down on the job.*

fall (flat) on one's **face** **1.** *Lit.* to fall down, face first. ☐ *Bobby fell flat on his face and skinned his nose.* ☐ *Down he went—he fell on his face.* **2.** *Fig.* to fail miserably, usually in a performance. ☐ *She was terrible in the play. She fell flat on her face.* ☐ *The whole play fell on its face.*

fall for someone *Fig.* to fall in love with someone. ☐ *I fell for her in a big way. She's gorgeous!* ☐ *Ted fell for Alice and they decided to get married.*

fall for something *Fig.* to believe something without reservation. ☐ *Surely, you don't expect me to fall for that!* ☐ *She fell for the excuse I gave her about getting stuck in traffic.*

fall from grace **1.** *Lit.* to sin and get on the wrong side of God. (A Christian concept.) ☐ *It was either fall from grace or starve from lack of money. That's how thieves are made.* ☐ *Given the choice between falling from grace and starving, few people choose to starve.* **2.** *Fig.* to do something wrong and get in trouble with someone other than God. ☐ *I hear that Ted lost the Wilson contract and has fallen from grace with the boss.* ☐ *The accounting firm has fallen from grace and the board is looking for a new one.*

fall from power *Fig.* to go out of power; to go out of office. ☐ *The dictator fell from power after the riots.* ☐ *Every ruler will fall from power sooner or later.*

fall from someone or something to fall off of someone or something. ☐ *The books fell from the top shelf in the earthquake.* ☐ *The eggs rolled and fell from the counter and broke on the floor.*

fall head over heels *Fig.* to fall down, perhaps turning over or rolling. ☐ *Fred tripped on the rug and fell head over heels into the center of the room.* ☐ *Slow down or you will fall down—head over heels.*

fall head over heels in love (with someone**)** *Fig.* to fall deeply in love with someone, especially suddenly. ☐ *Roger fell head over heels in love with Maggie, and they were married within the month.* ☐ *Very few people actually fall head*

over heels in love with each other. ☐ *She fell head over heels in love and thought she was dreaming.*

fall heir to something **1.** *Lit.* to inherit something; to end up with certain possessions of someone who has died. ☐ *I fell heir to all my grandmother's old photographs.* **2.** *Fig.* to end up with having to take care of something that no one else wants; to be placed in charge of something unexpectedly. ☐ *Bob fell heir to the Wilson project and has to complete what Jane failed to do.*

fall ill *Fig.* to become ill. ☐ *Tom fell ill just before he was to perform.* ☐ *We both fell ill after eating the baked fish.*

fall in to line up in a row, standing shoulder to shoulder. ☐ *The Boy Scouts were told to fall in behind the leader.* ☐ *The soldiers fell in quickly.*

fall in love (with each other) [for two people] to become enamored of each other. ☐ *They met in school and fell in love.* ☐ *When they fell in love, they thought it would last forever.*

fall in love (with someone**)** to develop the emotion of love for someone. ☐ *Tom fell in love with Mary, but she only wanted to be friends.* ☐ *John is too young to really fall in love.*

fall in love (with something**)** to become enamored of something. ☐ *I simply fell in love with the dress. I had to have it.* ☐ *I fell in love with the red car and bought it at once.*

fall in on someone or something to cave in on someone or something; to collapse on someone or something. ☐ *The roof of the mine fell in on the workers.* ☐ *The ceiling fell in on the diners.*

fall in the drink Go to in the drink.

fall in with someone or something to become involved with someone or a group. ☐ *I'm afraid that he fell in with the wrong kind of friends.* ☐ *John fell in with Max, who had served time in prison.*

fall in with something to concur with something; to harmonize with something. ☐ *We had to fall in with her wishes.* ☐ *The statement falls in exactly with my view.*

fall into a trap 1. *Lit.* to get caught in a trap. ☐ *The tiger fell into a trap and leapt out again immediately.* ☐ *The boys tried to get a squirrel to fall into a trap, but squirrels are too clever.* **2.** and **fall into the trap; fall into** someone's **trap** *Fig.* to become caught in someone's scheme; to be deceived into doing or thinking something. ☐ *We fell into a trap by asking for an explanation.* ☐ *I fell into his trap when I agreed to drive him home.*

fall into decay to degenerate; to rot. ☐ *The house was very old and had fallen into decay.* ☐ *The small town fell into decay, and people moved out.*

fall into disfavor to lose one's influence; to be preferred less and less. ☐ *This style of government fell into disfavor some years ago.* ☐ *Poor Lee fell into disfavor with the boss and lost all his special privileges.*

fall into disgrace to become without honor. ☐ *The mayor fell into disgrace because of his financial dealings.* ☐ *We fell into disgrace because of our criminal affiliations.*

fall into disuse to be used less and less. ☐ *The pump had fallen into disuse and the joints had rusted solid.* ☐ *Since my books had fallen into disuse, I sold them to a used-book dealer.*

fall in(to) line 1. *Lit.* to line up so that each person (except the first person) stands behind someone. ☐ *The teacher told the students to fall in line for lunch.* ☐ *Hungry students fall into line very quickly.* **2.** *Fig.* to conform; to fall in(to) place. ☐ *All the parts of the problem finally fell into line.* ☐ *Bill's behavior began to fall in line.* **3.** *Fig.* to behave in a manner similar to someone or something. ☐ *You are expected to fall into line with the other people.* ☐ *We want you to fall in line.*

fall into one's **lap** *Fig.* [for something of great value or usefulness] to be given or granted to someone without having been requested. ☐ *Some valuable antique jewelry just fell into his lap. His late mother had kept it hidden for years.*

fall in(to) place to fit together; to become organized; to make sense. ☐ *After we heard the whole story, things began to fall in place.* ☐ *When you get older, the different parts of your life begin to fall into place.*

fall into someone's **trap** Go to fall into a trap.

fall in(to something**)** to drop into something. ☐ *The rabbit fell into the hole and was trapped.* ☐ *It went right up to the hole and fell in.*

fall in(to step) to get into the same marching pattern as everyone else as regards which foot moves forward. (Everyone should be moving the same foot forward at the same time.) ☐ *I just can't seem to fall into step. I am very uncoordinated.* ☐ *Fall in! March with the others!*

fall into the gutter Go to in the gutter.

fall into the trap Go to fall into a trap.

fall into the wrong hands *Fig.* to become associated with the wrong person; to become the possession of the wrong person. ☐ *I don't want these plans to fall into the wrong hands.* ☐ *This could be dangerous if it fell into the wrong hands.*

fall like a ton of bricks Go to like a ton of bricks.

fall off to decline or diminish. ☐ *Business falls off during the summer months.* ☐ *My interest in school fell off when I became twenty.*

fall off (of) something**)** to drop off something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *A button fell off my shirt.* ☐ *I fell off the log.* ☐ *The twigs fell off of him as he stood up.*

fall off the wagon Go to off the wagon.

fall on deaf ears *Fig.* [for talk or ideas] to be ignored by the persons they were intended for. ☐ *Her pleas for mercy fell on deaf ears; the judge gave her the maximum sentence.* ☐ *All of Sally's good advice fell on deaf ears. Walter had made up his own mind.*

fall on hard times *Fig.* to experience difficult times, especially financially. ☐ *Since the war, her family had fallen on hard times.* ☐ *We fell on hard times during the recession.*

fall on one's **knees** and **fall to** one's **knees** to kneel down, usually in respect. ☐ *The people fell on their knees and prayed in gratitude for their salvation from the flood.* ☐ *They fell to their knees in awe.*

fall on one's **sword 1.** *Lit.* to fall down and be penetrated by one's own sword, accidentally or on purpose. ☐ *He tripped and fell on his sword.* **2.** *Fig.* to accept defeat; to go to extremes to indicate one's defeat. (From the ancient

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practice of a military commander committing suicide this way rather than being captured.) ☐ *So, because I lost the contract, I am supposed to fall on my sword or something?*

fall on someone's **shoulders** Go to **on** someone's **shoulders.**

fall on(to) someone or something to collapse toward or onto someone or something. ☐ *The fence fell onto the car, denting it severely.* ☐ *The branch fell on David.*

fall out 1. to happen; to result. ☐ *As things fell out, we had a wonderful trip.* ☐ *What fell out of our discussion was a decision to continue.* **2.** to leave one's place in a formation when dismissed. (Usually in scouting or the military. The opposite of **fall in.**) ☐ *The scouts fell out and ran to the campfire.* ☐ *All the soldiers fell out and talked among themselves.* **3.** to depart. ☐ *It's late, George. I have to fall out.* ☐ *Let's fall out. I have to get up early in the morning.*

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fall out of bed 1. *Lit.* to roll out of one's bed onto the floor. ☐ *I fell out of bed and broke my arm.* ☐ *Billy fell out of bed and started to cry.* **2.** *Fig.* [for a measurement] to drop very low very fast. ☐ *The major stock averages fell out of bed today as the market suffered its second severe crash in two months.* ☐ *The temperature fell out of bed last night.*

fall out of favor (with someone**)** and **lose favor (with** someone**)** to lose someone's approval or acceptance. ☐ *This style of house has fallen out of favor with most people lately.* ☐ *Saving money has lost favor with most people.*

fall out of love (with someone**)** to stop being in love with someone. ☐ *She claimed she had fallen out of love with him.* ☐ *He also had fallen out of love.*

fall out (of something**)** to topple out of something. ☐ *Mary fell out of the tree and hurt herself.*

fall out (with someone**) (about** someone or something**)** Go to next.

fall out (with someone**) (over** something**)** and **fall out (with** someone**) (about** someone or something**)** to quarrel or disagree with someone about something. ☐ *Tony fell out with Nick about the video game.* ☐ *Bill fell out with Sally over the question of buying a new car.* ☐ *Bill fell out with John about who would sleep on the bottom bunk.*

fall outside something to be beyond someone's power, responsibility, or jurisdiction. ☐ *This matter falls outside my bailiwick.* ☐ *Her offense fell outside of the manager's jurisdiction.*

fall over to topple over and fall down. ☐ *The fence fell over and dented the car.* ☐ *I felt faint and almost fell over.*

fall over backwards (to do something**)** and **bend over backwards (to** do something**); lean over backwards (to** do something**)** *Fig.* to do everything possible to please someone. ☐ *The taxi driver fell over backwards to be helpful.* ☐ *The teacher bent over backwards to help the students understand.* ☐ *You don't have to lean over backwards to get me to help. Just ask.*

fall over someone or something to stumble over someone or something. ☐ *Sam came into the house and fell over a kitchen chair.* ☐ *Walter fell over Roger, who was napping on the floor.*

fall overboard to fall from a boat or a ship into the water. (See also **go overboard.**) ☐ *Someone fell overboard and they had to stop the boat and go back.* ☐ *The lady's sunglasses fell overboard.*

fall short to lack something; to lack enough of something, such as money, time, etc. ☐ *We fell short of money at the end of the month.* ☐ *Tom fell short of cash and had to borrow from me.*

fall short of one's **goal(s)** and **fall short of the goal(s); fall short of the record** to fail to achieve a goal. ☐ *We fell short of our goal of collecting a thousand dollars.* ☐ *Ann ran a fast race, but fell short of the record.*

fall through [for something, such as plans] to fail. ☐ *Our party for next Saturday fell through.* ☐ *I hope our plans don't fall through.*

fall through something to fall and break through something. ☐ *One of the skaters fell through the thin ice.* ☐ *A number of hailstones fell through the roof of the greenhouse.*

fall through the cracks Go to **through the cracks.**

fall to to begin doing something; to prepare to do something and go to work on it. ☐ *She asked for help, and everyone fell to.* ☐ *Fall to, you guys!*

fall to one's **knees** Go to **fall on** one's **knees.**

fall to pieces 1. *Lit.* to break into pieces. ☐ *The road was so rough the car almost fell to pieces.* ☐ *I was afraid that my bicycle would fall to pieces before I got there.* **2.** *Fig.* to become emotionally upset. ☐ *I was so nervous, I fell to pieces and couldn't give my speech.* ☐ *Roger fell to pieces when his mother died.*

fall to someone *Fig.* to become the responsibility of someone. ☐ *It always falls to me to apologize first.* ☐ *Why does it fall to me to answer the telephone every time it rings?*

fall toward something to drop or fall in the direction of something. ☐ *She fell toward the curb rather than toward the traffic.* ☐ *The tree fell toward the garage rather than toward the house.*

fall under someone or something to drop down and end up beneath someone or something. ☐ *The old man fell under the wheels of the truck, but he suffered only minor injuries.* ☐ *The child tripped and fell under Mrs. Rogers, who almost did not see her.*

fall under someone's **spell 1.** *Lit.* to come under the magical control of a magician or similar person. ☐ *The damsel fell under the wizard's spell and sat there speechless.* ☐ *As the children fell under the witch's spell, they went to sleep.* **2.** *Fig.* to be fascinated by someone; to be enchanted by someone. ☐ *She was so beautiful. I fell under her spell at once.* ☐ *Wally fell under Donna's spell and became helpless in her presence.*

fall (up)on someone [for a task] to become the duty of someone. ☐ *The task of telling Mother about the broken vase fell upon Jane.* ☐ *The job of cleaning up the spill fell upon Tom.*

fall (up)on someone or something **1.** to collapse on top of someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on.*) ☐ *The bridge fell upon a boat passing beneath it.* ☐ *A small branch fell on Jerry as he passed beneath the tree.* **2.** to attack someone or something. ☐ *The cat fell upon the mouse and killed it.* ☐ *The children fell on the birthday cake and ate it all.*

fall wide of the mark Go to **wide of the mark.**

fall within something to belong to a specific category or classification. ☐ *This falls within the realm of the medical profession. There's no more I can do for you.* ☐ *Does this fall within your area of expertise?*

a **false move** and **one false move** *Fig.* [even] a single movement that indicates that one is disobeying an order to remain still or in a nonthreatening posture. ☐ *The robber threatened to shoot us if we made one false move.*

falter in something to fail in doing something; to exhibit a lack of something, such as faith, loyalty, perseverance, etc. ☐ *He did not falter in his effort to see the project through to the end.* ☐ *I promised not to falter in my loyalty.*

***familiar with** someone or something to have a good knowledge of someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Are you familiar with changing a flat tire?* ☐ *I can't speak German fluently, but I'm somewhat familiar with the language.*

Familiarity breeds contempt. *Prov.* People do not respect someone they know well enough to know his or her faults. ☐ *The movie star doesn't let anyone get to know him, because he knows that familiarity breeds contempt.*

familiarize someone **with** something to help someone get to know or understand someone or something. ☐ *I hope you will take the time to familiarize yourself with the instructions before you set out to operate this device.* ☐ *Let me take a moment to familiarize myself with the facts of the case.*

The **family that prays together stays together.** *Prov.* Families who practice religion together will not break apart through divorce or estrangement. ☐ *Mother believed that the family that prays together stays together and insisted that we all say prayers every night.*

famous last words *Fig.* assertions that are almost immediately countered. (Sarcastic.) ☐ *A: I said I would never speak to her again in my entire life! B: Famous last words! You just said hello to her.*

***a fan of** someone to be a follower of someone; to idolize someone. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *My mother is still a fan of the Beatles.* ☐ *I'm a great fan of the mayor of the town.*

fan out *Fig.* to spread out over a wide area. ☐ *The searchers fanned out, looking for the child lost in the woods.* ☐ *Let's fan out and search a wider area.*

fan out (from some place**)** to spread outward from a particular area. ☐ *The paths seem to fan out from the wide trail that starts at the house.* ☐ *The trails fanned out and soon we were all separated.*

fan something **out**† to spread something out so that all parts can be seen better. (As one opens a wood and paper fan.) ☐ *Todd fanned the cards out so we could see which ones he held.* ☐ *He fanned out the cards.*

fan the breeze *Fig.* to chat or gossip. ☐ *We're just fanning the breeze, so you didn't interrupt anything.* ☐ *Stop fanning the breeze and get to work.*

fan the flames (of something**)** *Fig.* to make something more intense; to make a situation worse. ☐ *The riot fanned the flames of racial hatred even more.* ☐ *The hostility in the school is bad enough without anyone fanning the flames.*

fancy footwork 1. *Lit.* clever and intricate dance steps. ☐ *The old man was known for his fancy footwork when he was on Broadway.* **2.** *Lit.* adroit movements of the feet that help someone retain balance or move through treacherous territory. ☐ *It took some fancy footwork to get down the mountain carrying the injured child.* **3.** *Fig.* a clever and intricate strategy that helps someone get out of trouble. ☐ *The governor did some fancy footwork to keep from getting blamed for the scandal.*

Fancy meeting you here! I am very surprised to meet you here! ☐ *Tom: Hi, Sue! Fancy meeting you here! Sue: Hi, Tom. I was thinking the same thing about you.* ☐ *"Fancy meeting you here," said Mr. Franklin when he bumped into the company president at the racetrack.*

fancy someone **as** someone or something to imagine that someone were someone else or some particular type of person. ☐ *Can you fancy her as a zookeeper?* ☐ *I can fancy him as a tall, dark stranger.* ☐ *I really don't fancy myself as a farmer.*

fancy someone's **chances** to have confidence in someone's [including one's own] ability to be successful. ☐ *We all think she will refuse to go out with him, but he certainly fancies his own chances.* ☐ *The other contestants are so talented that I don't fancy his chances at all.*

Fancy that! and **Imagine that!** I am very surprised to hear that.; That is hard to imagine or believe. ☐ *Mary: My father was elected president of the board. Sally: Fancy that!* ☐ *Sue: This computer is ten times faster than the one we had before. Jane: Imagine that! Is it easy to operate? Sue: Of course not.*

far and away the best unquestionably the best. ☐ *This soap is far and away the best I've ever used.* ☐ *Sally is good, but Ann is far and away the best artist in our school.*

far be it from me to do something it is not really my place to do something. (Always followed by *but*, as in the example.) ☐ *Far be it from me to tell you what to do, but I think you should buy the book.*

a **far cry from** something a thing that is very different from something else. ☐ *What you did was a far cry from what you said you were going to do.* ☐ *The song they played was a far cry from what I call music.*

far from it not it at all; not at all. ☐ *Do I think you need a new car? Far from it. The old one is fine.* ☐ *Bill: Does this hat look strange? Tom: Far from it. It looks good on you.*

far from the madding crowd in a quiet, restful place. (From Thomas Gray's poem, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard.") ☐ *Julia sat daydreaming at her desk, wishing she were far from the madding crowd.* ☐ *Jane: Where shall we go this weekend? Alan: Anywhere, as long as it's far from the madding crowd.*

far gone 1. in an extreme state, usually an irrational or intoxicated state. ☐ *Wow, that chick is far gone. Listen to her rave.* ☐ *He was too far gone to make any sense.* **2.** intoxicated. ☐ *Larry's far gone and looking sick.* ☐ *Wow, is she ever far gone!*

far into the night late into the night; until very late. ☐ *She sat up and read far into the night.* ☐ *The party went on far into the night.*

far out 1. *Lit.* far from the center of things; far from town. ☐ *The Smiths live sort of far out.* ☐ *The restaurant is nice,*

but too far out. **2.** *Sl.* great; extraordinary. ☐ *This jazz is really far out!* ☐ *You want to hear some far out heavy metal?* **3.** very hard to understand; arcane; highly theoretical. ☐ *This physics chapter is too far out for me.* ☐ *I can't follow your far out line of reasoning.* **4.** intoxicated. ☐ *Three beers and Wally was really far out.*

faraway look and **far-off look** *Fig.* an appearance on one's face of having one's mind in another place. ☐ *Dave had a faraway look in his eyes, so I elbowed him to get his attention.* ☐ *Lisa's face had a far-off look indicating that she was daydreaming.*

F

farm someone **out**† **1.** [for someone in control] to send someone to work for someone else. ☐ *I have farmed my electrician out for a week, so your work will have to wait.* ☐ *We farmed out the office staff.* **2.** to send a child away to be cared for by someone; to send a child to boarding school. ☐ *We farmed the kids out to my sister for the summer.* ☐ *We farmed out the kids.*

farm something **out**† **1.** to deplete the fertility of land by farming too intensely. ☐ *They farmed their land out through careless land management.* ☐ *They farmed out their land.* **2.** to send work to someone to be done away from one's normal place of business; to subcontract work. ☐ *We farmed the assembly work out.* ☐ *We always farm out the actual final assembly of the finished units.*

far-off look Go to faraway look.

fart around *Fig.* to waste time playing around. (Caution with *fart*, which is considered coarse.) ☐ *Stop farting around and get the job started.*

fashion something **into** something to make, form, or convert something into something else. ☐ *He fashioned the newspaper into a temporary rain hat.* ☐ *Sarah fashioned the clay into a little bowl.*

fashion something **on** something to model something on something else; to pattern something after something else. ☐ *She fashioned her dress on something she had seen in a history book.* ☐ *Donna fashioned the plan on the one Robert had used.*

fashion something **out of** something to make something from something; to convert something into something else. ☐ *He tried to fashion a dog out of balloons.* ☐ *Elaine was expert at fashioning a bow out of chocolate.*

fast and furious *Cliché* very rapidly and with unrestrained energy. ☐ *Her work in the kitchen was fast and furious, and it looked lovely when she finished.* ☐ *Everything was going so fast and furious at the store during the Christmas rush that we never had time to eat lunch.*

fast friends good, loyal friends. ☐ *The two of them had been fast friends since college.*

a **fast one** a clever and devious trick. (Compare this with pull a fast one.) ☐ *That was a fast one. I didn't know you were so devious.* ☐ *This was the last fast one like that you'll ever catch me with.*

fasten someone or something **(on)to** someone or something to attach people or things together. ☐ *He fastened himself onto the mast of the boat with a length of rope.* ☐ *I fastened a note onto Jimmy, so his kindergarten teacher would read it and remind him to wear his gloves home.*

fasten something **down**† **(to** something**)** to attach something down to something else. ☐ *Fasten this board down to the top of the workbench.* ☐ *Please fasten down the board.*

fasten something **up**† to close something up, using buttons, a zipper, snaps, hooks, a clasp, or other things meant to hold something closed. ☐ *Please fasten this up for me. I can't reach the zipper.* ☐ *Please fasten up my buttons in back.*

fasten (up)on someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to take firm hold of someone or something. ☐ *She fastened upon me and would not let me go until she finished speaking.* ☐ *I don't like people who fasten on me and ask a lot of questions.* **2.** *Fig.* to fix one's attention on someone or something. ☐ *He fastened upon the picture for a brief moment and then turned away.* ☐ *The baby fastened on the television screen and watched it for many minutes.*

faster and faster at an increasing rate of speed; fast and then even faster. ☐ *The car went faster and faster and I was afraid we would crash.* ☐ *The cost of education goes up faster and faster every year.*

fast-talk someone **into** something to use deceitful talk to get someone to do something. ☐ *You can't fast-talk me into giving you money. How dumb do you think I am?* ☐ *Max tried to fast-talk Lefty into robbing a bank with him.*

fast-talk someone **out of** something to use deceitful talk to get someone not to do something or to give something up. ☐ *Don't try to fast-talk me out of my share.*

fat and happy *Fig.* content, as if from being well-fed. ☐ *Since all the employees were fat and happy, there was little incentive to improve productivity.* ☐ *You look fat and happy. Has life been treating you well?*

fat and sassy *Fig.* in good health and spirits. ☐ *She came back from her vacation all fat and sassy.* ☐ *Under Joe's care, the runt of the litter grew up fat and sassy.*

***fat as a pig** exceptionally fat; grotesquely fat. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *If I don't stop eating this cake, I'll be fat as a pig!* ☐ *You really ought to go on a diet; you're as fat as a pig.*

fat cat *Fig.* someone who is ostentatiously and smugly wealthy. ☐ *I like to watch the fat cats go by in their BMWs.* ☐ *I'm no fat cat. I can't even pay my normal bills!*

fat chance *Fig.* very little likelihood. ☐ *Fat chance he has of getting a promotion.* ☐ *You think she'll lend you the money? Fat chance!*

*the **fat hit the fire** *Fig.* a situation that suddenly becomes frantic and unpleasant. (*Typically: **suddenly ~; then ~; when ~**.) ☐ *Things were looking bad in the stock market, then the fat hit the fire and I lost everything.*

The **fat is in the fire.** *Prov.* Matters have come to a crisis; trouble is about to start. ☐ *Brother: Mom found out that we broke the clock. Sister: Uh-oh. The fat's in the fire now.* ☐ *The fat is in the fire at work; we're nowhere near finishing the project, but the deadline is in two days.*

a **fate worse than death** *Fig.* a terrible fate. (Usually an exaggeration.) ☐ *Having to sit through one of his lectures is a fate worse than death.*

father something **on** someone *Fig.* to regard someone as the author or originator of something. ☐ *Do not attempt to father that stupid idea on me!* ☐ *We fathered the whole plan*

on the president. And we learned later she had nothing to do with it.

fatten someone or an animal **up† (with** something**)** to use something to make someone or an animal fat. ☐ *We will fatten the calf up with corn.* ☐ *I don't know why they keep fattening up their children with so much food.*

fatten up (on something**) 1.** *Lit.* to get fat by eating something. ☐ *The cattle fattened up on the succulent grass.* ☐ *The bears have to fatten up on food before they hibernate for the winter.* **2.** *Fig.* to become prosperous because of something. ☐ *The corporations fattened up on easy profits and low taxes.* ☐ *The directors of the company fattened up even during the recession when the workers were laid off.*

fault someone **(for** something**)** to blame or criticize someone for something. ☐ *I can't fault you for that. I would have done the same thing.* ☐ *He tended to fault himself for the failure of the project.*

faunch around *Rur.* to fuss and complain. ☐ *Stop faunching around about your problems and go to sleep.* ☐ *Aunt Bess is always faunching around about something.*

favor someone or something **with** something to provide someone or something with something beneficial or special. ☐ *Mary favored us with a song.* ☐ *Nature favored Bill with curly hair.*

fawn (all) over someone *Fig.* to flatter someone or attend to someone excessively; to **curry favor with** someone. ☐ *Please stop fawning all over the guests. You are embarrassing me.* ☐ *She always fawns over us when we visit.*

fawn (up)on someone *Fig.* to praise and flatter someone. ☐ *Aunt Mabel fawned on the new baby till the poor child was rescued by her mother.* ☐ *I hate the way our aunts fawn on us at family gatherings.*

fear for someone or something to be afraid for the safety of someone or something; to worry about someone or something. ☐ *I fear for Tom. He has gone to a very dangerous place.* ☐ *I don't want to go down that rocky trail. I fear for my car.*

feast one's **eyes ((up)on** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to enjoy the sight of someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Just feast your eyes on that beautiful beach.* ☐ *Jane feasted her eyes on Roger for a while and then went on with her studying.*

feast (up)on something to eat a great deal of something; to eat a feast built around something in particular. ☐ *We will feast upon turkey for weeks.* ☐ *We feasted on the fish Harry had caught.*

a **feather in** one's **cap** *Fig.* an honor; a reward for something. ☐ *Getting a new client was really a feather in my cap.* ☐ *John earned a feather in his cap by getting an A in physics.*

feather one's **(own) nest 1.** *Fig.* to decorate and furnish one's home in style and comfort. (Alludes to birds lining their nests with feathers to make them warm and comfortable.) ☐ *With the new family room and expanded kitchen, they seem to have feathered their nest quite comfortably.* **2.** *Fig.* to use power and prestige to provide for oneself selfishly. (Said especially of politicians who use their offices to make money for themselves.) ☐ *The mayor seemed to be helping people, but she was really feathering her own nest.* ☐ *The building contractor used a lot of public money to feather his nest.*

feature someone **as** something **1.** to imagine someone to be something or a particular type of person. ☐ *I really can't feature you as a ship's captain.* ☐ *Alice had always featured Fred as a fairly even-tempered person.* **2.** to give special prominence to someone in a particular part in a play, film, opera, etc. ☐ *They featured Laura as the lead singer in the group.* ☐ *The director refused to feature Roger as a lead.*

feature someone **in** something **1.** to imagine someone wearing something. ☐ *I can't feature you in that ridiculous dress.* ☐ *Can you feature Fran in that hat?* **2.** to imagine someone being in something or some place. ☐ *I can't feature you in Paris. You are too rural to enjoy a place like Paris.* ☐ *Can you feature David in New York City?*

F

***fed up (to** some degree**) (with** someone or something**)** bored or disgusted with someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *I am fed up to my eyeballs with your complaining.* ☐ *I am just fed up to here!*

Feed a cold and starve a fever. *Prov.* You should feed someone who has a cold, and withhold food from someone who has a fever.; (or, interpreted differently) If you feed someone who has a cold, that will ward off a fever. ☐ *Jill: I don't feel like going out to lunch with you. I have a cold. Jane: All the more reason you should get something to eat. Feed a cold and starve a fever, you know.*

feed off (of) something to eat something in particular customarily. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *This creature feeds off fallen fruit.* ☐ *Mosquitoes seem to want to feed off of me!*

feed one's **face** *Inf.* to put food in one's mouth; to eat (something). ☐ *You're always feeding your face. You're going to get fat.* ☐ *Stop feeding your face and listen to me.*

feed someone **a line** Go to **give** someone **a line**.

feed someone, something, or an animal **with** something **1.** to feed something to someone, a group, or an animal. ☐ *The camp cook fed them with hot dogs and beans.* ☐ *We fed the dogs with the leftovers.* **2.** to use a tool or utensil to feed someone, a group, or an animal. ☐ *He fed the baby with a spoon.* ☐ *We fed the entire group with paper plates.*

feed something **back into** something to return something back to where it came. ☐ *I tried to feed the stamps back into the machine, but, of course, they wouldn't go.* ☐ *The machine made too many boxes, but you can't feed them back into it!*

feed something **back† to** someone to give or hand something back to someone. ☐ *We fed the rope back to those in line behind us.* ☐ *Feed back the papers to the clerk.*

feed something **into** something to put something into something; to push a supply of something into something. ☐ *I fed all the coins into the telephone and waited to be connected.* ☐ *I will feed every coin I have into the phone and see what it does for me.* ☐ *Did you feed the data into the computer?*

feed something **to** someone *Fig.* to tell someone lies. ☐ *Don't try to feed that nonsense to me! I know it isn't so.* ☐ *Please don't feed any of those lies to Mark.*

feed something **to** someone or an animal to give someone or an animal food. ☐ *Don't feed pizza to the baby.* ☐ *I fed the leftover turkey to the dog.*

feed the kitty *Fig.* to contribute money. (A *kitty* here is a small collection of money.) ☐ *Please feed the kitty. Make a contribution to help sick children.* ☐ *Come on, Bill. Feed the kitty. You can afford a dollar for a good cause.*

feed (up)on someone or something to eat someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *They say that some Bengal tigers feed upon people.* ☐ *They feed on anything that moves.*

a **feeding frenzy 1.** *Lit.* [of sharks] a vicious, competitive feeding attack on prey animals. ☐ *One of the sharks was fatally bitten during a feeding frenzy amongst his own kind.* **2.** *Fig.* a vicious attack on someone or something. ☐ *It wasn't an office argument, it was a feeding frenzy led by the head accountant!*

F

feel a draft to sense that one is being rejected; to sense that someone is cool toward one, possibly for racial reasons. ☐ *Oh, man, I feel a draft in here. Let's leave.* ☐ *What a reception! I sure felt a draft.*

feel a glow of contentment Go to next.

feel a glow of happiness and **feel a glow of contentment; feel a glow of satisfaction; feel a glow of peacefulness** *Fig.* to have a good feeling of some kind. ☐ *Anne felt a glow of happiness as she held her new baby.* ☐ *Sitting by the lake, the lovers felt a warm glow of contentment.*

feel around (for someone or something**)** and **feel about (for** someone or something**)** to try to find someone or something by feel [rather than sight]. ☐ *He felt around for the soap in the bathtub.* ☐ *She felt about for the dog at the foot of the bed, but it wasn't there.* ☐ *Gerald felt about for a pencil.*

feel at home to feel as if one belongs; to feel as if one were in one's home; to feel accepted. ☐ *I liked my dormitory room. I really felt at home there.* ☐ *We will do whatever we can to make you feel at home.*

feel blue *Fig.* to feel sad. ☐ *You look like you feel blue. What's wrong?*

feel fit to feel well and healthy. ☐ *If you want to feel fit, you must eat the proper food and get enough rest.* ☐ *I hope I still feel fit when I get old.*

feel for someone to feel the emotional pain that someone else is feeling; to empathize or sympathize with someone. ☐ *I really feel for you. I'm so sorry it turned out this way.* ☐ *Fred felt for Dave, but there was nothing he could do for him.*

*a **feel for** something a natural or learned ability to do something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~**.) ☐ *I will do better with this work as soon as I get a feel for it.* ☐ *He doesn't have a feel for this kind of careful work.*

feel free (to do something**)** to feel like one is permitted to do something or take something. ☐ *Please feel free to stay for dinner.* ☐ *If you see something you want in the refrigerator, please feel free.*

feel guilty (about something**)** to feel that one is to blame for something; to feel intense regret for something that one has done. ☐ *I feel guilty for forgetting about your birthday.* ☐ *You shouldn't feel guilty about the accident. It's not your fault.*

feel it beneath one **(to** do something**)** to feel that one would be lowering oneself to do something. ☐ *Tom feels it beneath him to scrub the floor.* ☐ *Ann feels it beneath her to carry her own luggage.* ☐ *I would do it, but I feel it beneath me.*

feel like a million (dollars) *Fig.* to feel well and healthy, both physically and mentally. ☐ *A quick swim in the morning makes me feel like a million dollars.* ☐ *What a beautiful day! It makes you feel like a million.*

feel like a new person *Fig.* to feel refreshed and renewed, especially after getting well or getting dressed up. ☐ *I bought a new suit, and now I feel like a new person.* ☐ *Bob felt like a new person when he got out of the hospital.*

feel like death warmed over Go to like death warmed over.

feel like doing something to want to do something; to be in the mood to do something; to feel well enough to do something. ☐ *Do you feel like stopping work to eat something?* ☐ *I feel like going on a vacation.*

feel like oneself **again** Go to oneself again.

feel like someone or something to have the feel of someone or something; to seem to be someone or something according to feel or touch. ☐ *Whoever this is feels like Tom. Sort of soft and pudgy.* ☐ *This thing feels like a rubber hose, not a hot dog.*

*the **feel of** something *Fig.* a sense for how something feels when it is being used correctly. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I haven't yet got the feel of this bat. I hope I don't strike out.* ☐ *I can drive better now that I have the feel of this car's steering.*

feel on top of the world *Fig.* to feel very good, as if one were ruling the world. ☐ *I feel on top of the world this morning.* ☐ *I do not actually feel on top of the world, but I have felt worse.*

feel one's **gorge rise** *Fig.* to sense that one is getting very angry. ☐ *I felt my gorge rise and I knew I was going to lose my temper.* ☐ *Bob could feel his gorge rise as he read his tax bill.*

feel one's **oats** *Fig.* to be very lively. ☐ *Careful with that horse. He's feeling his oats today.* ☐ *Mary was feeling her oats and decided to go out dancing.*

feel out of place Go to out of place.

feel out of sorts Go to out of sorts.

feel out of things to feel alienated from something. ☐ *I feel out of things lately. Are people ignoring me?* ☐ *I feel a little out of things at this party, but I will try to join in the fun.*

feel pinched and **feel the pinch** *Fig.* experiencing hardship because of having too little money. ☐ *The Smiths used to go abroad every year, but now that he's retired, they're really feeling pinched.* ☐ *You're bound to feel the pinch a little when you're a student.*

feel somehow **about** someone or something to have ideas, opinions, or reactions regarding someone or something. ☐ *I feel good about him.* ☐ *Do you feel good about how you did on the test?* ☐ *How do you feel about Sally?*

feel someone **out**† **(about** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to find out what someone thinks about someone or some-

thing. (This does not involve touching anyone.) ☐ *I will feel him out about what he thinks about going to Florida.* ☐ *Let me feel out the boss about this matter.*

feel someone **up**† to feel someone sexually. (Use discretion with topic.) ☐ *I heard him say he really wanted to feel her up.* ☐ *He wanted to feel up the girl.*

feel something **in** one's **bones** and **know** something **in** one's **bones** *Fig.* to sense something; to have an intuition about something. ☐ *The train will be late. I feel it in my bones.* ☐ *I failed the test. I know it in my bones.*

feel something **with** something to touch and explore something with something. ☐ *I felt the soft little creature with my hand.* ☐ *Don't feel that thing with your bare hands.*

feel the pinch Go to **feel pinched**.

feel up to something to feel well enough or prepared enough to do something. (Often in the negative.) ☐ *I don't feel up to jogging today.* ☐ *Aunt Mary didn't feel up to making the visit.*

a **feeling about** something Go to a **feeling (that** something is the case**)**.

feeling (kinda) puny feeling ill. ☐ *I'm feeling puny. Think I might be coming down with a cold.* ☐ *Bill had to skip football practice on account of he was feeling puny.*

feeling no pain numbed by alcohol and feeling nothing; intoxicated. ☐ *She fell off the wagon and is feeling no pain.* ☐ *He drank the whole thing, and he's feeling no pain.*

*a **feeling (that** something is the case**)** and *a **feeling about** something a premonition that [something might happen or be the case]; an intuition about something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I had a feeling that you might be dropping by this afternoon.* ☐ *I didn't have any facts to support it. I just had a feeling.*

The **female of the species is more deadly than the male.** *Prov.* In many animal species, the female is poisonous and the male is not, and, by analogy, women are more dangerous than men. ☐ *Bill: My old girlfriend's been threatening me ever since I broke up with her, but she's too small and weak to do me any harm. Fred: I'd be careful if I were you. The female of the species is more deadly than the male.*

fence an animal **in**† to enclose an animal and its area within a fence or barrier. ☐ *We fenced the dog in to keep it at home.* ☐ *We had to fence in the dog.*

fence someone **in**† to restrict someone in some way. ☐ *I don't want to fence you in, but you have to get home earlier at night.* ☐ *Don't try to fence me in. I need a lot of freedom.* ☐ *Your last stupid move fenced in the department, making us less effective.*

fence someone or an animal **out**† to keep someone or an animal out with a fence or barrier. ☐ *We decided that living in the woods was satisfactory only if we fenced the wildlife out.* ☐ *We had to fence out the deer.* ☐ *We hoped we had fenced prowlers out with the tall electric fence.*

fence someone or something **off**† **(from** something**)** to separate someone or something from something else with a fence or barrier. ☐ *We fenced the children's play area off from the rest of the yard.* ☐ *Dave fenced off the play area.* ☐ *We fenced off the children from the rest of the yard.*

fence something **in**† to enclose an area within a fence. ☐ *When they fenced the garden in, they thought the deer wouldn't be able to destroy the flowers.* ☐ *We fenced in the yard to make a safe place for the children.*

fend for oneself Go to **shift for** oneself.

fend someone or something **off**† to hold someone or something off; to fight someone or something off. ☐ *We knew we could fend them off only a little while longer.* ☐ *They could not fend off the attackers.*

fender bender *Fig.* a minor car accident. ☐ *A small fender bender tied up traffic on the expressway for hours!*

ferret something **out**† Go to **ferret** something **out of** someone or something.

ferret something **out**† **(from** something**)** *Fig.* to fetch something out from something. ☐ *We will have to ferret the mouse out from behind the stove.* ☐ *We can ferret out the mouse with the aid of the cat.*

ferret something **out of** someone or something and **ferret** something **out**† *Fig.* to get, remove, or retrieve something from someone or something, usually with cunning and persistence. ☐ *I tried very hard, but I couldn't ferret the information out of the clerk.* ☐ *I had to ferret out the answers one by one.*

ferry someone **around**† to transport people here and there in small groups. ☐ *I really don't want to spend all my days ferrying children around.* ☐ *Why am I ferrying around a bunch of kids all day?*

ferry someone or something **across** something and **ferry** someone or something **across**† to transport someone or something across a river on a ferryboat. ☐ *Can we get someone to ferry us across the lake to the island?* ☐ *After they ferried across all the cars, they closed the ferryboat down for the night.*

fess up (to something**)** to confess to having done something. (Short form of *confess.*) ☐ *I tried to get the boy to fess up to doing it, but he wouldn't do it.* ☐ *Come on, fess up.*

festoon someone or something **with** something to drape or garland someone or something with something. ☐ *Karen festooned her daughter with flowers for the party.* ☐ *The kids festooned the gymnasium with crepe paper and garlands of plastic flowers.*

fetch something **in**† to bring or pull something in. ☐ *Would you please fetch some more firewood in?* ☐ *Can you fetch in the paper?*

fetch something **out of** something and **fetch** something **out**† to pull something out of something. ☐ *Could you fetch me another hot dog out of the pot?* ☐ *I'll fetch out a hot dog for you.*

fetch up *Sl.* to empty one's stomach; to vomit. ☐ *I really felt like I was going to fetch up.* ☐ *Somebody fetched up in here and didn't clean it up.*

fetch up at some place to reach a place; to end up at a place. ☐ *We fetched up at Sam's house at about midnight.* ☐ *The car fetched up at the cabin and everyone got out.*

feud (with someone**) (over** someone or something**)** and **feud (with** someone**) about (**someone or something**)** to fight with someone over someone or something; to have an ongoing battle with someone about someone or some-

thing. ☐ *Some of the neighbors are feuding with each other over the parking places on the street.* ☐ *Don't feud over her with me!*

few and far between very few; few and widely scattered. ☐ *Get some gasoline now. Service stations on this highway are few and far between.* ☐ *Some people think that good movies are few and far between.*

a **few bricks short of a load** and a **few cards shy of a full deck;** a **few cards short of a deck; not playing with a full deck; two bricks shy of a load** *Fig.* lacking in intellectual ability. (Many other variants.) ☐ *Tom: Joe thinks he can build a car out of old milk jugs. Mary: I think Joe's a few bricks short of a load.* ☐ *Ever since she fell and hit her head, Jane's been a few bricks short of a load, if you know what I'm saying.* ☐ *Bob's nice, but he's not playing with a full deck.* ☐ *You twit! You're two bricks shy of a load.*

F

a **few cards shy of a full deck** Go to previous.

a **few cards short of a deck** Go to a few bricks short of a load.

fiddle around (with someone**)** and **fiddle about (with** someone**)** to tease, annoy, or play with someone; to waste someone's time. ☐ *All right, stop fiddling around with me and tell me how much you will give me for my car.* ☐ *Now it's time for all of you to quit fiddling around and get to work.* ☐ *Tom, you have to stop spending your time fiddling about with your friends. It's time to get serious with your studies.*

fiddle around (with something**)** and **fiddle about (with** something**)** to play with something; to tinker with something ineptly. ☐ *My brother is outside fiddling around with his car engine.* ☐ *He should stop fiddling around and go out and get a job.*

fiddle something **away**† to waste something. ☐ *She fiddled the afternoon away.* ☐ *Don't fiddle away the afternoon. Get to work.*

fiddle while Rome burns *Fig.* to do nothing or something trivial while knowing that something disastrous is happening. (From a legend that the Roman emperor Nero played the lyre while Rome was burning.) ☐ *The lobbyists don't seem to be doing anything to stop this tax bill. They're fiddling while Rome burns.*

fiddle with someone or something to tinker or play with someone or something. ☐ *Please don't fiddle with the stereo controls.* ☐ *Leave your brother alone. Don't fiddle with him. He's cranky.*

fidget around to wiggle and twitch nervously. ☐ *The child sat there, fidgeting around for over ten minutes.* ☐ *Please don't fidget around so.*

fidget with something to play with something nervously. ☐ *Please don't fidget with your zipper.* ☐ *Carl is always fidgeting with his left ear.*

field questions and **field a question** to answer a series of questions, especially from reporters. ☐ *After her speech, Jane fielded questions from reporters.* ☐ *The president's press agents field questions from the newspaper.*

Fields have eyes, and woods have ears. *Prov.* Even though you are outside in an apparently empty landscape, someone may be eavesdropping on you. ☐ *Jill: You said you had a secret. Tell me. Jane: Not here. Jill: But there's nobody else in the park. Jane: Fields have eyes, and woods have ears.*

a **fifth wheel** *Fig.* an unwelcome or extra person. ☐ *I don't like living with my son and daughter-in-law. I feel like a fifth wheel.* ☐ *Bill always begs to come on camping trips with us, but really, he's a fifth wheel.*

fifty-fifty even or equal. (See also go fifty-fifty (on something).) ☐ *The chances of success are about fifty-fifty.* ☐ *Even at fifty-fifty, it's probably worth it, you know.*

fight about someone or something to have a battle or argue about someone or something. ☐ *Why do we always have to fight about money?* ☐ *Let's not fight about Ed.*

fight against someone or something to battle against someone or something. ☐ *The general refused to fight against the enemy, which was much stronger.* ☐ *He fought against the disease to the very end.*

fight against time *Fig.* to hurry to meet a deadline or to do something quickly. ☐ *The ambulance sped through the city to reach the accident, fighting against time.* ☐ *All the students fought against time to complete the test.*

fight back (at someone or something**)** to defend oneself against someone or something; to retaliate against someone or something. ☐ *You are going to have to fight back at them. You can't expect us to defend you.* ☐ *It's hard for me to fight back against three of them by myself.*

Fight fire with fire. *Prov.* Use against your opponent the same methods he or she is using against you. ☐ *After her opponent had spent several weeks slandering her, the candidate decided to fight fire with fire.* ☐ *When evangelists would come to our house and try to convert us, Mother would fight fire with fire and try to convert them to her religion.*

fight for someone or something to go to battle for the benefit of someone or something; to go to battle in the name of someone or something. ☐ *They all went off to fight for their country.* ☐ *The soldiers fought for the queen and the survival of the empire.* ☐ *I guess I will have to learn to fight for my rights.*

fight like hell Go to like the devil.

fight like the devil Go to like the devil.

fight like the dickens Go to like the devil.

fight on to continue to fight. ☐ *The boys fought on until one of them was down.* ☐ *They fought on until they were exhausted.*

fight (one's **way) back (to** something**)** to struggle to return to something or some place. ☐ *She fought her way back to the head of the line.* ☐ *Jan fought back to good health.*

fight one's **way out (of** something**)** and **fight** one's **way out** to struggle to get out of something or some place. ☐ *He fought his way out of the crowded room and out through the door.* ☐ *He couldn't fight his way out of a paper bag.*

fight (one's **way) through (**something**) 1.** to struggle to get through something; to struggle to penetrate something. ☐ *I'll have to fight my way through all this crepe paper in order to reach the punch bowl.* ☐ *The room was filled with trash, and I had to fight through it to get to the other door.* **2.** to struggle to work through all of some-

thing. ☐ *I have to fight my way through this stack of papers by noon.* ☐ *I am tired of fighting through red tape.*

fight over someone or something to fight a battle that decides who gets someone or something. ☐ *Well, let's not fight over Tom. You can have him. I can make a better team without him.* ☐ *The children were fighting over who would get the largest piece of cake.*

fight someone or something **down**† to fight against and defeat someone or something. ☐ *We fought the opposition down and got our bill through the committee.* ☐ *We had to fight down Fred, who wanted something entirely different.*

fight someone or something **hammer and tongs** and **fight** someone or something **tooth and nail; go at it hammer and tongs; go at it tooth and nail** *Fig.* to fight against someone or something energetically and with great determination. ☐ *They fought against the robber tooth and nail.* ☐ *The dogs were fighting each other hammer and tongs.*

fight someone or something **off**† to repel an attack from someone or something. ☐ *We fought the enemy attack off, but they returned almost immediately.* ☐ *She fought off the mosquitoes all evening.* ☐ *Jed fought the attacker off.*

fight someone or something **with** something to attack or battle someone or something with something. ☐ *We can't fight the enemy with clubs and pitchforks!* ☐ *I fought him with my bare fists.*

fight something **down**† **1.** to struggle to hold something back; to struggle to keep from being overwhelmed by something. ☐ *She fought her anger down and managed to stay calm.* ☐ *She fought down the urge.* **2.** to struggle to swallow something; to fight to get something down one's throat. ☐ *It tasted terrible, but I managed to fight it down.* ☐ *She fought down the nasty-tasting medicine.*

fight something **out**† to settle something by fighting. ☐ *Do we have to fight this out? Can't we use reason?* ☐ *I prefer to fight out this matter once and for all.*

fight something **through**† **(**something**)** to force something through some sort of procedure or process; to **railroad** something **through (**something**)**. ☐ *The governor fought the bill through the legislature successfully.* ☐ *She fought through the bill successfully.*

fight the good fight to fight a noble and well-intentioned battle. ☐ *He fought the good fight and left the meeting with a clear conscience.*

fight to the death to engage in a battle that isn't finished until one opponent is dead. ☐ *The two men looked as though they were going to fight to the death.* ☐ *These evil-tempered dogs will fight to the death.*

fight (with) someone or some creature **(over** someone or something**)** to fight with someone or an animal over who gets or keeps someone or something. ☐ *The terrier fought with the collie over the piece of meat.* ☐ *I don't want to fight you over Harry.*

fight (with) someone or something **(about** someone or something**)** to do battle or argue with someone or something about someone or something. ☐ *Let's not fight with each other about this simple matter.* ☐ *I don't want to fight with you about this!*

a **fighting chance** a good possibility of success, especially if every effort is made. ☐ *They have at least a fighting chance of winning the race.* ☐ *The patient could die, but he has a fighting chance since the operation.*

figure in something [for someone or something] to play a role in something. ☐ *Tom figures in our plans for future office management.* ☐ *I don't wish to figure in your future.*

figure on doing something to plan on something. ☐ *I figured on arriving at the party around eight o'clock.* ☐ *Jane figured on spending $25 on dinner.*

figure on someone or something to count on someone or something; to assume something about someone or something. ☐ *I am figuring on twelve people for dinner next Friday.* ☐ *We are figuring on you and your wife for dinner next weekend.*

figure out the root of the problem Go to the **root of the problem.**

figure someone **as** something to think of a person as a particular type of person. ☐ *I figured her as a reliable worker.* ☐ *We figured them all as good credit risks.*

figure someone or something **in**† Go to **figure** someone or something **in((to)** something**)**.

figure someone or something **in**† **(on** something**)** to plan on having someone or something included in something. ☐ *Please figure another ten people in on the picnic.* ☐ *I will figure in those people.*

figure someone or something **in((to)** something**)** and **figure** someone or something **in**† to reckon someone or something into the total. ☐ *I will figure the electric bill into the total.* ☐ *We can figure in one more person.*

figure someone or something **out**† to begin to comprehend someone or something; to come to understand someone or something better. ☐ *I just can't figure you out.* ☐ *I can't figure out quiet people readily.*

figure something **up**† to add up the amount of something. ☐ *Please figure the bill up. We have to go now.* ☐ *I will figure up the bill right away.*

filch something **(from** someone**)** *Sl.* to grab or steal something from someone. ☐ *The young boy filched a candy bar from the store.* ☐ *Who filched my wallet from me?*

file charges (against someone**)** Go to **press charges (against** someone**)**.

file for something to submit an application or document for something. ☐ *The company filed for bankruptcy.* ☐ *Let's file for reorganization.*

file in((to) something**)** [for a line of people] to move into something or some place. ☐ *The people filed into the hall quietly.* ☐ *Everyone filed in quietly.*

file out (of something**)** [for a line of people] to move out of something or some place. ☐ *The people filed quietly out of the theater.* ☐ *They filed out at the end.*

file past (someone or something**)** [for a line or procession] to move past someone or something. ☐ *The people filed past the coffin, looking sadly at the still figure inside.* ☐ *As they filed past, some wept openly.*

file something **against** someone to lodge a criminal charge against someone. ☐ *Sally filed a charge of assault against Max.* ☐ *The old man filed charges against the attacker.*

file something **(away**†**)** to put something away, usually in a file folder or file cabinet. ☐ *She filed the letter away for*

future reference. ☐ *Please file away this report. You will need it some day.*

file something **away**† **(from** something**)** and **file** something **off ((of)** something**); file** something off† to remove something from something else by filing. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *The dentist filed the sharp point away from the tooth.* ☐ *The dentist filed away the sharp point from the tooth.* ☐ *The dentist filed the point off.*

file something **down**† to level off a protrusion by filing. ☐ *File this edge down so no one gets cut on it.* ☐ *Please file down this edge.*

F

file something **off ((of)** something**)** Go to **file** something **away**† **(from** something**)**.

file something **with** someone or something to submit an application or a document to someone or a group. ☐ *You must file this copy with the state office.* ☐ *I will file this with my boss.*

file something off† Go to **file** something **away**† **(from** something**)**.

fill in [for an indentation, hole, etc.] to become full. ☐ *The scar filled in after a few months.* ☐ *Will this hole in the ground fill in by itself, or should I put some dirt in?*

fill in (for someone or something**)** *Fig.* to substitute for someone or something; to take the place of someone or something. ☐ *I will have to fill in for Wally until he gets back.* ☐ *I don't mind filling in.*

Fill in the blanks. You can figure out the rest.; You can draw a conclusion from that. (Fixed order. See also **fill** something **in**.) ☐ *Mary: What happened at Fred's house last night? Bill: There was a big fight, then the neighbors called the police. Mary: Then what happened? Bill: Fill in the blanks. What do you think?* ☐ *John: They had been lost for two days, then the wolves came, and the rest is history. Jane: Yes, I think I can fill in the blanks.*

fill one's **face** and **stuff** one's **face** *Sl.* to eat food fast; to stuff food into one's face. ☐ *Everytime I see you, you are stuffing your face. No wonder you're overweight!*

fill out to become full; to gain weight. ☐ *About a month after her debilitating illness, Maggie began to fill out again.* ☐ *The fruit on the trees began to fill out, and we knew it was going to ripen soon.*

fill someone **full of lead** *Sl.* to shoot someone. ☐ *The shopkeeper bought a gun and swore the next time someone broke into the shop, he'd fill him full of lead.* ☐ *Don't move, or I'll fill you full of lead.*

fill someone **in**† **(on** someone or something**)** to tell someone the details about someone or something. ☐ *Please fill me in on what happened last night.* ☐ *Please fill in the committee on the details.*

fill someone or something **up**† **(with** something**)** to put as much as possible into someone or something. ☐ *We filled him up with chili and crackers.* ☐ *We will fill up the basket with leaves.* ☐ *I will fill the basket up with flowers.*

fill someone's **head with** something *Fig.* to put some kind of ideas into someone's head. ☐ *Who's been filling your head with ideas like that?* ☐ *Mary has been filling my head with ideas about how to get rich.*

fill someone's **shoes** *Fig.* to take the place of some other person and do that person's work satisfactorily. (As if you were wearing the other person's shoes.) ☐ *I don't know how we'll be able to do without you. No one can fill your shoes.* ☐ *It'll be difficult to fill Jane's shoes. She did her job very well.*

fill something **in**† **1.** to add material to an indentation, hole, etc., to make it full. ☐ *You had better fill the crack in with something before you paint the wall.* ☐ *You should fill in the cracks first.* **2.** *Fig.* to write in the blank spaces on a paper; to write on a form. (See also **Fill in the blanks.**) ☐ *Please fill this form in.* ☐ *I will fill in the form for you.*

fill something **out**† *Fig.* to complete a form by writing in the blank spaces. ☐ *Please fill this form out and send it back to us in the mail.* ☐ *I will fill out the form as you asked.*

fill something **to** something to add material to something up to a certain point. ☐ *Fill the barrel up to here and no higher.* ☐ *Please fill the glass to the top.*

fill the bill and **fit the bill** to be acceptable. ☐ *Jane: I need some string. Tom: Here's some twine. Will it fill the bill?* ☐ *I need cloth to make a shirt. This muslin ought to fit the bill.*

fill the gap to serve temporarily. ☐ *I think that the temp will fill the gap until a new person can be hired.*

fill up 1. to become full. ☐ *The creek filled up after the heavy rain yesterday.* ☐ *The rain barrel began to fill up during the storm.* **2.** to fill one's gas tank. ☐ *I've got to stop and fill up. The gas tank is running low.* ☐ *We will fill up at the next little town.*

filled to the brim filled all the way full; filled up to the top edge. ☐ *I like my coffee cup filled to the brim.* ☐ *If the glass is filled to the brim, I can't drink without spilling the contents.*

film over [for something] to develop a film on its surface. ☐ *The windows had filmed over because of all the humidity.* ☐ *Her eyes filmed over with the cold.*

filter in(to some place**) 1.** *Lit.* to leak or seep into some place. ☐ *The smell of bacon cooking filtered into his room and made him wake up.* ☐ *The smoke filtered in and burned our eyes.* **2.** *Fig.* [for people] to come into a place, a few at a time, over a period of time. ☐ *One by one, the guests filtered into the room.* ☐ *They filtered in and started on the snacks.*

filter something **out of** something and **filter** something **out**† to remove something from a fluid by running it through a filter. ☐ *We filtered the odors out of the water and made it fit to drink.* ☐ *I'm glad you filtered out the odor.*

filter through (something**)** to pass or seep through something. ☐ *The water filtered through the coffee grounds and dripped into the pot.* ☐ *The clear water filtered through and left the sand behind.*

filthy lucre money. ☐ *I sure could use a little of that filthy lucre.* ☐ *I don't want to touch any of your filthy lucre.*

filthy rich 1. *Fig.* very wealthy. ☐ *I wouldn't mind being filthy rich.* ☐ *There are too many filthy rich people now.* **2.** *Fig.* people who are very wealthy. ☐ *The filthy rich can afford that kind of thing, but I can't.* ☐ *I sort of feel sorry for the filthy rich.*

a **final fling** *Fig.* the last act or period of enjoyment before a change in one's circumstances or lifestyle. ☐ *You might as well have a final fling before the baby's born.* ☐ *Mary's*

going out with her girlfriends for a final fling. She's getting married next week.

the **final say** Go to the last word.

the **final word** Go to the last word.

financially embarrassed *Euph.* broke. ☐ *I'm a bit financially embarrassed at the moment.* ☐ *Gary found himself financially embarrassed when the time came to pay the bill.*

find a way around someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to find a way to pass around someone or something to get to the other side. ☐ *I could hardly find a way around the tables in the crowded restaurant to get to the restroom.* **2.** *Fig.* to find a way to evade the rules, or someone's restrictions. ☐ *The students are always trying to find a way around the regulations.*

find against someone or something [for a jury or a judge] to announce a decision against one side of a lawsuit. ☐ *The jury found against the defendant, who was a horrible witness.* ☐ *The court found against the corporation and levied a fine.*

find fault (with someone or something**)** to find things wrong with someone or something. ☐ *We were unable to find fault with his arguments.* ☐ *Sally's father was always finding fault with her.*

find favor with someone to win the praise of someone. ☐ *The maid found favor with the family and was given a large salary increase.* ☐ *Mary found favor with her employer because of her good ideas.*

find for someone or something [for a jury or a judge] to announce a decision in favor of one side of a lawsuit. ☐ *The judge found for Mrs. Franklin, and that made her family quite happy.* ☐ *The court found for the plaintiff and admonished the defense lawyer.*

find it in one's **heart (to** do something**)** and **find it in** oneself **(to** do something**)** *Fig.* to have the courage or compassion to do something. ☐ *She couldn't find it in herself to refuse to come home to him.* ☐ *I can't do it! I can't find it in my heart.*

find it in oneself **(to** do something**)** Go to previous.

find its way somewhere [for something] to end up in a place. (This expression avoids accusing someone of moving the thing to the place.) ☐ *The money found its way into the mayor's pocket.* ☐ *The secret plans found their way into the enemy's hands.*

find (neither) hide nor hair Go to (neither) hide nor hair.

find one's **feet** *Fig.* to become used to a new situation or experience. ☐ *She was lonely when she first left home, but she is finding her feet now.* ☐ *It takes time to learn the office routine, but you will gradually find your feet.*

find one's **own level** *Fig.* to find the position or rank to which one is best suited. ☐ *You cannot force new clerks to be ambitious. They will all find their own level.* ☐ *The new student is happier in the beginning class. It was just a question of letting her find her own level.*

find one's **tongue** *Fig.* to be able to talk; to figure out what to say. ☐ *Tom was speechless for a moment. Then he found his tongue.* ☐ *Ann was unable to find her tongue. She sat there in silence.*

find one's **way (around)** *Fig.* to be able to move about an area satifactorily without getting lost. ☐ *I can go downtown by myself. I can find my way around.* ☐ *I know the area well enough to find my way.*

find one's **way around (**something**)** to discover a way to move around something or some place without getting lost. ☐ *Can you find your way around or shall I have someone take you?* ☐ *Don't worry. I can find my way around.*

find one's **way (**somewhere**)** [for someone] to discover the route to a place. ☐ *Mr. Smith found his way to the museum.* ☐ *Can you find your way home?*

find oneself *Fig.* to discover what one's talents and preferences are. ☐ *Bill did better in school after he found himself.* ☐ *John tried a number of different jobs. He finally found himself when he became a cook.*

find oneself **in a bind** Go to in a bind.

find oneself **in a jam** Go to in a jam.

find oneself **in the doghouse** Go to in the doghouse.

find oneself **in the market (for** something**)** Go to in the market (for something).

find oneself **in the public eye** Go to in the public eye.

find oneself **with** someone or something to discover that one has a disease or a problem. ☐ *I found myself with a terrible case of sunburn after the first day of my vacation.*

find oneself **without** someone or something to discover that one no longer has someone or something. ☐ *When I got to the head of the line, I found myself without a cent!*

find out a thing or two (about someone or something**)** Go to a thing or two (about someone or something).

find someone **a bit off** Go to a bit off.

find someone **a little off** Go to a little off.

find someone **guilty** and **find** someone **innocent; find** someone **not guilty** to decide guilt or innocence and deliver a verdict in a court of law. ☐ *The judge found the defendant not guilty by reason of insanity.* ☐ *The jury found the defendant innocent.*

find someone **in** to learn or discover that one is at home; to learn or discover that one is in one's office. ☐ *I never expected to find you in at this time of night.* ☐ *Did you really expect to find me in on a Friday night?*

find someone **innocent** Go to find someone guilty.

find someone **not guilty** Go to find someone guilty.

find someone **out 1.** to discover that someone is not at home. ☐ *We knocked on their door and found them out.* ☐ *Sam found Frank out when he arrived to collect the debt.* **2.** to discover something surprising or shocking about someone. ☐ *I don't want them to find me out.* ☐ *We found her out despite her deviousness.*

find something **in mint condition** Go to in mint condition.

find something **out†** to discover facts about someone or something; to learn a fact. ☐ *I found something out that you might be interested in.* ☐ *We found out that the Smiths are going to sell their house.*

find (something**) out† (about** someone or something**) (from** someone or something**)** to learn something about someone or something from someone or something. ☐

What did you find out about Terry from Mr. Franklin? ☐ *I didn't find anything out about Roger from the newspaper stories.* ☐ *I found out what I wanted to know about solar flares from the encyclopedia.* ☐ *What did you find out about Bill?*

find (something**) out the hard way** Go to learn (something) the hard way.

find the root of the problem Go to the root of the problem.

find time for someone or something Go to time for someone or something.

F

Finders keepers(, losers weepers). *Prov.* If you find something, you are entitled to keep it. (This is a children's rhyme and sounds childish when used by adults.) ☐ *Bill: Hey! How come you're using my fountain pen? Fred: It's mine now. I found it on the floor—finders keepers, losers weepers.* ☐ *Child: That's my hat. You can't have it. Playmate: I found it. Finders keepers.*

fine and dandy nice; good; well. ☐ *Well, that's just fine and dandy. Couldn't be better.* ☐ *I feel fine and dandy, and I'm going to have a good time here.*

Fine feathers make fine birds. *Prov.* If you dress elegantly, people will think you are elegant. (Can be used ironically, to suggest that even though someone dresses well, he or she is not a high-class person.) ☐ *Bill: I don't see why I should have to wear a necktie for a job interview. Jane: Fine feathers make fine birds.*

a **fine how do you do** an unpleasant situation. (Said with surprise.) ☐ *This is a fine how do you do! Someone left a big puddle of motor oil in my driveway.* ☐ *John saw his girlfriend out with another young man. He walked up to her and said, "Well, isn't this a fine how do you do!"*

a **fine kettle of fish** *Fig.* a troublesome situation; a vexing problem. (Usually appears in the expression, *This is a fine kettle of fish!*) ☐ *This is a fine kettle of fish. My husband is not here to meet me at the train station, and there's no phone here for me to call him.* ☐ *Alan: Oh, no! I've burned the roast. We don't have anything to serve our guests as a main dish. Jane: But they'll be here any minute! This is a fine kettle of fish.*

fine print Go to small print.

fine someone **for** something to demand a monetary penalty from someone for having done something. ☐ *The judge fined her for speeding.* ☐ *The agency fined our company for having the wrong kind of tank to store waste oil.*

a **fine state of affairs** Go to a pretty state of affairs.

Fine weather for ducks. Go to Lovely weather for ducks.

Fine words butter no parsnips. *Prov.* Just because someone promises something does not guarantee that he or she will do it. (Can be used as a rebuke, implying that the person you are addressing is promising something he or she will not do, as in the second example.) ☐ *Sue: Tom promised he would buy me any house I want if I marry him! Jane: Fine words butter no parsnips.* ☐ *Fred: Sweetheart, I'm very sorry I've been so short-tempered. I'll never, never be like that anymore. Ellen: Fine words butter no parsnips.*

fine-tune something **1.** *Lit.* to make delicate adjustments in some mechanical or electronic device. ☐ *It took a while to fine-tune the flute, but it was worth it.* **2.** *Fig.* to make small alterations in a plan or procedure. ☐ *We need to spend some time fine-tuning the scheme, then we will seek approval.*

finger someone **as** someone *Sl.* to identify someone as a certain person. (As if one were pointing a finger at someone.) ☐ *Max fingered his partner as the gunman.* ☐ *The accountant fingered the bookkeeper as the one who fixed the books.*

Fingers were made before forks. *Prov.* It is all right to eat with one's fingers because people had to eat somehow before there were forks. (Used to justify eating something with your fingers.) ☐ *Mother: Put that chicken wing back on your plate and eat it properly, with a knife and fork. Child: But Mom, fingers were made before forks.* ☐ *I don't see why it's considered bad manners to eat with your fingers. Fingers were made before forks.*

finish ahead of schedule Go to ahead of schedule.

finish someone or an animal **off†** to kill someone or an animal that is already injured or wounded. ☐ *They had to finish the wounded bear off with a revolver.* ☐ *The hunter finished off the bear.*

finish someone or something **off†** *Fig.* to complete some activity being performed on someone or something. ☐ *Let's finish this one off and go home.* ☐ *Yes, let's finish off this one.* ☐ *Nancy is cutting Elaine's hair. When she finishes her off, she will be ready to leave.*

finish someone or something **up†** *Fig.* to finish doing something to someone or something. ☐ *I will finish this typing up in a few minutes.* ☐ *She finished up Fred in a short time.*

finish (something**) by** doing something to bring something to a conclusion by doing something. ☐ *She finished the lecture by naming her sources.* ☐ *Sharon finished by reading a poem.*

finish something **off†** *Fig.* to eat or drink up all of something; to eat or drink up the last portion of something. ☐ *Let's finish the turkey off.* ☐ *You finish off the turkey. I've had enough.*

finish (something**) off† with** something to bring something to a conclusion with something. ☐ *She finished the dinner off with fancy cheeses and fruit.* ☐ *She finished off the dinner with pie.*

finish something **with a lick and a promise** Go to a lick and a promise.

finish with something to complete something; to become done with something. ☐ *I will finish with fixing this soon, and then you can have it.* ☐ *When will this be finished with?*

finishing touch(s) a final adjustment of something; some effort or action that completes something. ☐ *Norm is in his workshop putting the finishing touches on his latest project.*

fink on someone *Sl* to inform parents, the authorities, etc. on someone. ☐ *You're not going to fink on me, are you?* ☐ *Chuck finked on all of us.*

fink out (on someone or something**)** *Sl.* to decide not to cooperate with someone or something (after all). ☐ *Come on, don't fink out on us now.* ☐ *Bob finked out on the plan.*

fire away (at someone**)** *Fig.* to ask many questions of someone; to criticize someone severely. ☐ *When it came time for questions, the reporters began firing away at the*

mayor. ☐ *Members of the opposite party are always firing away at the president.*

Fire is a good servant but a bad master. *Prov.* You must be careful to use fire wisely and under control so that it will not hurt you. ☐ *Don't play with the candle flames, children. Fire is a good servant but a bad master.* ☐ *At camp, we learned how to build and extinguish fires safely, since fire is a good servant but a bad master.*

fire over something to shoot over something with a weapon, usually people's heads. ☐ *We fired over their heads to warn them to stay away.* ☐ *Wally fired over the target.*

fire someone **up†** *Fig.* to motivate someone; to make someone enthusiastic. ☐ *See if you can fire John up and get him to rake the leaves.* ☐ *I have to fire up the electorate if I want them to vote for me.*

fire someone **with anger** and **fire** someone **with enthusiasm; fire** someone **with hope; fire** someone **with expectations** *Fig.* [for someone's words] to fill someone with eagerness or the desire to do something. ☐ *The speech fired the audience with enthusiasm for change.* ☐ *We were fired with anger to protest against the government.*

fire someone **with enthusiasm** Go to previous.

fire someone **with expectations** Go to **fire** someone **with anger.**

fire (something**) at** someone or something and **fire (**something**) away at** someone or something to shoot at someone or something with a weapon. ☐ *Someone fired a gun at my car!* ☐ *The cowboy fired at the rattlesnake.* ☐ *The hunters fired away at the ducks.* ☐ *On television, somebody is always firing away at somebody else.*

fire (something**) away at** someone or something Go to previous.

fire (something**) back (at** someone or something**)** to shoot back at someone or something. ☐ *We fired about ten rounds back at them.* ☐ *The soldiers in the fort did not fire back at the attackers.*

fire something **back† (to** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to send something back to someone or a group immediately. ☐ *Look this over and fire it back to me immediately.* ☐ *Fire back all this stuff to the printer as soon as you have proofed it.*

fire something **into** someone or something to shoot something, as a weapon, into someone or something. ☐ *She fired the gun into a special box that stopped the bullet. She would then examine it under a special microscope.* ☐ *Max fired two shots into Lefty, but even that did not stop him.*

fire something **off† (to** someone**)** *Fig.* to send something to someone immediately, by a very rapid means. ☐ *Fire a letter off to Fred, ordering him to return home at once.* ☐ *I fired off a letter to Fred as you asked.* ☐ *I finished the e-mail and fired it off.*

fire something **up† 1.** *Lit.* to light something, such as a pipe, cigarette, etc. ☐ *If you fire that pipe up, I will leave the room.* ☐ *Please don't fire up that cigar in here!* **2.** *Fig.* to start something such as an engine. ☐ *Fire this thing up, and let's get going.* ☐ *Andy fired up the snowblower and started to clear a path.*

***a fire under** someone *Fig.* something that makes someone start doing something. (*Typically: **build ~; light ~; start ~**.) ☐ *The teacher built a fire under the students, and they really started working.* ☐ *You had better light a fire under your staff. Either that or we will lay off some of them.*

fire up to light a cigarette, cigar, or pipe. ☐ *One by one, the guests went outside and fired up.* ☐ *I have to get out of here and fire up.*

fire (up)on someone or something to shoot at someone or something with a weapon; to shoot in the direction of someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *The troops fired upon the advancing army.* ☐ *The cops fired on Max.*

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fired up *Fig.* excited; enthusiastic. ☐ *How can you be so fired up at this time of the morning?* ☐ *It's impossible to get Martin fired up at all.*

firing on all cylinders and **hitting on all cylinders 1.** *Lit.* [of an internal combustion engine] having all its cylinders working and thus providing the maximum amount of power. ☐ *The old car is firing on all cylinders despite its age.* ☐ *This thing's not hitting on all cylinders.* **2.** *Fig.* working at full strength; making every possible effort. ☐ *The team is firing on all cylinders under the new coach.* ☐ *The factory is hitting on all cylinders to finish the orders on time.*

***a firm hand** *Fig.* [someone's] strong sense of management; a high degree of discipline and direction. (*Typically: **exercise ~; have ~; need ~; take ~; use ~**.) ☐ *I had to use a firm hand with Perry when he was a child. He had a problem with discipline.*

firm something **up† 1.** *Lit.* to make something more stable or firm. ☐ *We need to firm this table up. It is very wobbly.* ☐ *You need to use a whisk to firm up the egg whites.* **2.** *Fig.* to make a monetary offer for something more appealing and attractive and therefore more "solid" and likely to be accepted. ☐ *You will have to firm the offer up with cash today, if you really want the house.* ☐ *Please firm up this offer if you still want the house.*

firm up 1. *Lit.* to develop better muscle tone; to become less flabby. ☐ *I need to do some exercises so I can firm up.* ☐ *You really ought to firm up.* **2.** *Fig.* to become more stable or viable; to recover from or stop a decline. ☐ *The economy will probably firm up soon.* ☐ *I hope that cattle prices firm up next spring.*

first and foremost *Cliché* first to be dealt with and most important. ☐ *First and foremost, I think you should work harder on your biology.* ☐ *Have this in mind first and foremost: Keep smiling!*

First catch your hare. *Prov.* Do not make plans about what you will do when you have something until you actually have it. ☐ *Fred: When I buy my house on the beach, you can spend summers with me there. Ellen: First catch your hare.*

First come, first served. *Prov.* The first people to arrive will be able to get the best choices. ☐ *You can't reserve a seat at the movie theater; it's strictly first come, first served.* ☐ *We should get to the book sale as soon as they open; it's first come, first served.*

***first crack at** something *Fig.* the first opportunity at doing, fixing, or having something. (*Typically: **get ~;**

have ~; give someone **~; take ~; want ~**.) ☐ *I'll take the first crack at it, and if I can't do it, you can try.*

The **first hundred years are the hardest.** *Prov.* The first hundred years of your life are the hardest, and after that, you can expect things to get easier; in other words, your whole life will probably be difficult. (A jocular, ironic way to console someone who is having difficulties.) ☐ *Don't worry; things are bound to improve for you. The first hundred years are the hardest.*

First impressions are the most lasting. *Prov.* People will remember the way you appear when you first meet them, so it is important to look and act your best when you meet someone for the first time. ☐ *George spent two hours picking just the right clothes to wear when he met the head of the law firm, since he knew that first impressions are the most lasting.*

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the **first leg (of** a journey**)** and the **first leg (of** the journey**)** the first segment of a journey; the first flight of a multiflight trip. ☐ *The first leg of the journey got me to London.*

first of all as the very first thing; before anything else. ☐ *First of all, put your name on this piece of paper.* ☐ *First of all, we'll try to find a place to live.*

first off first; the first thing. (Almost the same as **first of all**.) ☐ *He ordered soup first off.* ☐ *First off, we'll find a place to live.*

first see the light of day 1. *Fig.* to be born. ☐ *My grandfather has taken care of me since I first saw the light of day.* **2.** *Fig.* to come into being. ☐ *Bob's collection of short stories first saw the light of day in a privately printed edition three years ago.*

The **first step is always the hardest.** *Prov.* Starting a new endeavor is the hardest part of it. ☐ *Fred: I want to quit smoking, but I can't convince myself to sign up for the "stop smoking" program. Jill: The first step is always the hardest.* ☐ *If I can just start this project, I know the rest will be easy. The first step is always the hardest.*

first thing (in the morning) before anything else is done in the morning. ☐ *Please call me first thing in the morning. I can't help you now.* ☐ *I'll do that first thing.*

First things first. *Prov.* Do things in the proper order; do not skip things that you should do first. ☐ *Jill: Should we go to the museum first, or should we go shopping? Jane: I'm hungry. Let's eat lunch before we discuss it. First things first.* ☐ *First things first: read the directions carefully before you try to assemble the bookcase.*

the **firstest with the mostest** the earliest and in the largest numbers; the earliest with more of what's needed. ☐ *Pete got the prize for being the firstest with the mostest.* ☐ *I always like to be there early—the firstest with the mostest.*

fish for a compliment *Fig.* to try to get someone to pay oneself a compliment. ☐ *When she showed me her new dress, I could tell that she was fishing for a compliment.* ☐ *Tom was certainly fishing for a compliment when he modeled his fancy haircut for his friends.*

fish for something **1.** *Lit.* to try to catch a particular kind of fish. ☐ *We are fishing for cod today, but we'll take whatever we get.* ☐ *We will fish for perch from the riverbank.* **2.** *Fig.* to seek some kind of information. ☐ *You could tell the lawyer was fishing for something from the vague way she asked the questions.* ☐ *The telephone caller was fishing for too much information, so I hung up.*

fish in troubled waters *Fig.* to involve oneself in a difficult, confused, or dangerous situation, especially with a view to gaining an advantage. ☐ *Frank is fishing in troubled waters by buying more shares of that company. They are supposed to be in financial difficulties.* ☐ *The company could make more money by selling armaments abroad, but they would be fishing in troubled waters.*

Fish or cut bait. *Fig.* Do something or get out of the way. ☐ *Fish or cut bait, Chuck. There's work to be done here.* ☐ *Decide whether you're going to watch or help. Fish or cut bait.*

fish someone or something **out of** something and **fish** someone or something **out†** to pull someone or something out of something or some place. ☐ *She is down at the riverbank, fishing driftwood out of the water.* ☐ *She fished out a lot of wood.*

fish something **up†** Go to next.

fish something **up out of** something and **fish** something **up†** to pull or hoist something out of something, especially after searching or reaching for it. ☐ *The old shopkeeper fished a huge pickle up out of the barrel.* ☐ *He fished up a huge pickle.*

fish story and **fish tale** *Fig.* a great big lie. (Like a fisherman who exaggerates the size of the fish that got away.) ☐ *That's just a fish story. Don't try to fool me.* ☐ *He's a master at the fish tale. Maybe he should be a politician.*

fish tale Go to previous.

a **fishing expedition** a search for information without knowledge of whether such information exists. (This involves asking questions with no preconceived notion of what the answers might reveal.) ☐ *The lawyer was on a fishing expedition. There was no real wrong committed to justify a lawsuit.* ☐ *Your honor, the prosecutor is just on a clumsy fishing expedition. I move for dismissal.* ☐ *We are going to have to go on a fishing expedition to try to find the facts.*

fit and trim slim and in good physical shape. ☐ *Jean tried to keep herself fit and trim at all times.* ☐ *For some people, keeping fit and trim requires time, effort, and self-discipline.*

fit around something to wrap around something. ☐ *This part fits around the top and keeps the water out.* ☐ *Will this wrench fit around the bolt?*

***fit as a fiddle** *Cliché* in very good health. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *You may feel sick now, but after a few days of rest and plenty of liquids, you'll be fit as a fiddle.* ☐ *Grandson: Are you sure you'll be able to climb all these stairs? Grandmother: Of course! I feel as fit as a fiddle today.*

fit for a king and **fit for the gods** *Fig.* very nice; luxurious. ☐ *What a delicious meal. It was fit for a king.* ☐ *Our room at the hotel was fit for a king.*

fit for the gods Go to previous.

fit in (somehow**) (with** something**)** to match up or harmonize with something in some fashion. ☐ *Your itinerary fits in well with my plans.* ☐ *This fits in very poorly with what I had planned.*

fit in (with someone or something**)** to be comfortable with someone or something; to be in accord or harmony with someone or something. ☐ *I really feel as if I fit in with that group of people.* ☐ *It's good that you fit in.* ☐ *This chair doesn't fit in with the style of furniture in my house.*

fit in((to) something**)** [for something] to be a suitable size to go into something. ☐ *This peg does not fit into this hole.* ☐ *That huge sofa simply doesn't fit in through the door.*

fit like a glove *Fig.* to fit very well; to fit snugly. ☐ *My new shoes fit like a glove.* ☐ *My new coat is a little tight. It fits like a glove.*

fit someone **for** something **1.** to measure someone for something. ☐ *I have to fit him for his tuxedo. I'll take his measurements and get to work on it.* ☐ *She was fitted for her gown in only one afternoon.* **2.** to prepare someone for something; to make someone suitable for some purpose or activity. ☐ *His education did not fit him for working with children.* ☐ *Her temperament does not fit her for this kind of work.*

fit someone or something **in((to)** something**)** and **fit** someone or something **in**† to manage to place someone or something into something. ☐ *I think I can fit you into my schedule.* ☐ *I have fit in three people already today.* ☐ *The shelf is tight, but I think I can fit one more book in.*

fit someone or something **out**† **(for** something**)** to equip someone or something for something; to outfit someone or something for something. ☐ *We are going to fit our boat out so we can live on it during a long cruise.* ☐ *We fit out the children in funny costumes for Halloween.*

fit someone or something **out**† **(with** something**)** to provide or furnish someone or something with something. ☐ *They fit out the campers with everything they needed.* ☐ *They fit them out for only $140.*

fit someone or something **up**† **(with** something**)** and **fit** someone or something **(up**†**) with** something to provide someone or something with something for a particular purpose. ☐ *We fit the couple up with fins, masks, and snorkels for skin diving.* ☐ *The clerk fitted up the couple with diving gear for their vacation.* ☐ *She fit them with tanks and weights.*

fit someone **to a T** Go to **suit** someone **to a T.**

fit something **on(to)** something and **fit** something **on**† to manage to place something onto something. ☐ *See if you can fit this lid onto that jar over there.* ☐ *Sorry, I can't fit on this lid, because it's too big.*

fit something **to** something to make something suit something else. ☐ *Please try to fit your remarks to the audience.* ☐ *Can you fit the main course to the needs of all the people who are coming to dinner?*

fit something **together**† to put the parts of something together. ☐ *First you have to fit the pieces together to see if they are all there.* ☐ *I think I can fit the parts of the model airplane together.* ☐ *Do you think you can fit together all the parts of the puzzle?*

fit the bill Go to **fill the bill.**

fit to be tied angry and agitated. (As if needing to be restrained.) ☐ *Joe was fit to be tied when his wife told him she was leaving.* ☐ *I was fit to be tied when Mary tried to be friendly, after three years of not speaking to me.*

fit to kill *Rur.* a great deal; to the highest possible degree. ☐ *We laughed fit to kill when we saw the expression on Jim's face.* ☐ *I had my car gussied up fit to kill.*

fit together [for things] to conform in shape to one another. ☐ *All the pieces of the puzzle fit together. They really do.* ☐ *This nut and bolt just don't fit together.*

fit with something to harmonize with something; to go well with something. ☐ *Do you think that your behavior fits with the occasion?* ☐ *This coat doesn't fit with these slacks.*

***fits and starts** with irregular movement; with much stopping and starting. (*Typically: **by ~; in ~; with ~.**) ☐ *Somehow, they got the job done in fits and starts.* ☐ *By fits and starts, the old car finally got us to town.*

five-finger discount *Sl.* shoplifting. ☐ *Sam used his five-finger discount to get the kind of ring Jane wanted.* ☐ *I got this necklace by five-finger discount.*

***a fix 1.** *Sl.* a dose of a drug or narcotic. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~; need ~.**) ☐ *The addict badly needed a fix and was very fidgety.* **2.** an appropriate repair. ☐ *Do you have a good fix for a leaky faucet?*

fix an animal *Euph.* to remove the uterus or testicles of a pet animal. ☐ *We took Fluffy to the veterinarian to have her fixed.* ☐ *The animal shelter fixes all animals that come there, to prevent overpopulation.*

***a fix on** something **1.** the exact location of something distant. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~.**) ☐ *I can't get a fix on your location. Where are you?* ☐ *We are trying to get a fix on your radio transmission.* **2.** *Fig.* an understanding of the direction of a discussion. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~.**) ☐ *I can't quite get a fix on what you're trying to say.* ☐ *I can't get a fix on where you're going with this argument.*

fix someone or something **up**† to rehabilitate someone or something. ☐ *The doctor said he could fix me up with a few pills.* ☐ *The doctor fixed up the injured hunter and sent him home.*

fix someone's **wagon** *Fig.* to punish someone; to get even with someone; to plot against someone. ☐ *If you ever do that again, I'll fix your wagon!* ☐ *Tommy! You clean up your room this instant, or I'll fix your wagon!* ☐ *He reported me to the boss, but I fixed his wagon. I knocked his lunch on the floor.*

fix someone **up**† **(with** someone**)** and **line** someone **up**† **(with** someone**)** to arrange for someone to have a date or a companion. ☐ *They lined John up with my cousin, Jane.* ☐ *John didn't want us to fix him up.* ☐ *We fixed up Bob with a date.*

fix someone **up**† **(with** something**)** to supply someone with something. ☐ *I will fix you up with some alcohol and bandages.* ☐ *The clerk fixed up the lady with what she needed.* ☐ *Larry wanted some film and the clerk fixed him up with the best.*

fix something *Sl.* to pay money in secret to have something turn out the way you want. ☐ *The Boss fixed all the horse races in the county.* ☐ *After the gun-control bill failed to pass, there were rumors that the gun lobby had fixed the legislature.*

fix something **for (a meal)** to prepare something for a specific meal. ☐ *I will fix some chili for lunch.* ☐ *Will you fix something good for dinner tonight?*

fix something **on(to)** something to attach something onto something. ☐ *We fixed a notice onto the broken door so people wouldn't use it.* ☐ *Please fix a label on this package.*

fix something **over**† to redo something; to **do** something **over;** to redecorate something. ☐ *I want to fix this room over next spring.* ☐ *I really want to fix over this room.*

fix something **with** someone **1.** to get someone's agreement or permission for something. ☐ *Don't worry, I'll fix it with your boss.* ☐ *Can you fix things with my brother? He doesn't want me to do this.* **2.** to apologize or make amends to someone for something. ☐ *She is upset at you, but you can fix it with her, I'm sure.* ☐ *I will fix it with her. Don't worry.*

F

fix (up)on someone or something to become preoccupied with someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on.*) ☐ *She seems to have fixed upon becoming a pilot.* ☐ *James is quite fixed on Janet.*

fixed up provided with a date. ☐ *Sam got fixed up with Martha.* ☐ *Okay, Sam is fixed up with a date for Saturday.*

fixin(g) to do something *Rur.* getting ready to do something; getting ready to start something. ☐ *I'm fixin' to go to the store. Need anything?*

fizz up [for a liquid] to sparkle and bubble with many tiny bubbles; [for a liquid] to effervesce. ☐ *The cola drink fizzed up and spilled over.* ☐ *As she poured the root beer, it fizzed up over the glass.*

fizzle out 1. *Lit.* [for a liquid] to lose its effervescence. ☐ *This seltzer has fizzled out. I need a fresh glass of it.* **2.** *Fig.* [for an item in a fireworks display] to fail to operate properly, often producing only a hiss. ☐ *That last rocket fizzled out. Set off another one.* ☐ *A lot of the fireworks fizzled out because it was raining.* **3.** *Fig.* to fade or become ineffectual gradually. ☐ *The party began to fizzle out about midnight.* ☐ *The last clerk I hired fizzled out after the first week.*

flack out and **flake out** *Sl.* to collapse with exhaustion; to lie down because of exhaustion. ☐ *All the hikers flacked out when they reached the campsite.* ☐ *After a few hours, the hikers all flaked out.*

flag someone or something **down**† to signal or wave, indicating that someone should stop. ☐ *Please go out and flag a taxi down. I'll be right out.* ☐ *She went to flag down a taxi.*

flake away (from something**)** [for bits of something] to break away from the whole gradually or from natural causes. ☐ *Bits of stone flaked away from the surface of the statue year after year.* ☐ *Bits of the steps flaked away from years of constant use.*

flake down *Sl.* to go to bed and go to sleep. ☐ *I've got to go home and flake down for a while.* ☐ *Tom is flaked down for the night.*

flake off ((of) something**)** [for bits of something] to break away from the whole, perhaps under pressure or because of damage. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Little bits of marble began to flake off the marble steps.* ☐ *Bits flaked off from the whole.*

flake out Go to **flack out.**

flake something **off**† Go to next.

flake something **off of** something and **flake** something **off**† to make bits or flakes break off from the whole. ☐ *The sculptor flaked bits of stone off the block, but you could not yet see what the block was going to become.* ☐ *She flaked off a little more.*

flame up 1. [for something] to catch fire and burst into flames. ☐ *The trees flamed up one by one in the forest fire.* ☐ *Suddenly the car flamed up and exploded.* **2.** [for a fire] to expand and send out larger flames. ☐ *The raging fire flamed up and jumped to even more trees.* ☐ *As firemen opened the door and came in, the fire flamed up and filled the room.*

flame with anger and **flame with resentment; flame with lust; flame with vengeance** *Fig.* [for someone's eyes] to "blaze" or seem to communicate a particular quality or excitement, usually a negative feeling. ☐ *His eyes flamed with resentment when he heard Sally's good news.* ☐ *Her eyes flamed with hatred.*

flame with lust Go to previous.

flame with resentment Go to **flame with anger.**

flame with vengeance Go to **flame with anger.**

flank (up)on someone or something to be at the side of someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on.*) ☐ *The Victorian mansion flanked on the tall, modern apartment building.* ☐ *It flanked on a broad expanse of fir trees.*

flap around [for a sheet of something] to blow, flop, or slap around, perhaps in the wind. ☐ *The sails flapped around, making a lot of noise.* ☐ *The awning flapped around during the night.*

flap one's **gums** and **flap** one's **jaws** *Rur.* to talk aimlessly. ☐ *They're still out on the porch, flapping their gums.* ☐ *Well, I can't sit here flapping my jaws all day. Gotta get back to work.*

flap one's **jaws** Go to previous.

flare out to spread out; to widen. (Said especially of one opening of a tube or round-topped vessel.) ☐ *The end of the pipe flared out to a larger diameter.* ☐ *The top of the vase flared out, and was decorated with little blobs of colored glass.*

flare something **out**† to spread something out; to make something wider. (Said especially of one end of a tube or round-topped vessel.) ☐ *Can you flare the end of this pipe out a little?* ☐ *Flare out the end of this pipe.*

flare up 1. *Lit.* [for something] to ignite and burn. ☐ *The firewood flared up at last—four matches having been used.* **2.** *Lit.* [for a fire] to burn brightly again and expand rapidly. ☐ *After burning quietly for a while, the fire suddenly flared up and made the room very bright.* **3.** *Fig.* [for a pain or medical condition] to get worse suddenly. ☐ *My arthritis flares up during the damp weather.* **4.** *Fig.* [for a dispute] to break out or escalate into a battle. ☐ *A war flared up in the Middle East.* ☐ *We can't send the whole army every time a dispute flares up.* **5.** and **flare up at** someone or something *Fig.* to lose one's temper at someone or something. ☐ *I could tell by the way he flared up at me that he was not happy with what I had done.* ☐ *I didn't mean to flare up.*

flash a smile (at someone**)** *Fig.* to smile quickly and perhaps briefly at someone. ☐ *She flashed a smile at me as if she recognized me.*

flash across something **1.** *Lit.* [for something bright] to move quickly across something. ☐ *The telephone number flashed across the television screen too fast for me to copy it down.* ☐ *The spotlight flashed across the audience, blinding me as it went by.* **2.** *Fig.* [for an idea or image] to move quickly through one's mind. ☐ *A solution to the problem suddenly flashed across my mind.* ☐ *Thoughts of food flashed across my mind, and I began to be very hungry.*

flash back (on someone or something**)** *Fig.* to provide a glimpse of someone or something in the past. (In films, literature, and television.) ☐ *The next scene flashed back on Fred's murder.* ☐ *The story then flashed back, giving us information out of the past.*

flash back (to someone or something**)** to return briefly to a view of someone or something in the past. (In films, literature, and television.) ☐ *The story suddenly flashed back to Tom when he was a child.* ☐ *The story flashed back to Tom's childhood.*

a **flash in the pan** *Fig.* someone or something that draws a lot of attention for a very brief time. ☐ *I'm afraid that my success as a painter was just a flash in the pan.* ☐ *Tom had hoped to be a major film star, but his career was only a flash in the pan.*

flash into one's **mind** *Fig.* [for an idea or image] to enter one's mind for an instant. (See also **flash through** one's **mind.**) ☐ *A brilliant idea flashed into her mind, and she wrote it down.* ☐ *When the idea flashed into my mind, I closed my eyes and tried to forget it.*

flash into view *Fig.* to move quickly into view. ☐ *Suddenly, a doe and her fawn flashed into view.* ☐ *A bright parrot flashed into view and squawked raucously.*

flash off [for a light] to go off suddenly. (See also **flash on**.) ☐ *The light flashed off and it was dark for a few minutes.* ☐ *When the lights flashed off, I was setting my watch.*

flash on [for a light] to turn on suddenly. ☐ *The light flashed on and woke us up.* ☐ *When the light flashed on, I had just been getting to sleep.*

flash on someone or something [for a light] to shine on someone or something suddenly or in bursts. ☐ *The orange neon light flashed on John's face, making him look quite strange.* ☐ *The light flashed on the window shade, startling the occupants of the room.*

flash on something *Sl.* to remember something suddenly and vividly. ☐ *Then I flashed on a great idea.* ☐ *I was trying to flash on her name, but I couldn't bring it to mind.*

flash out [for a light] to shine out of something suddenly or in bursts. ☐ *The light flashed out, signaling us to stay away from the rocks.* ☐ *Under the door, we saw a light flashing out. Someone was watching television in that room.*

flash something **around**† to display something so everyone can see it. (Usually something one would hold in one's hand.) ☐ *Don't flash your money around on the streets.* ☐ *She flashed around the pictures of her grandchildren every chance she got.*

flash something **at** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to shine a light quickly on someone or something. ☐ *Larry flashed a light at Frank to verify his identity.* ☐ *We flashed the light at each doorway, looking for the address we had been sent to.* **2.** *Fig.* to show something, such as a badge, to someone or a group quickly. ☐ *The cop flashed his badge at the suspect.* ☐ *The security officer came in and flashed his badge at the board of directors.*

flash something **up**† **(**some place**)** to shine a light upwards toward something. ☐ *Flash your light up into the tree.* ☐ *She flashed up her light at the cat in the tree.* ☐ *Gloria flashed the light up.*

flash through one's **mind** *Fig.* [for an idea or image] to move quickly through one's mind. (See also **flash into** one's **mind.**) ☐ *Suddenly, a great idea flashed through my mind.* ☐ *The same idea flashed through all of our minds at once.*

flash with anger and **flash with recognition; flash with eagerness** [for someone's eyes] to "glimmer" or seem to communicate a particular quality or excitement. ☐ *Her green eyes flashed with anger.* ☐ *Ellen's eyes flashed with recognition when she saw me.*

flash with recognition Go to previous.

***flat as a board** and ***flat as a pancake** *Cliché* very flat. (Also used to describe someone's chest or abdomen, referring to well-developed abdominal muscles or small or nearly absent breasts or pectoral muscles—in either sex. *Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Jane was flat as a board until she was sixteen, when she suddenly blossomed.* ☐ *Lucy can mash an aluminum can flat as a pancake with one blow from her heel.*

flat as a pancake Go to previous.

flat broke and **flat busted** *Fig.* having no money at all. ☐ *Sorry, I'm flat broke. Not a cent on me.* ☐ *You may be flat broke, but you will find a way to pay your electricity bill or you will live in the dark.* ☐ *Mary was flat busted, and it was two more weeks before she was due to get paid.*

flat busted Go to previous.

flat on one's **ass 1.** *Fig. Inf.* completely exhausted. (Potentially offensive. Use only with discretion.) ☐ *I'm just flat on my ass. I need some rest.* ☐ *After the day of the marathon, Pete was flat on his ass for a week.* **2.** *Fig. Inf.* broke; financially destroyed. (Potentially offensive. Use only with discretion. An elaboration of **flat broke**.) ☐ *Sorry, I can't help you. I'm broke—flat on my ass.* ☐ *The guy's flat on his ass. Can you help him out with a loan?*

(flat) on one's **back** ill in bed. ☐ *I've been on my back with the flu for two weeks.* ☐ *She was flat on her back during her illness.*

flat out 1. clearly and definitely; holding nothing back. ☐ *I told her flat out that I didn't like her.* ☐ *They reported flat out that the operation was a failure.* **2.** at top speed. ☐ *How fast will this car go flat out?* ☐ *This car will hit about 110 miles per hour flat out.*

flatten someone or something **out**† to make someone or something flat. ☐ *If you fall under the steamroller, it will flatten you out.* ☐ *Flatten out that dough a little more.* ☐ *Please flatten it out.*

flatter one's **figure** *Fig.* [for clothing] to make one look thin or to make one's figure look better than it is. ☐ *The lines of this dress really flatter your figure.* ☐ *The trousers had a full cut that flattered Maria's figure.*

Flattery will get you nowhere. Flattering me will not increase your chances of success. ☐ *A: Gee, you can do*

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almost anything, can't you? B: Probably, but flattery will get you nowhere.

flavor food with something to season a food with something. ☐ *He flavors his gravy with a little sage.* ☐ *Can you flavor the soup with a little less pepper next time?*

fleck something **with** something to put little specks of something on something. ☐ *They flecked the little figures with some kind of powder that made them sparkle.* ☐ *His hair was flecked with gray.*

flee from someone or something to run away from someone or something. ☐ *The robber fled from the scene of the crime.* ☐ *The children fled from the wrath of the old man.*

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flee to something to escape to something or some place. ☐ *We fled to our little place on the coast. They never found us.* ☐ *The little mouse fled to its hole in the wall when the cat came around.*

fleet of foot *Fig.* able to run fast. ☐ *Frederick, who was notably fleet of foot, outran all the other boys and won the prize.*

a **fleeting glance** *Fig.* a quick glance; a very brief look. ☐ *I had a fleeting glance at the car as it sped by, but I couldn't read the license place number.*

flesh and blood 1. *Lit.* a living human body, especially with reference to its natural limitations; a human being. ☐ *This cold weather is more than flesh and blood can stand.* ☐ *Carrying 300 pounds is beyond mere flesh and blood.* **2.** *Fig.* the quality of being alive. ☐ *The paintings of this artist are lifeless. They lack flesh and blood.* ☐ *This play needs flesh and blood, not the mumbling of intensely dull actors.* **3.** and **own flesh and blood** *Fig.* one's own relatives; one's own kin. ☐ *That's no way to treat one's own flesh and blood.* ☐ *I want to leave my money to my own flesh and blood.*

flesh out to become more fleshy. ☐ *She began to flesh out at the age of thirteen.* ☐ *After his illness, Tom fleshed out and regained his strength.*

flesh something **out**† **(with** something**)** *Fig.* to make something more detailed, bigger, or fuller. ☐ *This is basically a good outline. Now you'll have to flesh it out.* ☐ *The play was good, except that the author needed to flesh out the third act. It was too short.*

flex something **out of shape** to bend something out of its normal shape. ☐ *Don't flex all the hangers out of shape. We need a few in the closet.* ☐ *Who flexed the gate out of shape?*

flexed out of shape *Sl.* very angry; bent out of shape. ☐ *The boss was completely flexed out of shape.* ☐ *I am truly flexed out of shape.*

flick out 1. [for the ends of a flame] to reach out as the flame burns. ☐ *The flames of the campfire flicked out and threatened the cold fingers that were too close.* ☐ *The flames flicked out from the burning house and set a nearby tree on fire.* **2.** [for the tongue of a reptile] to come out suddenly. ☐ *The snake's tongue flicked out regularly.* ☐ *The lizard's tongue flicked out, grabbed the insect and ate it.*

flick something **off**† **1.** to turn something off, using a toggle switch. ☐ *Mary flicked the light off and went out of the room.* ☐ *Please flick the light off as you go out the door.* ☐ *Please flick off the light.* **2.** Go to next.

flick something **off** someone or something and **flick** something **off**† to brush or knock a speck of something off of someone or something with a quick movement. ☐ *She flicked a speck of lint off his collar.* ☐ *She flicked off the lint.*

flick something **on**† to turn something on, using a toggle switch. ☐ *Mary came into the room and flicked the light on.* ☐ *Please flick on the light.*

flick something **out**† [for a reptile] to push out its tongue quickly. ☐ *The lizard flicked its tongue out repeatedly.* ☐ *The lizard kept flicking out its tongue at regular intervals.*

flick something **with** something to brush or knock something with something quickly or lightly. ☐ *She flicked her finger at the fly that had lighted nearby.* ☐ *Tom flicked the vase with his sleeve and knocked it over.*

flick through something to turn quickly through the pages of something. ☐ *Colleen flicked through the magazine, looking only at the advertisements.* ☐ *I have only had time to flick through the manuscript, but it looks okay.*

flicker out [for a flame] to dwindle, little by little, until it goes out. ☐ *The candle flickered out, leaving us in total darkness.* ☐ *When the last flame flickered out, the room began to get cold.*

flight of fancy an idea or suggestion that is out of touch with reality or possibility. ☐ *What is the point in indulging in flights of fancy about exotic vacations when you cannot even afford the rent?*

flinch from someone or something to move back suddenly from someone or something; to shrink (back) (from someone or something) suddenly. ☐ *She struck at him and he flinched from her.* ☐ *At the last minute the center fielder flinched from the ball.*

fling one's **head back**† to tilt one's head back quickly. ☐ *She flung her head back and laughed heartily.* ☐ *She flung back her head and laughed.*

fling oneself **at** someone Go to throw oneself at someone.

fling someone or something **around**† to sling or throw someone or something around. ☐ *Don't fling your wet clothing around. You are messing up the whole room.* ☐ *Don't fling around all your clothes.*

fling someone or something **aside**† to toss or sling someone or something aside or out of the way. ☐ *She flung aside the covers and leaped out of bed.* ☐ *She flung the covers aside.*

fling someone or something **away**† to throw or sling someone or something away or out of the way. ☐ *You can't just fling me away! I am your eldest son!* ☐ *You can't just fling away the things you don't want!*

fling someone or something **back**† **1.** to sling or throw someone or something backwards. ☐ *I had to fling the child back, away from the fire.* ☐ *I flung back the door and ran out.* ☐ *Walt grabbed at the door and flung it back.* **2.** to return someone or something by slinging or throwing. ☐ *She took the little fish and flung it back into the water.* ☐ *Did you fling back the ball to Roger?*

fling someone or something **down**† to throw or push someone or something down. ☐ *He flung the book down in great anger.* ☐ *He flung down the book and ran from the room.*

fling someone or something **out of** something and **fling** someone or something **out**† to sling or throw someone or some-

thing out of something or some place. □ *In anger, she flung the cat out of the window.* □ *She flung out the cat and closed the window.*

fling something **at** someone or something to throw something roughly or carelessly at someone or something. □ *Don't fling that towel at me!* □ *Don't just fling that paper at the wastebasket, hoping it will get there!*

fling something **in(to)** something and **fling** something **in**† to throw something into something. □ *I will fling this thing in the trash. It is junk!* □ *Liz opened the laundry chute and flung in her clothes.* □ *She flung them in.*

fling something **off of** oneself and **fling** something **off**† **1.** to pull or throw something off of oneself hastily. □ *She flung the blanket off herself.* □ *She flung off the blanket.* **2.** to pull or take off an article of clothing. □ *Larry flung his jacket off and went straight to the kitchen.* □ *He flung off his jacket.*

fling something **off (of)** something and **fling** something **off**† to yank or pull something off something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) □ *He flung the bedspread off the bed and dived in.* □ *He flung off the covers and dived into bed.*

fling something **on** oneself and **fling** something **on**† to put an article of clothing onto oneself hastily. □ *She got up and flung on her robe.* □ *She flung her robe on and went to answer the door.*

fling something **up**† **in** someone's **face** *Fig.* to bring a problem up and confront someone with it. □ *Don't fling it up in my face! It's not my fault!* □ *I don't like anyone to fling up my past in my face.*

fling something **up**† **(in** something**)** to throw one's arms or hands up in an expression of some emotion, such as despair, horror, disgust, resignation. □ *She flung her hands up in despair.* □ *She flung up her hands and cried out for help.*

fling up *Sl.* to empty one's stomach; to vomit. □ *I was afraid I was going to fling up.* □ *Who flung up on the sidewalk?*

flip around to turn end for end, all the way around, quickly. □ *The alligator flipped around and hissed at us.* □ *The kitten flipped around and pounced on my hand.*

flip one's **lid** Go to next.

flip one's **wig** and **flip** one's **lid** *Sl.* to suddenly become angry, crazy, or enthusiastic. □ *Whenever anyone mentions taxes, Mr. Jones absolutely flips his wig.* □ *Stop whistling. You're going to make me flip my lid.*

flip out *Sl.* to lose control of oneself. □ *After a sleepless night, Wally simply flipped out.* □ *I felt like I was going to flip out from the steady dripping of the faucet.*

flip over to turn over quickly. □ *The fish flipped over and flipped back over again.* □ *The cat flipped over and ran away.*

flip over someone or something *Sl.* to become very excited about someone or something; to lose control because of someone or something. □ *I flipped over her the first time I ever saw her.* □ *The guests really flipped over the Beef Wellington!*

the **flip side 1.** *Lit.* the "other" side of a phonograph record. □ *On the flip side, we have another version of "Love Me Tender" sung by Sandy Softly.* □ *You really should listen to the flip side sometime.* **2.** *Fig.* another aspect of a situation. □ *On the flip side, if we lower the taxes it may stimulate consumer spending.*

flip someone **for** something to flip [a coin] with someone to determine the posession of something or the right to do something. □ *Maybe it's yours; maybe it's mine. I'll flip you for it.*

flip someone **off**† and **flip** someone **out**†; **flip** someone **the bird** *Sl.* to give someone the finger, that is raise the middle finger, a rude sign. (The *digitus impudicus.*) □ *The youth flipped the police officer off. Not a good idea.* □ *He flipped off the cop.* □ *You better not flip a cop out!* □ *The little kid flipped the cop the bird and didn't even know what it meant.*

flip someone **out**† Go to previous.

flip someone **the bird** Go to **flip** someone **off**.

flip someone or something **over**† to turn someone or something over quickly. □ *He flipped over the fish and removed the scales from its other side.* □ *Billy flipped Bobby over and started hitting him on the other side.*

flip someone **out**† Go to **flip** someone **off**†.

flip through something to go quickly through the leaves of a book, etc., page by page. □ *She flipped through the book, looking at the pictures.* □ *Don't just flip through it. Read it.*

flirt with someone to tease or trifle with someone alluringly. □ *Are you flirting with me?* □ *Everyone knows that married men aren't supposed to flirt with anyone.*

flirt with the idea of doing something *Fig.* to think about doing something; to toy with an idea; to consider something, but not too seriously. (See also **flirt with** someone.) □ *I flirted with the idea of going to Europe for two weeks.* □ *Jane flirted with the idea of quitting her job.*

flit about to move about quickly; to **dart about.** □ *A large number of hummingbirds were flitting about.* □ *Butterflies and moths flitted about among the trees and flowers.*

flit from person to person *Fig.* to move quickly from person to person or thing to thing. (See also **flit from** something **to** something else.) □ *Tom flitted quickly from person to person, handing out snacks and beverages.* □ *The singer flitted from table to table, working the crowd for tips.*

flit from something **to** something else **1.** *Lit.* [for an insect] to fly quickly from one thing to another. □ *The butterfly flitted from flower to flower.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to go quickly from task to task, spending little time on each one. □ *The housekeeper only flits from room to room without ever getting anything completely clean.*

float a loan *Fig.* to get a loan of money; to arrange for a loan of money. □ *I couldn't afford to pay cash for the car, so I floated a loan.* □ *They needed money, so they had to float a loan.*

float around to float from here to there freely. □ *All sorts of paper and trash were floating around on the surface of the pond.* □ *Water hyacinths floated around, making a very tropical scene.*

float into something **1.** *Lit.* to move on water or in air into something. □ *The huge cruise ship floated majestically into the harbor.* □ *The kite floated into a tree and was ruined.*

2. *Fig.* to move into something gently, as if floating. ☐ *She floated into the room, looking like Cinderella before midnight.* ☐ *Tom and Gloria floated into the theater like a king and queen. They must have rehearsed it.*

float on air *Fig.* [for someone] to feel free and euphoric. ☐ *I was so happy, I was floating on air.* ☐ *Mary was floating on air after she won first prize.*

float through something **1.** *Lit.* to move slowly through water or air, gently. ☐ *The boats floated through the water slowly and gracefully.* ☐ *As the clouds floated through the sky, they cast blotchy shadows on the ground.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to move aimlessly through something. (As if semiconscious.) ☐ *She has no ambition. She's just floating through life.* ☐ *He floated through his work that day. It is probably done all wrong.*

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float (up)on something to drift as if on the surface of something; to drift along through the air. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *The little tufts of dandelion seeds floated upon the breeze.* ☐ *The fluff floated on the breeze.*

flock after someone or something to follow someone or something in a group. ☐ *The children flocked after the man playing the flute.* ☐ *Fans flocked after the movie star as he went from his limo into the hotel.*

flock around someone or something to crowd around someone or something. ☐ *All the children will flock around the magician to see how the tricks are performed.* ☐ *The guests flocked around the birthday cake.*

flock in((to) some place**)** *Fig.* [for people] to move into some place in crowds. ☐ *People were flocking into the store where everything was on sale.*

flock to someone or something *Fig.* [for people] to come to someone or something in great numbers. ☐ *Many people flocked to the shopping mall for the postholiday discounts.* ☐ *The kids flocked to the movie theater on Saturday afternoon.*

flock together to gather together in great numbers. (Typically said of birds and sheep.) ☐ *A large number of blackbirds flocked together, making a lot of noise.* ☐ *Do sheep really flock together in a storm?*

flog a dead horse and **beat a dead horse** *Fig.* to insist on talking about something that no one is interested in, or that has already been thoroughly discussed. ☐ *The history teacher lectured us every day about the importance of studying history, until we begged him to stop flogging a dead horse.* ☐ *Jill: I think I'll write the company president another letter asking him to prohibit smoking. Jane: There's no use beating a dead horse, Jill; he's already decided to let people smoke.*

flog someone **to death** *Lit.* to beat someone to death with a whip. ☐ *In the movie, the captain ordered the first mate to flog the sailor to death.*

flog something **to death** *Fig.* to dwell on something so much that it no longer has any interest. ☐ *Stop talking about this! You've flogged it to death.* ☐ *Walter almost flogged the whole matter to death before we stopped him.*

flood in(to something**) 1.** *Lit.* [for a fluid] to flow quickly into something in great volume. ☐ *The water flooded in and soaked the carpets.* **2.** *Fig.* [for large amounts or numbers or people or things] to pour or rush into something. ☐ *The people flooded into the hall.* ☐ *We opened the door, and the dogs and cats flooded in.*

flood out (of something**) 1.** *Lit.* [for water or something that flows] to rush out of something. ☐ *The water flooded out of the break in the dam.* **2.** *Fig.* [for people] to rush out of something or some place. ☐ *The people flooded out of the theater, totally disgusted with the performance.*

flood someone or something **out of** something and **flood** someone or something **out**† [for too much water] to force someone or something to leave something or some place. ☐ *The high waters flooded them out of their home.* ☐ *The high waters flooded out a lot of people.*

flood someone or something **with** something to cover or inundate someone or something with something. ☐ *We flooded them with praise and carried them on our shoulders.* ☐ *The rains flooded the fields with standing water.*

***the floor** *Fig.* the exclusive right to address the audience. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; hold ~; grant** someone **~**.) ☐ *When I get the floor, I'll make a short speech.* ☐ *The last time you had the floor, you talked for an hour.*

floor it *Fig.* to press down hard and fast on the accelerator of a vehicle. ☐ *She floored it and sped off over the hill.*

floor someone to surprise and astound someone. ☐ *His brashness simply floored me!*

flop around [for something] to turn around awkwardly; [for a fish out of water] to squirm and flap. ☐ *The hose flopped around, throwing water first this way and then that, knocking down plants as it flopped.* ☐ *A number of fish flopped around in the bottom of the boat.*

flop as something to be a failure in a particular aspect of something in one's life or career. ☐ *He flopped as an actor.* ☐ *I don't want to flop as a public speaker.*

flop down to sit down heavily or awkwardly. ☐ *Be graceful. Don't just flop down!* ☐ *When I reached the chair, all I could do was flop down.*

flop into something [for someone] to fall or drop into something, such as bed, a chair, a bathtub, etc. ☐ *Maggie flopped into the chair and slipped off her shoes.* ☐ *Tom flopped into bed and fell fast asleep.*

flop someone or something **over**† to turn someone or something over, awkwardly or carelessly. ☐ *They flopped the unconscious man over, searching for his identification.* ☐ *They flopped over the injured man.*

flop something **down on(to)** something and **flop** something **down**† to drop or slap something down on something. ☐ *She flopped the liver down on the cutting board.* ☐ *She flopped down the raw meat.*

flora and fauna plants and animals. ☐ *The magazine story described the flora and fauna of Panama.* ☐ *We went for a hike in the Finnish wilderness hoping to learn all about the local flora and fauna.*

floral tribute *Euph.* flowers sent to a funeral. ☐ *The church was filled with floral tributes.* ☐ *Did you wish to make any arrangements for floral tributes at your grandmother's funeral?*

flotsam and jetsam 1. *Lit.* the floating wreckage of a ship and its cargo, or floating cargo deliberately cast overboard to stabilize a ship in a rough sea. ☐ *All sorts of flotsam and jetsam washed up on the beach.* **2.** *Fig.* worthless

matter; worthless encumbrances. ☐ *His mind is burdened with the flotsam and jetsam of many years of poor instruction and lax study habits.* ☐ *Your report would be better if you could get rid of a lot of the flotsam and jetsam and clean up the grammar a bit.*

flounce in(to some place**)** to move into a place with exaggerated or jerky motions. ☐ *A couple of teenagers flounced into the store and started examining the most expensive merchandise.* ☐ *They flounced in and caught the eye of the security guard.*

flounce out (of some place**)** to bounce or bound out of some place. ☐ *She turned up her nose and flounced out of the shop.* ☐ *She flounced out in anger.*

flounder around to struggle or wallow around. ☐ *The whole company is just floundering around and getting nowhere.* ☐ *The horse floundered around, trying to get across the soggy pasture.*

flounder through something **1.** *Lit.* to struggle through something, such as a mire, swamp, etc. ☐ *The Jeep floundered through the swamp without getting stuck.* ☐ *The horse floundered through the muddy field.* **2.** *Fig.* to struggle awkwardly through a difficult situation. ☐ *We floundered through the performance. I don't know how we did it, but we did it.* ☐ *We just floundered through our presentation, hoping for a lot of questions.*

flow across something to stream or glide across something. ☐ *A mass of cold air flowed across the city and froze us all.* ☐ *The floodwaters flowed across the fields and ruined the spring planting.*

flow along to move along evenly, as a liquid flows. ☐ *At the base of the dam, the river began to flow along at a slower pace.* ☐ *The project flowed along quite nicely.*

flow away to course or move away. ☐ *The floodwaters flowed away as fast as they had come.* ☐ *All the spilled water flowed away.*

flow from something to run out from something. ☐ *The blood flowed from the wound on his hand and stained his shirt.* ☐ *The oil flowed from the cracked engine and made a mess on the floor.*

flow (from something**) (to** something**)** to course from one thing to another. ☐ *This water flows all the way from Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico.* ☐ *Rain flows to the river from this very drain.*

flow in(to something**)** to course into something; to pour into something. ☐ *The words flowed into my head, and I felt like I could write again.* ☐ *The water flowed in when I opened the door on the flood.*

flow out (of something**) 1.** *Lit.* to course out of something. ☐ *The apple juice flowed out of the press as we turned the crank.* ☐ *It stopped flowing out when we had crushed the apples totally.* **2.** *Fig.* [for people] to issue forth from something. ☐ *The people flowed out of the stadium exits.* ☐ *At the end of the game, the people flowed out in a steady stream.*

flow over someone or something **1.** *Lit.* [for a liquid or something that flows] to move over someone or something. ☐ *The water flowed over the land, covering everything.* ☐ *She slipped and fell into the icy creek and the water flowed over her, freezing her almost to death.* **2.** *Fig.* [for some kind of feeling] to envelop someone. ☐ *A sense of peace flowed over her.* ☐ *Patriotic feelings flowed over the crowd as they listened to the national anthem.*

flow with something to have some liquid coursing on the surface or within someone or something. ☐ *The sewers were flowing with the floodwaters.* ☐ *Her veins must flow with ice water. She is so cold.*

flub something **up**† to mess something up; to ruin something. ☐ *I saw you play in the tournament last Friday. You really flubbed it up, if you don't mind me saying so.* ☐ *You really flubbed up the tournament.*

flub the dub *Inf.* to fail to do the right thing. ☐ *Martin is flubbing the dub with the fund-raising campaign.* ☐ *Please don't flub the dub this time.*

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flub up to make an error. ☐ *I flubbed up again!*

fluctuate between someone **and** someone else to waver between choosing one person and another. ☐ *I am fluctuating between Sam and Tony as my choice.* ☐ *The manager fluctuated between Mary and Sarah as the new assistant.*

fluctuate between something **and** something else to move between one thing and another; to change from one thing to another. ☐ *Things seemed to fluctuate between the very good and the very bad.* ☐ *The temperature in here fluctuates between too hot and too cold.*

fluctuate with something to vary in accord with something. ☐ *The tides fluctuate with the phase of the moon.* ☐ *Frank's blood pressure fluctuates with his mood.*

fluff one's **lines** and **blow** one's **lines; muff** one's **lines** to speak one's speech badly or forget one's lines when one is in a play. ☐ *The actress fluffed her lines badly in the last act.* ☐ *I was in a play once, and I muffed my lines over and over.* ☐ *It's okay to blow your lines in rehearsal.*

fluff something **out**† [for a bird] to move its feathers outward. ☐ *The parrot said good night, fluffed its feathers out, and went to sleep.* ☐ *The bird fluffed out its feathers.*

fluff something **up**† to make something soft appear fuller or higher. ☐ *Fluff your pillow up before you go to bed.* ☐ *She fluffed up her pillow before retiring.*

flunk out (of something**)** to leave school or a course because of failure. ☐ *Fred flunked out of school and never tried to go back.* ☐ *That's it. All F's. I've flunked out.*

flunk someone **out**† to give one a grade that forces one to leave school or a course. ☐ *The math professor flunked me out. He expects too much.* ☐ *She flunked out half the class!*

flush someone or something **out of** some place and **flush** someone or something **out**† to cause someone or something to leave a hiding place. (Originally from hunting.) ☐ *The police flushed the gunman out from his hiding place.* ☐ *They flushed out the crooks.*

flush something **away**† to wash something unwanted away. ☐ *Flush all this mess away!* ☐ *Fred flushed away all the leaves on the sidewalk.*

flush something **out**† to clean something out with a flow of liquid. ☐ *Flush the fuel line out to clean it.* ☐ *Please flush out the fuel line and clean it.*

flush with something **1.** *Lit.* even with something; sharing a surface with something. ☐ *The edge of the sink is flush with the counter.* ☐ *The wood flooring is flush with the carpet so people won't trip.* **2.** *Fig. [of a face] red with*

anger, embarrassment, rage, etc. ☐ *He faced the woman he had dreamed about all his life. His face flushed with recognition and his heart pounded.* ☐ *Ellen's face flushed with embarrassment.*

flutter about and **flutter around 1.** *Lit.* to fly about with quick, flapping motions of the wings. ☐ *The moths fluttered about aimlessly.* ☐ *A few birds fluttered around.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to move about quickly and busily. ☐ *Aunt Margaret fluttered about, picking up after everyone.* ☐ *Stop fluttering around and sit down!*

flutter about something and **flutter around** something **1.** *Lit.* to fly around something or some place. ☐ *The moths were fluttering about the lightbulb.* ☐ *The butterflies fluttered around the bright flowers.* **2.** *Fig.* to keep moving busily within a particular place. ☐ *The maid fluttered about the house, dusting and arranging.* ☐ *She fluttered around the house from room to room.*

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flutter down [for flying or falling things] to flap or float downward. ☐ *The butterflies fluttered down onto the flowers.* ☐ *The leaves fluttered down from the trees when the breeze blew.*

flutter over someone or something to fly or flap above someone or something. (Also said of a person being fussy about someone or something.) ☐ *The little moths fluttered over us while we were in the garden.* ☐ *The birds flutter over the fountain, eager for a bath.*

fly across something [for a bird or a plane] to move in the air across something. ☐ *A bird flew across the open area in the forest.* ☐ *A large jet flew across the clear blue sky.*

fly apart to break apart, throwing pieces around. ☐ *Don't run the engine too fast or it will fly apart!* ☐ *Mary's bicycle wheel flew apart during the race.*

fly around to soar or float aloft randomly. ☐ *There were insects flying around everywhere.* ☐ *Planes flew around all day and all night, making it hard to sleep.*

fly around someone or something to soar or float in the air near someone or something. ☐ *We saw seven helicopters flying around the stadium.* ☐ *A bunch of mosquitoes flew around me.*

fly at someone or something to attack someone or something suddenly and violently. ☐ *The angry bird flew at its attacker.* ☐ *She flew at him, threatening to scratch his eyes out.*

fly away to take flight and depart. ☐ *The owl hooted one last hoot and flew away.* ☐ *All the birds flew away when the cat came around.*

fly by 1. *Lit.* to soar past, flying. ☐ *Three jet fighters flew by.* ☐ *A huge hawk flew by, frightening all the smaller birds.* **2.** *Fig.* [for time] to go quickly. ☐ *The hours just flew by, because we were having fun.* ☐ *Time flew by so fast that it was dark before we knew it.*

fly by the seat of one's **pants** Go to **by the seat of** one's **pants.**

fly from someone or something **(to** something**)** to escape from something or some place to a place of safety. ☐ *The family had to fly from their pursuers to a place of safety outside the country.* ☐ *They flew from the people chasing them.*

fly from something **(to** something**)** to go from something or some place to some other place by air. ☐ *We had to fly from Miami to Raleigh to get a flight to Chicago.* ☐ *We were able to fly from Miami at the last minute.*

fly in Go to **fly into** something.

fly in the face of someone or something and **fly in the teeth of** someone or something *Fig.* to challenge someone or something; to go against someone or something. ☐ *This idea flies in the face of everything we know about matter and energy.* ☐ *You had better not fly in the face of the committee.*

a **fly in the ointment** *Fig.* a small, unpleasant matter that spoils something; a drawback. ☐ *We enjoyed the play, but the fly in the ointment was not being able to find my hat afterward.* ☐ *It sounds like a good idea, but there must be a fly in the ointment somewhere.*

fly in the teeth of someone or something Go to **fly in the face of** someone or something.

fly into a rage *Fig.* to become enraged suddenly. ☐ *When he heard the report, he flew into a rage.* ☐ *We were afraid that she would fly into a rage.*

fly into something **1.** and **fly in** to go to something or some place by air; to arrive by air. ☐ *When are you going to fly into the airport?* ☐ *We will fly into Detroit tomorrow.* **2.** to crash into something while flying. ☐ *Birds sometimes fly into tall buildings.* **3.** to pass into something, such as fog, clouds, wind, etc., while flying. ☐ *We flew into some clouds, but the flight was not rough.* ☐ *The plane flew into some fog as it was landing.*

fly into the face of danger *Fig.* to take great risks; to threaten or challenge danger, as if danger were a person. (This may refer to flying, as in an airplane, but not necessarily.) ☐ *John plans to go bungee jumping this weekend. He really likes flying into the face of danger.* ☐ *Willard was not exactly the type to fly into the face of danger, but tonight was an exception, and he ordered extra-hot enchiladas.*

fly off 1. *Lit.* to take to flight quickly. ☐ *The stork flew off before we got a good look at it.* ☐ *The little birds flew off and things were quiet again.* **2.** *Fig.* to leave in a hurry. ☐ *Well, it's late. I must fly off.* ☐ *She flew off a while ago.*

fly off the handle *Fig.* to lose one's temper. ☐ *Every time anyone mentions taxes, Mrs. Brown flies off the handle.* ☐ *If she keeps flying off the handle like that, she'll have a heart attack.*

fly off with someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to depart with someone or something by air. ☐ *The eagle flew off with the kitten.* ☐ *The pilot flew off with the eight passengers.* **2.** *Fig.* to leave in a hurry with someone or something. ☐ *She flew off with her packages before she got her change.* ☐ *Dave flew off with his brother because they had to meet a train.*

fly out (of something**) 1.** *Lit.* to leave a place by air. ☐ *We are going to fly out of Manaus on a charter.* ☐ *We flew out on time.* **2.** *Fig.* to leave a place quickly. ☐ *We flew out of there as fast as we could.* ☐ *She opened the door and flew out.*

fly over someone or something to soar or glide over someone or something. ☐ *We saw an eagle fly over us.* ☐ *The plane flew over the desert.*

fly past (someone or something**)** to soar or glide past someone or something. ☐ *The stone flew past Mike's left ear, and he ducked.* ☐ *The plane flew past the cloud bank.*

fly someone or something **in(to** some place**) (from** some place**)** and **fly** someone or something **in†** to transport someone or something to some place from some place. ☐ *We flew the documents into Adamsville from Springfield.* ☐ *We flew in the documents to Chicago from Springfield.*

fly someone or something **out of** something and **fly** someone or something **out†** to transport someone or something out of something by air. ☐ *They flew the tourists out of the troubled area on chartered flights.* ☐ *The tourists flew out to any destination that was available.*

fly the coop *Fig.* to escape; to get out or get away. (Alludes to a chicken escaping from a chicken coop.) ☐ *I couldn't stand the party, so I flew the coop.* ☐ *The prisoner flew the coop at the first opportunity.*

fly to someone or something to go to someone or something quickly and eagerly; to flee to someone or something. ☐ *She flew to his arms as he got off the boat.* ☐ *Harry flew to Gloria and hugged her tight.*

fly to something to go to something or some place by air. ☐ *After Miami, we fly to Chicago.* ☐ *Let's fly to Paris for lunch.*

fly up to something to go by air to a place at a higher elevation or to a place in the north. ☐ *We will fly up to St. Paul for the holidays.* ☐ *I want to fly up to Alberta, Canada, for the summer.*

fly-by-night *Fig.* irresponsible; untrustworthy. (Alludes to a person who sneaks away secretly in the night.) ☐ *The carpenter we hired was a fly-by-night worker who did a very bad job.* ☐ *You shouldn't deal with a fly-by-night merchant.*

flying high 1. *Fig.* very successful in one's ambitions; in an important or powerful position. (Often with the implication that this is not the usual situation or will change.) ☐ *The government is flying high just now, but wait until the budget is announced.* ☐ *He's flying high these days, but he comes from a very poor family.* **2.** *Fig.* in a state of euphoria. (From good news, success, or drugs.) ☐ *Wow! Todd is really flying high. Did he discover a gold mine?* ☐ *Sally is flying high. What's she on?*

foam at the mouth 1. *Lit.* to create froth or foam around the mouth, as with some diseases. ☐ *The poor dog was foaming at the mouth and looked quite dangerous.* ☐ *What does it mean when a cow foams at the mouth?* **2.** *Fig.* to be extraordinarily angry. ☐ *She was almost foaming at the mouth when she heard about the cost of the car repairs.* ☐ *Walter was foaming at the mouth with rage.*

foam up [for something, such as soap or milk] to make foam or lather. ☐ *Milk will foam up when it is boiled.* ☐ *The boiling soup foamed up and slopped over the pot.*

fob someone or something **off† (on(to)** someone**)** to get rid of someone or something by transferring someone or something to someone. ☐ *Don't try to fob your girlfriend off on me!* ☐ *He also fobbed off a bad car on Jane.* ☐ *Some car dealers are always trying to fob something off.*

focus on someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to aim and adjust a lens (including the lens in the eye) onto someone or something. ☐ *I focused on the flower and pressed the shutter release.* ☐ *I focused on Fred and snapped just as he moved.* **2.** *Fig.* to dwell on the subject of someone or something. ☐ *Let's focus on the question of the electric bill, if you don't mind.* ☐ *Let us focus on Fred and discuss his progress.*

focus something **on** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to aim a lens at someone or something and adjust the lens for clarity. ☐ *I focused the binoculars on the bird and stood there in awe at its beauty.* ☐ *He focused the camera on Jane and snapped the shutter.* **2.** *Fig.* to direct attention to someone or something. ☐ *Could we please focus the discussion on the matter at hand for a few moments?* ☐ *Let's focus our attention on Tom and discuss his achievements so far.*

fog over [for something made of glass] to become covered over with water vapor. ☐ *The windshield fogged over because I forgot to turn on the defroster.* ☐ *The mirror fogged over, and I couldn't see to shave.*

fog something **up†** to make something made of glass become covered with a film of water vapor. ☐ *The moisture fogged the windshield up, and we had to stop to clean it off.* ☐ *The moisture fogged up the glass.*

fog up [for something made of glass] to become partially or completely obscured by a film of water vapor. ☐ *The glass fogged up, and we couldn't see out.*

the **foggiest (idea)** *Fig.* (even) a hazy idea. (Usually in the negative.) ☐ *I'm sorry I don't know. I haven't the foggiest.* ☐ *I don't have the foggiest idea of how to do this.*

foist someone or something **off† (on** someone or something**)** to cast someone or something unwanted off on someone or a group. ☐ *Please don't try to foist cheap merchandise off on me.* ☐ *Don't foist off your brother on me!* ☐ *You can't foist that stuff off! It's worthless! People won't buy it!*

fold back [for a sheet of something] to bend back. ☐ *The cloth folded back, revealing the faded upholstery below.* ☐ *The top page folded back, revealing a neatly typed manuscript.*

fold one's **hands** to bring one's hands together, palm to palm, with the fingers interlocking; to grasp one's hands together, palm to palm, perpendicular to one another. ☐ *Please fold your hands and put them on the table while the teacher reads you a story.* ☐ *Please fold your hands and be quiet.*

fold something **away†** to fold something up and put it away. ☐ *Please fold the maps away.* ☐ *Please fold away the maps neatly.*

fold something **back†** to bend a sheet or flap of something back. ☐ *She very carefully folded the page back to mark her place in the book.* ☐ *She folded back the page to mark her place in the book.* ☐ *The surgeon folded the flap of skin back, revealing the torn ligament.*

fold something **into** something **1.** and **fold** something **in†** to blend something, such as eggs, into batter. (See also **cut** something **into** something.) ☐ *Carefully, the chef folded the eggs into the other ingredients.* ☐ *The chef folded in the eggs.* **2.** to make an object by folding something, such as paper or cloth. ☐ *He folded the paper into a little bird.* ☐ *Wally can fold a sheet of paper into an airplane that flies.*

fold something **over†** to double something over on itself; to make a fold in something. ☐ *I folded the paper over twice to make something I could fan myself with.* ☐ *Fold over each sheet, and then place it on the stack.*

fold something **up† 1.** *Lit.* to double something over into its original folded position. ☐ *Please fold the paper up when you are finished.* ☐ *Please fold up the paper.* **2.** *Fig.* to put an end to something; to close a money-losing enter-

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prise. ☐ *Mr. Jones was going broke, so he folded his business up.* ☐ *The producer decided to fold up the play early. It was losing money.*

fold, spindle, or mutilate to harm or disfigure. Referring to a once-standard line printed on machine-readable documents, such as computer punch cards. (Such a document, if folded, placed on a bill spike, or otherwise punctured, would no longer be machine-readable.) ☐ *At the bottom of the bill, it said "do not fold, spindle, or mutilate," and Jane, in her anger, did all three.* ☐ *Look here, chum, if you don't want to get folded, spindled, or mutilated, you had better do what you are told!*

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fold up 1. *Lit.* [for something] to close by folding. ☐ *The table just folded up with no warning, trapping my leg.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to faint. ☐ *She folded up when she heard the news.* ☐ *I was so weak that I was afraid I was going to fold up.* **3.** *Fig.* [for a business] to cease operating. ☐ *Our shop finally folded up because of the recession.* ☐ *Tom's little candy shop folded up.*

folding money bills of various dollar denominations. ☐ *I don't want a check. Give me folding money!* ☐ *You got any folding money with you?*

follow after the style of someone or something Go to **after the style of** someone or something.

follow in someone's **tracks** and **follow in** someone's **footsteps** to follow someone's example; to assume someone else's role or occupation. ☐ *The vice president was following in the president's footsteps when he called for budget cuts.* ☐ *She followed in her father's footsteps and went into medicine.*

follow on (after someone or something**) 1.** *Lit.* to depart and arrive after someone or something. ☐ *I can't leave now. I will have to follow on after the others.* ☐ *I will follow on later.* **2.** *Fig.* to die at a date later than someone or a group. ☐ *She followed on after her husband a few years later.* ☐ *He died in June and she followed on in August.*

follow one's **heart** *Fig.* to act according to one's feelings; to obey one's sympathetic or compassionate inclinations. ☐ *I couldn't decide what to do, so I just followed my heart.* ☐ *I trust that you will follow your heart in this matter.*

follow one's **nose 1.** *Lit.* to go straight ahead, the direction that one's nose is pointing. ☐ *The town that you want is straight ahead on this highway. Just follow your nose.* ☐ *The chief's office is right around the corner. Turn left and follow your nose.* **2.** *Fig.* to follow an odor to its source. ☐ *The kitchen is at the back of the building. Just follow your nose.* ☐ *There was a bad smell in the basement—probably a dead mouse. I followed my nose until I found it.*

follow orders to do as one has been instructed. ☐ *You have to learn to follow orders if you want to be a Marine.* ☐ *I didn't do anything wrong. I was only following orders.*

follow someone or something **about** and **follow** someone or something **around** to go the same route as someone or something all the time; to trail someone or something. ☐ *Why are you always following me about?* ☐ *Stop following me around.*

follow someone or something **out** to go out right after someone or something. ☐ *I followed her out and asked her if I could take her home.* ☐ *The dog followed Billy out and went to school with him.*

follow someone's **lead** to do as someone else does; to accept someone's guidance; to follow someone's direction. ☐ *Just follow my lead and you will not get lost.* ☐ *John followed his father's lead and became a lawyer.*

follow someone **up**† and **follow up (on** someone**)** to check on the work that someone has done. ☐ *I have to follow Sally up and make sure she did everything right.* ☐ *I follow up Sally, checking on her work.* ☐ *I'll follow up on her.*

follow something **through** Go to **follow through (with** something**)**.

follow something **up**† and **follow up (on** something**) 1.** to check something out; to find out more about something. ☐ *Would you please follow this lead up? It might be important.* ☐ *Please follow up this lead.* ☐ *I'll follow up on it.* ☐ *Yes, please follow up.* **2.** to make sure that something was done the way it was intended. ☐ *Please follow this up. I want it done right.* ☐ *Please follow up this business.* ☐ *I'll follow up on it.*

follow suit to follow in the same pattern; to follow someone else's example. (From card games.) ☐ *Mary went to work for a bank, and Jane followed suit. Now they are both head cashiers.* ☐ *The Smiths went out to dinner, but the Browns didn't follow suit. They stayed home.*

follow the crowd to do what everyone else is doing. ☐ *I am an independent thinker. I could never just follow the crowd.* ☐ *When in doubt, I follow the crowd. At least I don't stand out like a fool.*

follow through (on something**)** and **carry through (on** something**)** to complete a task; to see a task through to its completion. ☐ *You must follow through on the things that you start.* ☐ *Don't start the job if you can't follow through.* ☐ *Ask Sally to carry through on her project.*

follow through (with something**)** and **follow** something **through** to complete an activity, doing what was promised. ☐ *I wish you would follow through with the project we talked about.* ☐ *You never follow through!*

follow up (on someone**)** Go to **follow** someone **up**†.

follow up (on someone or something**)** to find out more about someone or something. ☐ *Please follow up on Mr. Brown and his activities.* ☐ *Bill, Mr. Smith has a complaint. Would you please follow up on it?*

follow up (on something**)** Go to **follow** something **up**†.

foment trouble to cause trouble. ☐ *Leave it to Bob to foment trouble.* ☐ *I wasn't fomenting trouble, just expressing my opinion!*

***fond of** someone or something liking someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *I'm fond of chocolate.* ☐ *Mary isn't fond of me, but I'm fond of her.*

food for thought *Fig.* something for someone to think about; issues to be considered. ☐ *Your essay has provided me with some interesting food for thought.* ☐ *My adviser gave me some food for thought about job opportunities.*

A **fool and his money are soon parted.** *Prov.* Foolish people spend money, without thinking. (Perceived as a rebuke if you say it about the person you are addressing.) ☐ *Go ahead and buy a diamond collar for your dog if you really want to. A fool and his money are soon parted.* ☐ *Bill sends a check to every organization that asks him for money. A fool and his money are soon parted.*

fool around to waste time doing something unnecessary or doing something amateurishly. ☐ *Stop fooling around and clean your room as I told you.* ☐ *I wish you didn't spend so much time fooling around.*

fool (around) with someone or something **1.** to waste time in the company of someone or a group. ☐ *Stop fooling around with those guys. They're up to no good most of the time.* ☐ *Better not fool around with part-time work. Go get a good job if you can.* **2.** to have dealings with or tamper with someone or something. ☐ *You had better not fool around with my little sister.* ☐ *Don't fool with that thing!* **3.** to challenge or threaten someone or something. ☐ *You had better not fool around with me, if you know what's good for you.* ☐ *Don't fool with the police force!*

Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me. *Prov.* After being tricked once, one should be wary, so that the person cannot trick you again. ☐ *Fred: Would you like a can of peanuts? Jane: The last can of peanuts you gave me had a toy snake in it. Fred: This one really is peanuts. Jane: Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me.*

a **fool's paradise** *Fig.* a state of being happy for foolish or unfounded reasons. ☐ *I'm afraid that Sue's marital happiness is a fool's paradise; there are rumors that her husband is unfaithful.* ☐ *Fred is confident that he'll get a big raise this year, but I think he's living in a fool's paradise.*

fool someone **into** something to deceive someone or oneself into doing something. ☐ *You'll never fool me into believing you.* ☐ *We fooled the boss into giving us all the day off.*

Fools rush in where angels fear to tread. *Prov.* Foolish people usually do not understand when a situation is dangerous, so they are not afraid to do things that would frighten more sensible people. ☐ *Alan: Bob is too scared to go in and confront the boss, so I'm going to. Jane: Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.*

*a **foot in both camps** *Fig.* an interest in or to support each of two opposing groups of people. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *The shop steward had been promised a promotion and so had a foot in both camps during the strike—workers and management.* ☐ *Mr. Smith has a foot in both camps in the parent-teacher dispute. He teaches math, but he has a son at the school.*

foot the bill (for something**)** *Fig.* to pay for something; to pay for a bill. ☐ *My boss took me out for lunch and the company footed the bill.* ☐ *You paid for dinner last time. Let me foot the bill for lunch today.*

*a **foothold (**somewhere**)** *Fig.* an initial position of support; a starting point. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; help** someone **get ~**.) ☐ *It's difficult to get a foothold in the education market when schools are laying off teachers.* ☐ *Max's father helped him get a foothold in the textile industry.*

foot-in-mouth disease the tendency to say the wrong thing at the wrong time. ☐ *I suffer a lot from foot-in-mouth disease.* ☐ *Well, Ralph has foot-in-mouth disease again.*

footloose and fancy-free *Fig.* without long-term responsibilities or commitments. ☐ *All the rest of them have wives, but John is footloose and fancy-free.* ☐ *Mary never stays long in any job. She likes being footloose and fancy-free.*

for a drive Go to **for a spin.**

for a lark and **on a lark** for a joke; as something done for fun. ☐ *For a lark, I wore a clown's wig to school.* ☐ *On a lark, I skipped school and drove to the beach.*

for a living [of work] done to earn enough money to live. ☐ *John paints houses for a living.* ☐ *What do you do for a living?*

for a ride Go to **for a spin.**

***for a song** *Fig.* cheaply. (As if the singing of a song were payment. *Typically: **buy** something **~; get** something **~; pick up** someone **~**.) ☐ *No one else wanted it, so I picked it up for a song.* ☐ *I could buy this house for a song, because it's so ugly.*

***for a spin** and ***for a ride; *for a drive** to take a ride in a vehicle or on a bicycle. (*Typically: **go ~; go out ~; take** something **~**.) ☐ *Let's get out our bikes and go for a spin.*

for a split second Go to a **split second.**

for all I care I don't care if (something happens). ☐ *For all I care, the whole city council can go to the devil.* ☐ *They can all starve for all I care.*

for all I know according to the information I have; I think; probably. (Usually implies uncertainty.) ☐ *For all I know, the mayor has resigned already.* ☐ *She may have gone to town for all I know.*

for all intents and purposes *Cliché* seeming as if; looking as if. ☐ *Tom stood there, looking, for all intents and purposes, as if he could strangle Sally, but, being the gentleman that he is, he just glowered.* ☐ *Mary: Is the car washed now? John: For all intents and purposes, yes, but I didn't dry it yet.*

for all it's worth and **for what(ever) it's worth** if it has any value. (Usually implies lack of confidence.) ☐ *My idea—for all it's worth—is to offer them only $300.* ☐ *Here is my thinking, for whatever it's worth.* ☐ *Ask her to give us her opinion, for what it's worth.*

for (all) one's **trouble** in spite of one's efforts; in return for one's efforts. (Implies that the "trouble" was not worth taking, or was harmful.) ☐ *He got a punch in the jaw for all his trouble.* ☐ *For her trouble, she got only honorable mention.*

for all practical purposes as might be reasonably expected; essentially. ☐ *For all practical purposes, this is simply a matter of right and wrong.* ☐ *This should be considered final, for all practical purposes.*

for all someone's **problems** in spite of a person's problems (as specified). ☐ *For all her complaining, she still seems to be a happy person.* ☐ *For all my aches and pains, I'm still rather healthy.*

for all the world 1. exactly; precisely. (Especially with *look*.) ☐ *She sat there looking for all the world as if she was going to cry.* ☐ *It started out seeming for all the world like a beautiful day. Then a storm came up.* **2.** everything. (Usually in the negative.) ☐ *I wouldn't give up my baby for all the world.* ☐ *They wouldn't sell their property for all the world.*

for better or for worse under any conditions; no matter what happens. ☐ *I married you for better or for worse.* ☐ *For better or for worse, I'm going to quit my job.*

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for chicken feed and **for peanuts** *Fig.* for nearly nothing; for very little money. (Also used without *for.*) ☐ *Bob doesn't get paid much. He works for chicken feed.* ☐ *You can buy an old car for chicken feed.* ☐ *I won't do that kind of work for peanuts!*

For crying in a bucket! Go to next.

For crying out loud! and **For crying in a bucket!** *Inf.* an exclamation of shock, anger, or surprise. ☐ *Fred: For crying out loud! Answer the telephone! Bob: But it's always for you!* ☐ *John: Good grief! What am I going to do? This is the end! Sue: For crying in a bucket! What's wrong?*

for days on end *Fig.* for many days. ☐ *We kept on traveling for days on end.* ☐ *Doctor, I've had this pain for days on end.*

for fear of something out of fear for something; because of fear of something. ☐ *He doesn't drive for fear of an accident.* ☐ *They lock their car doors for fear of being attacked.*

for free for no charge or cost; free of any cost. ☐ *They let us into the movie for free.* ☐ *I will let you have a sample of the candy for free.*

for giggles Go to for kicks.

for good forever; permanently. ☐ *I finally left home for good.* ☐ *They tried to repair it many times before they fixed it for good.*

for good measure as extra; (adding) a little more to make sure there is enough. ☐ *When I bought a pound of nails, the clerk threw in a few extra nails for good measure.* ☐ *I always put a little extra salt in the soup for good measure.*

For goodness sake! Go to For Pete's sake!

For gosh sake! Go to For Pete's sake!

For heaven('s) sake Go to For Pete's sake!

for hours on end *Fig.* for many hours. ☐ *We sat and waited in the emergency room for hours on end.* ☐ *The children were happy to play video games for hours on end.*

for instance for example. ☐ *I've lived in many cities, for instance, Boston, Chicago, and Detroit.* ☐ *Jane is very generous. For instance, she volunteers at the hospital and gives money to charities.*

for keeps forever. ☐ *Does that mean I'm going to have this scar for keeps?* ☐ *This is yours for keeps. Enjoy it.*

for kicks and **for laughs; for giggles** *Fig.* for fun; just for entertainment; for no good reason. ☐ *They didn't mean any harm. They just did it for kicks.* ☐ *We drove over to the next town for laughs.*

for life for the remainder of one's life. ☐ *The accident caused me to become blind for life.* ☐ *She will stay in prison for life.*

for miles *Fig.* to or in a distance extending two or more miles. ☐ *The huge field of wheat extends for miles.* ☐ *We traveled for miles without stopping.*

for my money in my opinion (as regards value or worth). ☐ *That's the best brand of tools there is, for my money.* ☐ *For my money, you can't go wrong with a pure wool sweater.*

for one's **(own) part** as far as one is concerned; from one's point of view. ☐ *For my own part, I wish to stay here.* ☐ *For her part, she prefers chocolate.*

for one's **(own) sake** for one's good or benefit; in honor of someone. ☐ *I have to earn a living for my family's sake.* ☐ *I did it for my mother's sake.*

for openers and **for starters** to start with. ☐ *For openers, they played a song everyone knows.* ☐ *For starters, I'll serve a delicious soup.*

for peanuts Go to for chicken feed.

For Pete's sake! and **For pity's sake!; For the love of Mike!; For goodness sake!; For gosh sake!; For heaven('s) sake!** a mild exclamation of surprise or shock. ☐ *For Pete's sake! How've ya been?* ☐ *For pity's sake! Ask the man in out of the cold!*

For pity's sake! Go to previous.

for real *Inf.* genuine; not imaginary. ☐ *Ken is really strange. Is he for real?* ☐ *This whole day has been weird, it just isn't for real.*

for safekeeping for the purpose of keeping someone or something safe. ☐ *I put my jewelry in the vault for safekeeping.* ☐ *I checked my fur coat at the entrance to the bar for safekeeping.*

for sale available for purchase; buyable. ☐ *Is this item for sale?* ☐ *How long has this house been for sale?* ☐ *My car is for sale. Are you interested?*

For shame! That is shameful! ☐ *Sue: Did you hear that Tom was in jail? Fred: For shame! What did he do? Sue: Nobody knows.* ☐ *Mary: I've decided not to go to the conference. John: For shame! Who will represent us?*

for short as an abbreviation. ☐ *The Internal Revenue Service is known as the IRS for short.* ☐ *David goes by Dave for short.*

for (some**) days running** and **for (**some**) weeks running; for (**some**) months running; for (**some**) years running** days in a series; months in a series; etc. (The *some* can be any number.) ☐ *I had a bad cold for five days running.* ☐ *For two years running, I brought work home from the office every night.*

for (some**) months running** Go to previous.

for (some**) years running** Go to for (some) days running.

for someone or something's **sake** and **for the sake of** someone or something for the purpose or benefit of someone or something; to satisfy the demands of someone or something. ☐ *I made a meatless dinner for John's sake; he's a vegetarian.* ☐ *The teacher repeated the assignment for the sake of the slower students.*

for starters Go to for openers.

for sure for certain. ☐ *I will be there for sure.* ☐ *Sally: Are you ready to go? Bob: For sure. Sally: Then, let's go.*

for that matter besides; in addition. ☐ *If you're hungry, take one of my doughnuts. For that matter, take two.* ☐ *I don't like this house. The roof leaks. For that matter, the whole place is falling apart.* ☐ *Tom is quite arrogant. So is his sister, for that matter.*

for the asking if one just asks (for something); simply by asking; on request. ☐ *Do you want to use my car? It's yours for the asking.* ☐ *I have an extra winter coat that's yours for the asking.*

***for the better** to be an improvement. (*Typically: **be ~; be a change ~**.) ☐ *A change of government would*

be for the better. ☐ *A new winter coat would certainly be for the better.*

for the birds worthless; undesirable. ☐ *This television program is for the birds.* ☐ *Winter weather is for the birds.*

for the devil of it and **for the heck of it; for the hell of it** because it is slightly evil; for no good reason. (Use caution with hell.) ☐ *The kids broke the window just for the devil of it.* ☐ *We just drove over for the heck of it.*

for the duration for the whole time that something continues; for the entire period of time required for something to be completed; for as long as something takes. ☐ *We are in this war for the duration.* ☐ *However long it takes, we'll wait. We are here for the duration.*

for the fun of it just for the entertainment value of doing it. ☐ *We went on a picnic just for the fun of it.*

for the good of someone or something for the benefit, profit, or advantage of someone or something. ☐ *The president said the strict drug laws were for the good of the country.* ☐ *David took a second job for the good of his family.*

for the heck of it Go to for the devil of it.

for the hell of it Go to for the devil of it.

for the life of me at all; even one little bit. (Used with a negative.) ☐ *For the life of me, I can't figure this out.* ☐ *I can't for the life of me climb up a mountain.*

For the love of Mike! Go to For Pete's sake!

for the moment and **for the time being** for the present; for now; temporarily. ☐ *This quick fix will have to do for the moment.* ☐ *This is all right for the time being. It'll have to be improved next week, however.* ☐ *This good feeling will last only for the time being.*

for the most part mostly; in general. ☐ *For the most part, the class is enjoying geometry.* ☐ *I like working here for the most part.*

for the record so that (one's own version of) the facts will be known; for open, public knowledge. (This often is said when there are reporters present.) ☐ *I'd like to say—for the record—that at no time have I ever accepted a bribe from anyone.* ☐ *For the record, I've never been able to get anything done around city hall without bribing someone.*

for the sake of someone or something Go to for someone or something's sake.

for the time being Go to for the moment.

For want of a nail the shoe was lost; for want of a shoe the horse was lost; and for want of a horse the man was lost. *Prov.* Overlooking small details can have disastrous consequences. (You can quote any of the sentences in this proverb by themselves.) ☐ *Jill: I don't think we need to check our bicycle tires before we go for our ride. Jane: I disagree. For want of a nail the shoe was lost.* ☐ *Before we began the hike into the mountains, we checked our equipment painstakingly, remembering that for want of a horse the man was lost.*

for what(ever) it's worth Go to for all it's worth.

for your information a phrase that introduces or follows a piece of information. (Can be spoken with considerable impatience.) ☐ *Mary: What is this one? Sue: For your information, it is exactly the same as the one you just asked about.* ☐ *Bob: How long do I have to wait here? Bill: For your information, we will be here until the bus driver feels that it is safe to travel.*

forage (around) (for something**)** to search for something, especially something to eat. ☐ *I will go to the kitchen and forage around for some cereal or something.* ☐ *The rabbits got into the garden and were foraging for a good meal.*

forbidden fruit *Fig.* someone or something that one finds attractive or desirable partly because having the person or thing is immoral or illegal. (Biblical; from the apple in the Garden of Eden that was forbidden to Adam by God.) ☐ *Jim flirts with his sister-in-law only because she's forbidden fruit.* ☐ *The boy watches that program only when his parents are out. It's forbidden fruit.*

F

force someone or an animal **from** something to drive someone or an animal away from something. ☐ *We forced the horses from the corral, putting them back into the pasture.* ☐ *I forced Tom from the room and locked the door.*

force someone or something **down†** to press or push someone or something downward. ☐ *I forced him down and slipped the handcuffs on him.* ☐ *The cop forced down the thug and handcuffed him.* ☐ *I forced the dog down and held it there.*

force someone or something **down** someone's **throat** Go to shove someone or something down someone's throat.

force someone or something **in(to)** something and **force** someone or something **in† 1.** to make someone or something go into something. ☐ *Please don't force me into that little room!* ☐ *They forced in many people.* **2.** to make someone or something fit into something. ☐ *Don't try to force the plug into the socket.* ☐ *Don't force in the plug.* ☐ *Sam forced his buddy into the cabinet, and left him well hidden there.*

force someone or something **off (of)** something and **force** someone or something **off† 1.** *Lit.* to get someone, something, or an animal off something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *I had to force the cat off the sofa. She just wouldn't be coaxed off.* ☐ *I had to force off the cat. She is so stubborn.* **2.** *Fig.* to make someone or a group resign from a board, committee, panel, etc. ☐ *They forced her off the board before she could change any of their policies.* ☐ *They forced off the dissenters as well as the CEO.*

force someone or something **(off) on** someone to make someone take someone or something. ☐ *I didn't want it, but she forced it off on me.* ☐ *She forced her nephew on me and went out shopping.*

force someone or something **out of** something and **force** someone or something **out†** to drive someone or something out of something or some place. ☐ *The citizen's group forced the governor out of office.* ☐ *They forced out the governor.*

force someone or something **through** something to push someone or something through an opening. ☐ *First, you must force the others through the opening and then go through yourself.* ☐ *We forced the sofa through the door and scarred up the doorjamb.*

force someone **out of office** and **drive** someone **out of office; drive** someone **out†; force** someone **out†** to drive someone out of an elective office. ☐ *The city coun-*

cil forced out the mayor, who resigned under pressure. ☐ *Please resign immediately, or I'll have to drive you out.*

force someone's **hand** to force a person to reveal plans, strategies, or secrets. (Alludes to a handful of cards in card playing.) ☐ *We didn't know what she was doing until Tom forced her hand.* ☐ *We changed our game plan after we forced the other team's hand in the first period.*

force someone **to the wall** and **drive** someone **to the wall** *Fig.* to push someone to an extreme position; to put someone into an awkward position. ☐ *He wouldn't tell the truth until we forced him to the wall.* ☐ *They don't pay their bills until you drive them to the wall.*

F

force something **down**† to force oneself to swallow something. ☐ *I can't stand sweet potatoes, but I manage to force them down just to keep from making a scene.* ☐ *She forced down the sweet potatoes.*

force something **through** something to press or drive something through something that resists. ☐ *They forced the bill through the legislature.* ☐ *We were not able to force the matter through the board of directors.*

force something **up**† Go to **drive** something **up**.

a **force to be reckoned with** *Fig.* someone or something that is important and powerful and must not be ignored. ☐ *Walter is a force to be reckoned with. Be prepared to deal with him.* ☐ *The growing discontent with the political system is a powerful force to be reckoned with.*

fore and aft at the front and the back, usually of a boat or ship. ☐ *They had to attach new lights fore and aft because the old ones were not bright enough to meet the new regulations.* ☐ *The captain ordered a watch stationed fore and aft.*

foreclose on something to take the property on which a mortgage is held; to satisfy an unpaid loan by taking ownership of the property put up for security on the loan. ☐ *If you don't pay, we will be forced to foreclose on your house.* ☐ *The bank foreclosed on our property.*

a **foregone conclusion** *Cliché* a conclusion already reached; an inevitable result. ☐ *That the company was moving to California was a foregone conclusion.* ☐ *That the mayor will win reelection is a foregone conclusion.*

forever and a day Go to next.

forever and ever and **forever and a day** forever. ☐ *I will love you forever and ever.* ☐ *This car won't keep running forever and ever. We'll have to get a new one sometime upcoming.* ☐ *We have enough money to last forever and a day.*

forewarn someone **about** something and **forewarn** someone **of** something to warn someone about someone or something. ☐ *They forewarned us of your strange behavior.* ☐ *Didn't we forewarn you about Max's problem?*

Forewarned is forearmed. *Prov.* If you know about something beforehand, you can prepare for it. ☐ *Before you meet Lily, I should tell you that she's a little eccentric. Forewarned is forearmed, right?* ☐ *Check the temperature before you go outside. Forewarned is forearmed.*

Forget (about) it! 1. *Inf.* **Drop the subject!**; **Never mind!**; Don't bother me with it. ☐ *Jane: Then, there's this matter of the unpaid bills. Bill: Forget it! You'll have to pay them all!* ☐ *Sally: What's this I hear about you and Tom? Sue: Forget about it! I don't want to talk to you about it.* **2.** *Inf.* **Nothing.** ☐ *Sue: What did you say? Mary: Forget it!* ☐ *Tom: Now I'm ready to go. Sue: Excuse me? Tom: Oh, nothing. Just forget it.* **3.** *Inf.* **You're welcome.**; It was nothing. ☐ *John: Thank you so much for helping me! Bill: Oh, forget it!* ☐ *Bob: We're all very grateful to you for coming into work today on your day off. Mary: Forget about it! No problem!*

forget about someone or something **1.** to put someone or something out of one's mind. ☐ *Don't forget about me!* ☐ *You ought to forget about all that.* **2.** to fail to remember something at the appropriate time. ☐ *She forgot about paying the electric bill until the lights were turned off.* ☐ *She forgot about the children and they were left standing on the corner.*

forget one's **manners** to do something ill-mannered. ☐ *Jimmy! Have we forgotten our manners?*

forget oneself to forget one's manners or training. (Said in formal situations in reference to belching, bad table manners, and, in the case of very young children, pants-wetting.) ☐ *Sorry, Mother, I forgot myself.* ☐ *John, we are going out to dinner tonight. Please don't forget yourself.*

Forget you! *Sl.* **Drop dead!**; Beat it! ☐ *Oh, yeah! Forget you!* ☐ *Forget you! Get a life!*

Forgive and forget. *Prov.* You should not only forgive people for hurting you, you should also forget that they ever hurt you. ☐ *When my sister lost my favorite book, I was angry at her for weeks, but my mother finally convinced me to forgive and forget.* ☐ *Jane: Are you going to invite Sam to your party? Sue: No way. Last year he laughed at my new skirt. Jane: Come on, Sue, forgive and forget.*

forgive someone **for** something to pardon someone for something. ☐ *Please forgive me for being late.* ☐ *He never forgave himself for harming her.*

fork some money **out**† **(for** something**)** *Fig.* to pay (perhaps unwillingly) for something. (Often mention is made of the amount of money. See the examples.) ☐ *Do you think I'm going to fork twenty dollars out for that book?* ☐ *Forking out lots of money for taxes is part of life.*

fork something **out**† **(to** someone**) 1.** *Inf. Lit.* to serve food to someone, using a fork. ☐ *He forked out the chicken to everyone.* ☐ *He brought up a big dish of fried chicken and forked it out.* **2.** *Fig.* to give out something to someone. ☐ *We forked the coupons out to everyone who asked for them.* ☐ *We forked out the coupons.*

fork something **over**† **(to** someone**)** *Inf.* to give something to someone. (Usually refers to money.) ☐ *Come on! Fork the money over to me!* ☐ *Fork over the cash you owe me!*

form an opinion to think up or decide on an opinion. (Note the variations in the examples.) ☐ *I don't know enough about the issue to form an opinion.* ☐ *Don't tell me how to think! I can form my own opinion.* ☐ *I don't form opinions without careful consideration.*

form and substance structure and meaningful content. ☐ *The first act of the play was one screaming match after another. It lacked form and substance throughout.* ☐ *Jane's report was good. The teacher commented on the excellent form and substance of the paper.*

form from something [for something] to develop from something; [for something] to assume a shape, using

something else as raw material. ☐ *Suddenly, an idea began to form from the things that you had said.* ☐ *It seemed that a figure was forming from the mists arising from the swamps.*

form someone or something **into** something to shape someone or something into something. ☐ *We formed the people into a line.* ☐ *Kathy formed the clay into a small elephant.*

form something **out of** something to shape something from something. ☐ *He formed a tiny elephant out of the clay.* ☐ *Wally formed a mound out of the sand.*

form (up) into something [for a group of people] to assume the shape of something. ☐ *The boys formed up into a jagged line.* ☐ *We'll form into a line.*

fortify someone or an animal **(against** something**) (with** something**)** to strengthen someone or an animal against something with something. ☐ *I'll need a cup of hot chocolate to fortify me against the storm.* ☐ *We have to fortify the dogs against the cold with extra food.*

Fortune favors the bold. Go to next.

Fortune favors the brave. and **Fortune favors the bold.** *Prov.* You will have good luck if you carry out your plans boldly. (Used to encourage people to have the courage to carry out their plans.) ☐ *Fortune favors the bold, Bob. Quit your day job and work on your novel full-time.* ☐ *Jill: Let's wait till next year before trying to start our own business. Jane: No. We'll do it this year. Fortune favors the brave.*

forty winks *Fig.* a nap; some sleep. ☐ *I could use forty winks before I have to get to work.* ☐ *I need forty winks before I get started again.*

forward something **from** some place **(to** someone or some place**)** to send something onward to someone from the place it was originally received. ☐ *We forwarded the letter from Chicago to Springfield.* ☐ *Kelly forwarded the letter to her brother.*

foul one's **own nest** *Fig.* to harm one's own interests; to bring disadvantage upon oneself. (Alludes to a bird excreting into its own nest. See also **It's an ill bird that fouls its own nest.**) ☐ *He tried to discredit a fellow senator with the president, but just succeeded in fouling his own nest.* ☐ *The boss really dislikes Mary. She certainly fouled her own nest when she spread those rumors about him.*

foul out (of something**)** [for a basketball player] to be forced out of a game because of having too many fouls. ☐ *The center fouled out in the first fifteen minutes.* ☐ *Two other players fouled out soon after.*

foul play illegal activity; bad practices. ☐ *The police investigating the death suspect foul play.* ☐ *Each student got an A on the test, and the teacher imagined it was the result of foul play.*

foul someone or something **up**† to cause disorder and confusion for someone or something; to tangle up someone or something; to **mess** someone or something **up**. ☐ *Go away! Don't foul me up any more.* ☐ *You've fouled up my whole day.* ☐ *Watch out! You're going to foul up my kite strings.*

foul up to blunder; to **mess up**. ☐ *Please don't foul up this time.* ☐ *The quarterback fouled up in the first quarter, and that lost us the game.*

fouled up messed up; ruined; tangled up. (Usually as *fouled-up* when attributive.) ☐ *This is sure a fouled-up mess.* ☐ *You sure are fouled up, you know.*

found money money that has come to someone with such ease or surprise that one might have just as well found it by accident. ☐ *The money he got from his uncle's estate is all found money except for the taxes. He did nothing to earn it.*

found something **(up)on** something to establish something on some kind of basis or justification. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *The owners founded this company upon prompt service.* ☐ *We founded our business on practically no money.*

F

four sheets in the wind and **four sheets (to the wind)** intoxicated. (See comments at **three sheets in the wind**.) ☐ *She's not just tipsy. She's four sheets!* ☐ *After only three beers, Gary was four sheets to the wind.*

'Fraid not. Go to **(I'm) afraid not.**

'Fraid so. Go to **(I'm) afraid so.**

fraidy cat *Fig.* a coward; a person who is frightened of everything. (Used in children's taunts.) ☐ *Don't be a fraidy cat. Go ahead, jump!* ☐ *Carl is such a fraidy cat. He runs inside when it starts to rain.*

frame something **in** something **1.** *Lit.* to place a frame of something around something. ☐ *Let us frame the photograph in a wood frame rather than a metal one.* ☐ *Alice chose to frame the painting in a simple, unmatted frame.* **2.** *Fig.* to express something in a particular way. ☐ *He framed his comments in very simple language.* ☐ *I hope you frame your remarks more clearly next time.*

frame something **out**† to build the basic wood structure of a building, such as a house. ☐ *The carpenters, working fast, framed the whole house out in a day.* ☐ *They framed out the house.*

frankly speaking Go to **(speaking) (quite) frankly.**

fraternize with someone or something to associate with someone or a group; to consort with someone or a group. ☐ *They were instructed not to fraternize with the opposing team before the game.* ☐ *Don't fraternize with Lefty "Fingers" Moran.*

fraught with danger *Cliché* [of something] full of something dangerous or unpleasant. ☐ *The spy's trip to Russia was fraught with danger.* ☐ *My escape from the kidnappers was fraught with danger.*

freak out (at someone or something**)** Go to **freak out (over** someone or something**)**.

freak out (on something**)** to lose control of one's mind because of something, usually a drug. ☐ *She freaked out on the stuff she was smoking.* ☐ *She took some funny little pills and freaked out immediately.*

freak out (over someone or something**)** and **freak out (at** someone or something**)** to become very angry or lose control of one's mind because of someone or something that has happened. ☐ *I absolutely freaked out over the whole business!* ☐ *Don't freak out at me!*

freak someone **out**† to shock or disorient someone. ☐ *The whole business freaked me out.* ☐ *I didn't mean to freak out everybody with the bad news.*

freaked (out) 1. shocked; disoriented. (Sometimes used of the effects of drugs or alcohol.) □ *I was too freaked out to reply.* □ *Man, was I freaked.* **2.** tired out; exhausted. □ *I'm too freaked out to go on without some rest.* □ *The chick is really freaked. Let her rest.*

free and clear without encumbrance, particularly in regard to the ownership of something. □ *After the last payment, Jane owned the car free and clear.* □ *If you can't prove that you own the house and the land it stands on free and clear, you can't sell it.*

free and easy casual. □ *John is so free and easy. How can anyone be so relaxed?* □ *Now, take it easy. Just act free and easy. No one will know you're nervous.*

F

***free as a bird** and ***free as (the) air** *Cliché* carefree; completely free and unhindered. (*Also: **as ~**.) □ *Jane is always happy and free as a bird.* □ *The convict escaped from jail and was as free as a bird for two days.* □ *No, I'm not married. I don't even have a girlfriend. I'm free as the air.*

free as (the) air Go to previous.

free gift something extra given to you when you buy something else. □ *When you order your magazine subscription, this book is yours to keep as our free gift.* □ *This canvas tote is a free gift for everyone who opens an account at our bank today!*

***a free hand (with** someone or something**)** *Fig.* freedom to exercise complete control over something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) □ *I didn't get a free hand with the last project.* □ *John was in charge then, but he didn't get a free hand either.*

free lunch *Fig.* something of value that is free. (Often negative. See also There's no such thing as a free lunch.) □ *There's always somebody who'll do anything to get a free lunch.*

a **free ride 1.** *Lit.* a ride to somewhere for which no payment is demanded. □ *I got a free ride from a truck driver who was headed for town.* □ *I won't call a taxi when I can get a free ride.* **2.** *Fig.* an easy time; participation without contributing anything. □ *You've had a free ride long enough. You have to do your share of the work now.* □ *No more free rides around here. Get off your duff and get a job!*

free someone or something **from** someone or something to release or unburden someone or something from someone or something. □ *We freed the raccoon from the trap.* □ *Max tried to free himself from the police officer.* □ *The dog tried to free itself from the dogcatcher.*

a **free translation** and a **loose translation** a translation or restatement that is not completely accurate and not well thought out; a translation or restatement done casually. □ *John gave a free translation of what our Japanese client asked for, and we missed the main issue.* □ *Anne gave a very free translation of the ancient Chinese poem.*

a **freeze on** doing something *Fig.* a policy that put a temporary end to something. □ *The company put a freeze on hiring as soon as they took us over.*

freeze one's **tail off** *Fig. Inf.* to freeze; to get very cold. □ *Don't stand out there in the cold wind! You'll freeze your tail off!* □ *It's as cold as a welldigger's nose today. I about froze my tail off walking to work.*

freeze (on)to something [for something] to touch something very cold and freeze hard and fast to it. □ *My hand froze to the railing.* □ *The branch froze onto the side of the house.*

freeze over [for a body of water] to get cold and form a layer of ice on top. □ *The pond froze over, so we went skating.*

freeze someone or something **in** one's **memory** *Fig.* to preserve the image of someone or something in one's memory. □ *I tried to freeze her in my memory so I would have her with me always.* □ *I froze the scene in my memory.*

freeze someone or something **to death 1.** *Lit.* [for cold weather] to kill someone or something. □ *I was afraid that the cold snap would freeze the dog to death.* **2.** *Fig.* to make someone or something very cold. □ *This weather is going to freeze us all to death.*

freeze someone **out**† **1.** *Lit.* to make it too cold for someone, usually by opening windows or through the use of air-conditioning. □ *Turn up the heat unless you're trying to freeze us out.* □ *Are you trying to freeze out everybody? Close the door.* **2.** *Fig.* to lock someone out socially; to isolate someone from something or a group. □ *We didn't want to freeze you out. You failed to pay your dues, however.* □ *They froze out the newcomers.*

freeze someone's **wages** *Fig.* to hold someone's pay at its current level. □ *The company froze everyone's wages as soon as the economy went sour.*

freeze something **into** something **1.** to use cold to solidify something into a different state, usually water into ice. □ *The extreme cold froze the water of the river into solid ice.* □ *The cold snap froze the water in the puddles into hard sheets of ice.* **2.** to use cold to solidify something into a particular shape. □ *We froze the ice cream into the shape of a penguin.* □ *This ice tray will freeze water into little round balls of ice.*

freeze up 1. *Lit.* [for something] to freeze and stop functioning. □ *The joint froze up and wouldn't move anymore.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to become frightened and anxious, and be unable to move, speak, or continue with something. □ *I froze up and couldn't say anything more.*

fresh and sweet 1. very clean and fresh smelling. □ *Now the baby is changed and she is all fresh and sweet.* **2.** *Inf.* just out of jail. □ *Mary is fresh and sweet and back on the street.*

***fresh as a daisy** *Cliché* very fresh; [of a person] always alert and ready to go. (*Also: **as ~**.) □ *How can you be fresh as a daisy so early in the morning?* □ *I always feel fresh as a daisy after a shower.*

fresh blood Go to (some) new blood.

fresh out (of something**)** and **clean out (of** something**)** just now having sold or used up the last of something. □ *Sorry, I can't serve you scrambled eggs. We are fresh out of eggs.* □ *We are fresh out of nails. I sold the last box just ten minutes ago.* □ *Lettuce? Sorry. I'm clean out.*

a **fresh pair of eyes** Go to another pair of eyes.

***a fresh start** a new start; an act of starting over. (*Typically: **get ~; get off to ~; give** someone **~; have ~; make ~**.) □ *After our apologies and a little discussion, we decided to make a fresh start.*

***fresh (with** someone**)** overly bold or impertinent with someone. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *When I tried to kiss Mary, she slapped me and shouted, "Don't get fresh with me!"* ☐ *I can't stand people who get fresh.*

freshen someone or something **up**† to revive or restore the appearance or vitality of someone or something. ☐ *What can we do to freshen this room up?* ☐ *A cold shower freshened up the runner.*

freshen up to get cleaned up, rested up, or restored. ☐ *I need a few minutes to freshen up before dinner.*

fret about someone or something and **fret over** someone or something to worry about someone or something. ☐ *Please don't fret about being a few minutes late.* ☐ *There is no need to fret over Larry.*

Fret not! *Inf.* Don't worry!; Do not fret about it! ☐ *Mary: Oh, look at the clock! I'm going to be late for my appointment! Bob: Fret not! I'll drive you.* ☐ *"Fret not!" said Sally. "We're almost there!"*

fret over someone or something Go to **fret about** someone or something.

A **friend in need is a friend indeed.** A true friend is a person who will help you when you really need help. ☐ *When Bill helped me with geometry, I really learned the meaning of "A friend in need is a friend indeed."*

friend or foe a friend or an enemy. ☐ *I can't tell whether Jim is friend or foe.* ☐ *"Who goes there? Friend or foe?" asked the sentry.*

***friends with** someone a friend of someone. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *Sally is friends with Bill.* ☐ *Mary and Bill are friends with one another.*

frighten one **out of** one's **wits** and **scare** one **out of** one's **wits; frighten** someone **out of a year's growth; scare** someone **out of a year's growth; frighten** one **out of** one's **mind; scare** one **out of** one's **mind** *Fig.* to frighten one very badly. ☐ *Oh! That loud noise scared me out of my wits.* ☐ *I'll give him a good scolding and frighten him out of his wits.* ☐ *Oh, you frightened me out of a year's growth!* ☐ *You frightened Bob out of his mind.*

frighten someone or an animal **in**† Go to **frighten** someone or an animal **into** something.

frighten someone or an animal **into** doing something to threaten someone or an animal into doing something. ☐ *You can't frighten me into leaving!* ☐ *Let's try to frighten the coyotes into running away.*

frighten someone or an animal **into** something **1.** and **frighten** someone or an animal **in**† to scare someone or an animal into entering something or some place. ☐ *The trouble in the neighborhood frightened most of the residents into their houses.* ☐ *The mouse was out of its hole, but we came in and frightened the little mouse back in.* **2.** to scare someone or an animal into a particular state. ☐ *They frightened me into a quivering mass.* ☐ *The mouse was frightened into a state of confusion.*

frighten someone or an animal **to death** and **scare** someone or an animal **to death 1.** *Lit.* to frighten a living creature badly enough to cause death. ☐ *The roar of the plane engine seems to have frightened the little dog to death.* **2.** *Fig.* to frighten someone severely. ☐ *The dentist always frightens me to death.* ☐ *She scared me to death when she screamed.*

frighten someone or something **away**† and **frighten** someone or something **off**† to scare someone or something off. ☐ *The noise frightened the burglar away.* ☐ *Something frightened away the prowlers.* ☐ *The high prices frightened the shoppers off.*

frighten someone **out of a year's growth** Go to **frighten** one **out of** one's **wits.**

frighten the hell out of someone and **frighten the pants off** someone**; frighten the living daylights out of** someone**; scare the living daylights out of** someone**; scare the shit out of** someone**; scare the wits out of** someone to frighten someone badly, suddenly or both. (Use of *hell* and *shit* are crude.) ☐ *These figures frighten the hell out of me.* ☐ *The door blew shut and scared the shit out of me.* ☐ *It takes a lot to scare the pants off a hardened criminal.*

frighten the pants off someone Go to previous.

frightened to death and **scared to death 1.** *Lit.* frightened to the point of dying. ☐ *This poor animal has been frightened to death by the attacking dogs.* **2.** *Fig.* frightened or anxious. ☐ *I don't want to go to the dentist today. I'm frightened to death.* ☐ *I'm frightened to death of spiders.*

fritter something **away**† **(on** someone or something**)** to waste something, such as money, on someone or something, foolishly. ☐ *Did you fritter good money away on that old car?* ☐ *You frittered away one hundred dollars on that piece of junk?*

*****a **frog in** one's **throat** *Fig.* a feeling of hoarseness or a lump in one's throat. (Often regarded as a sign of fear. *Typically: **get ~; have ~**.) ☐ *I feel like I'm getting a frog in my throat when I have to speak in public.* ☐ *She says she gets a frog in her throat when she is nervous.*

from A to Z *Fig.* of a complete and wide variety. ☐ *We have just about everything from A to Z.* ☐ *She ordered everything on the menu from A to Z.*

from all corners of the world and **from the four corners of the earth** *Fig.* from all places in the world. ☐ *People came from all corners of the world to attend the conference.*

from dawn to dusk *Fig.* during the period of the day when there is light; from the rising of the sun to the setting of the sun. ☐ *I have to work from dawn to dusk on the farm.* ☐ *The factory runs from dawn to dusk to produce hats and gloves.*

from day one Go to **day one.**

from day to day on a daily basis; one day at a time; occasionally. ☐ *We face this kind of problem from day to day.* ☐ *I'll have to check into this matter from day to day.*

from door to door moving from one door to another—typically, from one house to another. ☐ *The candidate went from door to door, campaigning for town council.* ☐ *The children went from door to door, saying "Trick or treat!" at each one.*

from far and near and **from near and far** from all around, both close by and farther away. (In either order.) ☐ *All the young people from far and near gathered at the high school for the game.* ☐ *The eagles gathered from near and far at the river where the salmon were spawning.*

F

from giddy-up to whoa *Rur.* all the way from the beginning to the end. ☐ *The road is paved from giddy-up to whoa.* ☐ *The play stinks. It is dull from giddy-up to whoa.*

from hand to hand *Fig.* from one person to a series of other persons. ☐ *The book traveled from hand to hand until it got back to its owner.* ☐ *By the time the baby had been passed from hand to hand, it was crying.*

from head to toe *Fig.* from the top of one's head to one's feet. ☐ *She was decked out in flowers from head to toe.* ☐ *The huge parka covered the small child from head to toe, assuring that she would be well-protected against the cold.*

F

from hell to breakfast *Rur.* from one end of the earth to the other; all over; everywhere. (Use with caution.) ☐ *We searched from hell to breakfast, but never did find the runaway kid.* ☐ *I tracked that deer from hell to breakfast, but never got a shot at it.*

from here on (in) and **from here on (out)** from this point forward. ☐ *From here on in we do it my way.* ☐ *I want everything clear from here on out.*

from here till next Tuesday *Rur.* for a great distance; for a long time. ☐ *If you try that again, I'll knock you from here till next Tuesday.* ☐ *You can lecture him from here till next Tuesday, but he won't listen.*

from Missouri requiring proof; needing to be shown something in order to believe it. (From the nickname for the state of Missouri, the Show Me State.) ☐ *You'll have to prove it to me. I'm from Missouri.* ☐ *She's from Missouri and has to be shown.*

from my perspective and **from where I stand; from my point of view; the way I see it** *Fig.* in my own opinion. ☐ *Mary: What do you think of all this? Tom: From my perspective, it is just terrible.* ☐ *Bob: From my point of view, this looks like a very good deal. Bill: That's good for you. I stand to lose money on it.* ☐ *Alice: From where I stand, it appears that you're going to have to pay a lot of money to get this matter settled. Sue: I'll pay anything. I just want to get all this behind me.*

from near and far Go to from far and near.

from overseas from a location on the other side of the Atlantic or Pacific Ocean, according to the point of view of someone located in the U.S. ☐ *The latest word from overseas is that the treaty has been signed.* ☐ *Is there any news from overseas about the war?*

from pillar to post *Fig.* from one place to a series of other places; (figuratively) from person to person, as with gossip. ☐ *My father was in the army, and we moved from pillar to post year after year.* ☐ *After I told one person my secret, it went quickly from pillar to post.*

from rags to riches *Fig.* from poverty to wealth; from modesty to elegance. ☐ *The princess used to be quite poor. She certainly moved from rags to riches.* ☐ *After I inherited the money, I went from rags to riches.*

***from scratch** *Fig.* [making something] by starting from the beginning with the basic ingredients. (*Typically: **bake** something **~; do** something **~; make** something **~; start (**something**)** ~.) ☐ *We made the cake from scratch, using no prepared ingredients.* ☐ *I didn't have a ladder, so I made one from scratch.*

from sea to shining sea *Fig.* from coast to coast. (Taken from the lyrics of the song "America the Beautiful".) ☐ *The new insect pest spread from sea to shining sea in a matter of months.*

from side to side moving first to one side and then to the other, repeatedly. ☐ *The pendulum of the clock swings from side to side.* ☐ *The singers swayed from side to side as they sang.*

from start to finish *Fig.* entirely; throughout. ☐ *I disliked the whole business from start to finish.* ☐ *Mary caused problems from start to finish.*

from stem to stern 1. *Lit.* from the front of a boat or ship to the back. ☐ *He inspected the boat from stem to stern and decided he wanted to buy it.* **2.** *Fig.* from one end to another. ☐ *Now, I have to clean the house from stem to stern.* ☐ *I polished my car carefully from stem to stern.*

from the bottom of one's **heart** *Fig.* sincerely. ☐ *When I returned the lost kitten to Mrs. Brown, she thanked me from the bottom of her heart.* ☐ *Oh, thank you! I'm grateful from the bottom of my heart.*

from the cradle to the grave *Fig.* from birth to death. ☐ *The government promised to take care of us from the cradle to the grave.* ☐ *You can feel secure and well-protected from the cradle to the grave.*

from the four corners of the earth Go to from all corners of the world.

from (the) git-go *Sl.* from the very start. ☐ *This kind of thing has been a problem from the git-go.* ☐ *I warned you about this from git-go.*

from the ground up *Fig.* from the very beginning. ☐ *We must plan our sales campaign carefully from the ground up.* ☐ *Sorry, but you'll have to start all over again from the ground up.*

from the heart *Fig.* from a deep and sincere emotional source. ☐ *I know that your kind words come from the heart.* ☐ *We don't want your gift unless it comes from the heart.*

from the old school and **of the old school** *Fig.* holding attitudes or ideas that were popular and important in the past, but which are no longer considered relevant or in line with modern trends. (See also of the old school.) ☐ *Grammar is not taught much now, but fortunately my son has a teacher from the old school.* ☐ *Aunt Jane is from the old school. She never goes out without wearing a hat and gloves.*

from the outset throughout, from the very beginning. ☐ *I felt from the outset that Lisa was the wrong one for the job.* ☐ *From the outset, I felt unwelcome in the group.*

from the sublime to the ridiculous *Fig.* from something fine and uplifting to something ridiculous or mundane. ☐ *After Mr. Jones had introduced my wife to his wife, he jokingly turned to introduce me and said, "From the sublime to the ridiculous."* ☐ *After the opera singer finished, the master of ceremonies introduced the comic juggler saying, "From the sublime to the ridiculous...."*

From the sublime to the ridiculous is only a step. *Prov.* Something grand can easily become very funny. ☐ *Bob, I don't think you should include a bowl of breakfast cereal in your still-life painting. From the sublime to the ridiculous is only a step.* ☐ *The production of* Macbeth *went from the sublime to the ridiculous when Lady Macbeth came onstage in an old army uniform.*

from the top *Fig.* from the beginning of something, such as a song or a script. ☐ *Okay, let's try it again from the top.* ☐ *Play it from the top one more time.*

from the word go *Cliché* from the very beginning. ☐ *I knew about the problem from the word go.* ☐ *She was failing the class from the word go.*

from this day forward Go to next.

from this day on and **from this day forward** from today into the future. ☐ *We'll live in love and peace from this day on.* ☐ *I'll treasure your gift from this day forward.*

from time to time irregularly; now and then; occasionally; sometimes; not predictably. ☐ *From time to time, I like to go fishing instead of going to work.* ☐ *Bob visits us at our house from time to time.*

from tip to toe *Fig.* from the top to the bottom. ☐ *She is wearing all new clothes from tip to toe.* ☐ *The house needs to be cleaned thoroughly from tip to toe.*

from top to bottom *Fig.* from the highest point to the lowest point; throughout. ☐ *I have to clean the house from top to bottom today.* ☐ *We need to replace our elected officials from top to bottom.*

from way back from far in the past; from a much earlier time. ☐ *Grandfather comes from way back.* ☐ *This antique clock is from way back.*

from where I stand Go to from my perspective.

front for someone or something to serve as the public contact or public "face" for someone or something. ☐ *Her publicity agent fronted for her most of the time.* ☐ *Max fronted for a gang of thieves.*

front off (about something**)** *Sl.* to be brash and resentful about something. ☐ *Todd was fronting off about his assignment and got a detention for it.* ☐ *You will wish you hadn't fronted off about your supervisor.*

front on something [for a building or a piece of land] to face out on something. ☐ *The property fronts on a lovely boulevard that has very little traffic.* ☐ *Our house fronts on a lake.*

front someone some amount of money to provide an advance payment of some amount to someone. ☐ *The buyer fronted me half the purchase price as a favor.*

the **front-runner** the person or thing thought most likely to win or succeed. ☐ *The press found out some juicy secrets about the front-runner and made them all public.* ☐ *Who is the front-runner in the race to be governor?*

frost over to become covered with frost. ☐ *The windows had all frosted over in the night.* ☐ *The car windows frosted over.*

frosted (over) *Sl.* angry; annoyed. ☐ *The clerk was really frosted over when I asked for a better one.* ☐ *Why was he so frosted?*

froth something **up**† to whip or aerate something until it is frothy. ☐ *Froth the milk up before you add it to the sauce.* ☐ *Froth up the milk before you pour it in.*

froth up [for something] to build up a froth when whipped, aerated, or boiled. ☐ *The mixture began to froth up as Dan beat it.* ☐ *The milk frothed up as the steam went through it.*

frown at someone or something to scowl at someone or something. ☐ *Please don't frown at me. I didn't do anything.* ☐ *Frank frowned at the dog and gave it a kick.*

frown on someone or something to disapprove of someone or something; to show displeasure or disapproval of someone or something. ☐ *The Internal Revenue Service frowns on tax cheaters.* ☐ *Aunt Clara always seemed to frown on my cousin for some reason.*

the **fruits of** one's **labor(s)** *Fig.* the results of one's work. ☐ *We displayed the fruits of our labor at the county fair.* ☐ *What have you accomplished? Where is the fruit of your labors?*

fry something **up**† to cook something by frying. ☐ *Let's fry some chicken up for dinner.* ☐ *We fried up some chicken.*

Fuck you! a strong condemnation. (Taboo.) ☐ *Fuck you! Why did you have to do that?* ☐ *Fuck you! I don't care any more!*

fudge factor *Fig.* a margin of error. ☐ *I never use a fudge factor. I measure correctly, and I cut the material exactly the way I measured it.* ☐ *I built in a fudge factor of three percent.*

fuel something **(up**†**)** to put fuel into something. ☐ *I have to fuel this car up before I go any farther.* ☐ *I need to fuel up the car.*

fuel up to fill one's tank with fuel. ☐ *Let's stop here and fuel up.* ☐ *I need to fuel up at the next little town.*

***full as a tick** very full of food or drink. (Alludes to a tick that has filled itself full of blood. See also tight as a tick. *Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Little Billy ate and ate until he was as full as a tick.* ☐ *Our cat drank the cream until he became full as a tick.*

full of beans Go to full of hot air.

full of bull Go to full of hot air.

full of holes *Fig.* [of an argument or plan] that cannot stand up to challenge or scrutiny. (See also not hold water; pick holes in something.) ☐ *Your argument is full of holes.* ☐ *This plan is full of holes and won't work.*

full of hot air and **full of beans; full of bull; full of it; full of prunes** *Fig.* full of nonsense; talking nonsense. ☐ *Oh, shut up, Mary. You're full of hot air.* ☐ *Don't pay any attention to Bill. He's full of beans.* ☐ *My English professor is full of bull.* ☐ *You're full of it.*

full of Old Nick Go to full of the devil.

***full of** oneself *Fig.* conceited; self-important. (*Typically: **act ~; be ~**.) ☐ *Mary is very unpopular because she's so full of herself.* ☐ *She doesn't care about other people's feelings. She's too full of herself.*

full of prunes Go to full of hot air.

full of the devil and **full of Old Nick** always making mischief. ☐ *Little Chuckie is sure full of the devil.* ☐ *Toward the end of the school year, the kids are always full of Old Nick.*

a **full plate** *Fig.* a full schedule; a lot to do. ☐ *I'm very busy at work, and I've got a full plate at home too.*

full steam ahead *Fig.* onward with determination. ☐ *We started moving full steam ahead on the project.* ☐ *Full steam ahead! Let's see how fast this will go!*

full up *Rur.* full. ☐ *I ate till I was full up.* ☐ *I can't get any more gas in the tank. It's full up.*

fulminate against someone or something to denounce someone or something. ☐ *The workers were fulminating against their employer.* ☐ *They are fulminating against the president of the union.*

fumble for something to try to grasp awkwardly for something. ☐ *He fumbled for his wallet, hoping Wally would pay the bill.* ☐ *Tex was shot while fumbling for his gun.*

fume about someone or something and **fume over** someone or something to be very angry about someone or something. ☐ *She was just fuming over her broken vase.* ☐ *She was still fuming about Larry the next morning.*

F

fume at someone *Fig.* to rage at someone. ☐ *She was really fuming at Sam, who had broken her table leg.*

fume over someone or something Go to fume about someone or something.

fun and games *Fig.* playing around; doing worthless things. ☐ *All right, Bill, the fun and games are over. It's time to get down to work.* ☐ *This isn't a serious course. It's nothing but fun and games.*

funked out *Sl.* intoxicated. ☐ *Do you think you can go through life funked out all the time?* ☐ *Are you funked out again?*

***funny as a barrel of monkeys** *Cliché* very funny. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Ron was as funny as a barrel of monkeys.* ☐ *The entire evening was funny as a barrel of monkeys.*

***funny as a crutch** not funny at all. (Sarcastic. *Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Your trick is about as funny as a crutch. Nobody thought it was funny.* ☐ *The lame joke Ron told was as funny as a crutch, and we all yawned.*

funny bone and **crazy bone** a spot near the elbow bone that is very sensitive to the touch. ☐ *Ouch, I hit my funny bone.* ☐ *Effie bumped her crazy bone and made a horrendous face.*

funny business Go to monkey business.

funny ha-ha amusing; comical. (As opposed to funny peculiar.) ☐ *I didn't mean that Mrs. Peters is funny ha-ha. She's weird—funny peculiar in fact.* ☐ *Mike thinks his jokes are funny ha-ha, but we laugh because they are so silly.*

funny money 1. *Sl.* counterfeit money. ☐ *The bank teller spotted the funny money in the man's deposit almost immediately.* **2.** *Fig.* temporary or substitute money, good only in certain places. ☐ *What am I going to do with all this funny money when I leave here? It's no good anywhere else.* **3.** *Fig.* foreign currency. (Jocular.) ☐ *We had better buy some gifts and get rid of some of this funny money before our flight.*

funny peculiar odd; eccentric. (As opposed to funny ha-ha.) ☐ *I didn't mean that Mrs. Peters is funny ha-ha. She's weird—funny peculiar in fact.* ☐ *His face is sort of funny—funny peculiar, that is.*

a **fur piece** *Rur.* a long distance. (*Fur* = far.) ☐ *It's a fur piece to the library. You'd best take the bus instead of walking.* ☐ *It's a pretty fur piece to the nearest big town.*

furnish something **for** someone or something and **furnish** someone or something **with** something to provide something for someone or a group. ☐ *I would be happy to furnish dinner for the visitors.* ☐ *I furnished the board of directors with the information.*

furnish something **for** something to provide something to be used as something. ☐ *Could you furnish the salad for our picnic?* ☐ *We can't furnish enough glassware for the whole party.*

a **furtive glance** a secret or quick glance, quickly averted. ☐ *He made a furtive glance in the direction of the closet when the robbers asked where the jewelery was hidden.*

fuse something **with** something to bond something together with something. ☐ *You have to fuse the upper layer to the lower layer with heat.* ☐ *He used heat and pressure to fuse the patch with the soft rubber of the raft.*

fuse with something to bond with something. ☐ *The metal has fused with the glass coating on the tank.* ☐ *I didn't know that metal could fuse with glass.*

fuss about and **fuss around** to go about complaining; to move about in a busy manner. ☐ *Don't fuss about so much. Things will take care of themselves.* ☐ *Now, stop fussing around and sit down.*

fuss about someone or something to complain about someone or something. ☐ *What are you fussing about now?* ☐ *Are you still fussing about Tony?*

fuss and feathers *Rur.* fancy addictions that are overdone or troublesome. ☐ *A truly elegant dress doesn't have a lot of fuss and feathers.* ☐ *They ruined a nice room with all that fuss and feathers.*

fuss around Go to fuss about.

fuss (around) with someone or something to keep bothering with someone or something; to fiddle with someone or something. ☐ *Don't fuss around with it. We'll have to get a new one.* ☐ *Don't fuss with your children. They will get along just fine without all that attention.*

fuss at someone or something to complain at someone. ☐ *Stop fussing at me!* ☐ *The squirrel is fussing at the dog.*

fuss over someone or something to go to a lot of bother about someone or something. ☐ *My aunt always fusses over me and my sister.* ☐ *You spend a lot of time fussing over your hair.*

futz around *Sl.* to waste time. ☐ *Stop futzing around and get the job done.* ☐ *I wish you would stop futzing around!*

futz something **up**† *Sl.* to mess something up. ☐ *Who futzed the computer up?* ☐ *I don't want to futz up the deal, so I will be quiet.*

Gg

gab up a storm Go to **up a storm**.

gad around and **gad about** to go from place to place, having fun. ☐ *I'm too old to gad around like that.* ☐ *She wasted too much time gadding about with her friends.*

gag on something to choke on something; to retch on something. ☐ *The dog is gagging on whatever you gave her.* ☐ *This fish is good, but I hope I don't gag on a bone.*

gain dominion over someone or something to achieve total authority over someone or something. ☐ *The dictator sought to gain dominion over the entire country.* ☐ *Harry was not happy until he had gained dominion over the people who worked for him.*

gain from something to benefit from something. ☐ *I hope you gain from this experience.* ☐ *What do you think I will gain from this?*

gain ground to make progress; to advance; to become more important or popular. ☐ *Our new product is gaining ground against that of our competitor.* ☐ *Since the government announced its new policies, the opposition has been gaining ground.*

gain in something to advance in a particular quality. ☐ *Todd grew in stature and gained in wisdom.* ☐ *Mary gained in experience as the weeks went on.*

gain on someone or something to begin to catch up or move ahead of someone or something. ☐ *We were gaining on them when they suddenly sped up.* ☐ *Our horse was gaining on the horse in front.*

gain something **by** doing something to achieve some benefit by doing something. ☐ *What did he gain by dropping out of school?* ☐ *I will gain some degree of security by investing in U.S. Treasury bonds.*

gain something **from** something to earn or achieve something from something. ☐ *I hope you gain something worthwhile from all this.* ☐ *I know I will gain some valuable experience from this job.*

gallivant around to travel around aimlessly. ☐ *Why don't you stop gallivanting around and come home for a while?* ☐ *Mary is off gallivanting around with her boyfriend.*

gallop through something **1.** *Lit.* [for a horse] to pass through something at a gallop. ☐ *Her horse galloped through the garden and dumped her in the cabbages.* ☐ *A few horses galloped through the meadow.* **2.** *Fig.* to go through something quickly; to do or perform something rapidly and perhaps carelessly. ☐ *Mike galloped through his song and left the stage in a hurry.* ☐ *Don't just gallop through your homework!*

galumph around to move around looking for someone or something or transporting someone or something. ☐ *I am so tired of galumphing around, dropping off and picking up kids.* ☐ *I have to stop galumphing around day after day.*

galvanize someone **into action** *Fig.* to stimulate someone into some activity. ☐ *The explosion galvanized Martha into action.* ☐ *We were galvanized into action by the storm.*

gamble on someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to make a wager on something concerning someone or something. ☐ *I wouldn't gamble on it happening.* ☐ *Don't gamble on that horse. You'll be sorry.* **2.** *Fig.* to run a risk by choosing or depending on someone or something. ☐ *I wouldn't gamble on Ted's being able to come. I don't think he can.* ☐ *Don't gamble on Ted. I'm almost sure he won't come.*

gamble something **away**† to lose all of something by gambling. ☐ *He gambled all his money away.* ☐ *He gambled away all his money.*

The **game is up.** and The **jig is up.** *Fig.* The illegal activity has been found out or has come to an end. ☐ *When the police were waiting for them inside the bank vault, the would-be robbers knew that the game was up.* ☐ *"The jig is up!" said the cop as he grabbed the shoulder of the pickpocket.*

a **game that two can play** *Fig.* a manner of competing that two competitors can use; a strategy that competing sides can both use. (Said when about to use the same ploy that an opponent has used.) ☐ *The mayor shouted at the city council, "Politics is a game that two can play."* ☐ *"Flattery is a game that two can play," said John as he returned Mary's compliment.*

gang up (on someone**)** to form into a group and attack someone. (Usually a physical attack, but it can also be a verbal attack.) ☐ *We can't win against the robber unless we gang up on him.* ☐ *All right, you guys, don't gang up on me. Play fair!*

gape at someone or something to stare at someone or something in wonder. ☐ *Don't just stand there, gaping at me. Come in.* ☐ *Stop gaping at the storm clouds and get in here.*

garb someone **in** something to dress someone in something. ☐ *He hoped that someday he wouldn't have to garb his children in rags.* ☐ *She garbed herself in her finest clothes and got ready to meet her husband's family.*

Garbage in, garbage out. *Prov.* If you give nonsensical instructions to people or computers, those instructions will produce nonsensical results. ☐ *Jill: Why is my computer generating all this gibberish? Jane: You must have made a mistake in the program. Garbage in, garbage out.* ☐ *Ed insists that children are so ignorant nowadays because their teachers are incompetent. "Garbage in, garbage out," he says.*

garbage something **down**† *Sl.* to gobble something up; to quickly swallow something down. ☐ *Don't garbage your food down!* ☐ *That guy will garbage down almost anything.*

garner something **in**† and **garner** something **up**† to take something in and store it; to harvest something in and store it. (Originally referred to grain stored in a granary.)

☐ *Will they garner the crop in on time this year?* ☐ *They had garnered in the entire crop by late October.*

garnish something **with** something to embellish or decorate something, such as food, with something. ☐ *For the final presentation, I will garnish the dish with a sprig of parsley.* ☐ *The roast was garnished with slices of apple.*

gas something **up**† to put gasoline into a vehicle. ☐ *I have to gas this car up soon.* ☐ *I will stop and gas up the car at the next little town.*

gas up to fill up one's gasoline tank with gasoline. ☐ *I have to stop at the next service station and gas up.* ☐ *The next time you gas up, try some of the gasoline with alcohol in it.*

gasp at someone or something to inhale sharply in surprise or shock at someone or something. ☐ *I gasped at the sight that lay before me.* ☐ *I saw how weary Denise looked and I gasped at her.*

gasp for air to fight for a breath of air. (After one has been deprived of air.) ☐ *Walter popped to the surface of the water and gasped for air.* ☐ *The injured dog appeared to be gasping for air.*

gasp for breath to labor for one's breath. (Usually because of physical exertion.) ☐ *She ran and ran until she was gasping for breath.* ☐ *The diver finally came to the surface, gasping for breath.*

gasp something **out**† to utter something, gasping. ☐ *She gasped the words out haltingly.* ☐ *Dan was just able to gasp out the instructions before he passed out.*

gassed (up) *Sl.* intoxicated. ☐ *Fred is gassed up and very wobbly.* ☐ *He was too gassed up to drive home.*

gather a case (against someone**)** Go to **build a case (against** someone**)**.

gather around someone or something to collect around someone or something. ☐ *Let's all gather around her and hear her out.* ☐ *Please gather around the table for dinner.*

gather dust *Fig.* [for something] to sit unused for a long time. ☐ *Most of my talent is just gathering dust because I don't really have an opportunity to perform.*

gather someone **into** something and **gather** someone **in**† to assemble or bring people into something or some place. ☐ *The hostess gathered the children into the house just as the storm hit.* ☐ *She gathered in the children.* ☐ *Harry gathered them in before the storm.*

gather someone or something **around (**oneself**)** to collect people or things around oneself; to draw someone or something to oneself. ☐ *He gathered a lot of arty people around himself.* ☐ *She liked to gather exotic plants around herself.* ☐ *Grandpa gathered all the kids around and read them a story.*

gather someone or something **to** oneself to draw someone or something to oneself. ☐ *The hen gathered her chicks to herself.* ☐ *Harry gathered the poker chips to himself.*

gather someone or something **together**† to assemble people or things together in one place. ☐ *Gather everyone together in the drawing room for a meeting.* ☐ *Please gather together all the suspects so that they can be questioned again.* ☐ *Would you gather all your papers together and put them away?*

gather something **from** someone to collect something from someone. ☐ *I will gather the papers from Wally, and you go get those that Ted is working on.* ☐ *Would you gather the pictures from everyone? We have to leave now and take them with us.*

gather something **from** someone or something to learn something from someone or something; to infer something from someone or someone's remarks. (The *something* is often a clause shifted to another position in the sentence.) ☐ *I gather from your brother that you do not approve of her.* ☐ *We gathered that from your remarks.*

gather something **from** something to collect something from something. ☐ *Kristine gathered the honey from the beehives.* ☐ *I gathered my money from the cashier.*

gather something **in**† **1.** *Lit.* to collect something and bring it in; to harvest something. ☐ *We gathered the pumpkins in just before Halloween.* ☐ *We gathered in the pumpkins just in time.* **2.** *Fig.* to fold or bunch cloth together when sewing or fitting clothing. ☐ *Try gathering it in on each side to make it seem smaller.* ☐ *I will have to gather in this skirt.*

gather something **up**† to collect something; to pick something up. ☐ *Let's gather our things up and go.* ☐ *Please gather up your things.*

gather together to assemble together. ☐ *We will gather together on the main deck for a meeting.* ☐ *Let's all gather together this evening and sing.*

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may. *Prov.* Enjoy yourself while you can, before you lose the opportunity or before you become too old. (From Robert Herrick's poem, "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time.") ☐ *Sue: Should I go out on a date with Robbie on Saturday, or should I stay home and study? Ellen: Gather ye rosebuds while ye may.* ☐ *You ought to travel abroad now, while you're young, before you have responsibilities that might keep you from going. Gather ye rosebuds while ye may.*

***gaudy as a butterfly** fancy; colorful. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Marie looked as gaudy as a butterfly in her new dress.* ☐ *Michael's scarf is gaudy as a butterfly.*

gawk at someone or something to stare at someone or something, obviously and awkwardly. ☐ *Why are you standing there, gawking at me?* ☐ *The tourists stood at the foot of the mountain and gawked at the top.*

gaze around (at someone or something**)** to look all around at someone or something. ☐ *The manager gazed around at each of us, and finally spoke.* ☐ *Tourists gazed around at the scenery for a while and got back in the bus.* ☐ *We just stood there, gazing around.*

gaze at someone or something to stare at someone or something. ☐ *I stood for an hour, gazing at the sea.* ☐ *She gazed at me for a moment and then smiled.*

gaze on someone or something to look at someone or something; to survey someone or something. ☐ *She gazed sullenly on the ruin that had been her home.* ☐ *The teacher gazed on the student and frightened her.*

gaze out on something to look out on something, such as a lovely view, from inside a building or from a particular spot. ☐ *She gazed out on the flowering trees and knew that life would go on.* ☐ *Henry sat for hours, gazing out on the lake.*

gear someone or something **up**† **(for** someone or something**)** to prepare someone or something for someone or some-

thing. □ *We have to gear up the workers for the arrival of the new manager.* □ *We geared ourselves up for Frank, who was coming to lecture to us.*

gear something **to** someone or something to cause something to match something else; to create or adapt something for a specific purpose. □ *Tim geared his speech to his audience.* □ *The newspaper geared its language to a fourth-grade reading level.*

gear up for someone or something to get ready for something. □ *We are busy gearing up for Joan's visit next week.*

generalize about someone or something and **generalize on** someone or something to interpret someone or something in very general terms. □ *Sometimes it isn't wise to generalize about a complicated issue.* □ *She is very complex and it is difficult to generalize on her.*

generalize from something to assume a general pattern in something from specific observances of something. □ *You can hardly generalize from only two instances.* □ *You can't generalize anything from the testimony of a single witness!*

generalize on someone or something Go to **generalize about** someone or something.

Generation X and **Generation X'er** people reaching puberty during the 1970s and 1980s. □ *Three or four generation X'ers were in the antique store looking eagerly at some of those horrible old dinette chairs from the 1950s.*

generous to a fault *Cliché* too generous; overly generous. □ *My favorite uncle is generous to a fault.* □ *Sally—always generous to a fault—gave away her lunch to a homeless man.*

Genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains. *Prov.* Genius is the quality of being exceedingly careful about everything you do. □ *If genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains, Marilyn certainly has it. She never overlooks a single detail that needs attention.*

Genius is ten percent inspiration and ninety percent perspiration. *Prov.* People get brilliant results primarily by working hard, not because they have special inborn powers. □ *Child: Betty always does the best drawings in art class. She must be a genius. Father: If you worked hard, you could do just as well. Remember, genius is ten percent inspiration and ninety percent perspiration.*

***gentle as a lamb** *Cliché* [of someone] very gentle. (*Also: **as ~**.) □ *Don't be afraid of Mr. Schaeffer. He may look fierce, but he's as gentle as a lamb.* □ *Lisa was gentle as a lamb when dealing with children.*

the **genuine article** the real thing rather than a substitute. □ *Is this the genuine article or some cheap imitation substitute?* □ *I'll take the genuine article, thanks.*

get a bang out of someone or something Go to **get a charge out of** someone or something.

get a bead on someone or something Go to **draw a bead on** someone or something.

get a buzz out of someone or something *Fig.* to get some humor from someone or something. □ *I thought you'd get a buzz out of that gag.* □ *I hope you get a buzz out of Ted. He's a funny guy.*

get a charge out of someone or something and **get a bang out of** someone or something; **get a kick out of** someone or something to receive special pleasure from someone or something. □ *I really got a charge out of that comedian's routine.* □ *Tom is really funny. I always get a kick out of his jokes.* □ *Bill really got a bang out of the present we gave him.*

get a hurry on and **get a move on** to start to hurry. □ *We are going to leave in five minutes, Jane. Get a hurry on!* □ *Mary! Get a move on! We can't wait all day.*

get a kick out of someone or something Go to **get a charge out of** someone or something.

get a laugh to do something that will create laughter. □ *John will do almost anything to get a laugh.*

Get a life! *Inf.* Change your life radically! Find something interesting to do or say! □ *You are such a twit! Get a life!* □ *Get a life, you clown!*

get a load of someone or something to get a good look at someone or something. □ *Wow! Get a load of that car!* □ *Get a load of Mary!*

get a lot of mileage out of something *Fig.* to get a lot of use from something, as if it were a car. □ *Bob always got a lot of mileage out of one joke.* □ *I got a lot of mileage out of my TV before it broke down.*

get a move on Go to **get a hurry on.**

get a rise from someone and **get a rise out of** someone *Fig.* to make someone react, usually angrily. □ *Tease Joe about his girlfriend. That generally gets a rise from him.* □ *I pestered Mary for half the afternoon, but didn't get a rise out of her.*

get a say (in something**)** Go to a **voice (in** something**).**

get a (sound) grasp of something Go to a **(solid) grasp of** something.

get a ticket to receive a traffic ticket. □ *If you keep racing along at this speed, you will get a ticket!*

get a weight off one's **mind** Go to a **load off** one's **mind.**

get a word in edgewise and **get a word in edgeways** *Fig.* to manage to say something when other people are talking and ignoring you. (Often in the negative. Alludes to trying to "squeeze" a word into a running conversation.) □ *It was such an exciting conversation that I could hardly get a word in edgewise.* □ *Mary talks so fast that nobody can get a word in edgeways.*

get aboard something to get onto a ship, a train, or an airplane. □ *What time should we get aboard the ship?* □ *Everyone can get aboard at noon.*

get about and **get around** to manage to move around. □ *I broke my hip last year, but I can still get about.* □ *Dad can't get around too much anymore, so I go over to help him.*

get across (something**)** to manage to cross something. (See also **put** something **across (to** someone**)**.) □ *We finally got across the river where it was very shallow.* □ *Where the water was low, it was easy to get across.*

get after someone **1.** *Lit.* to begin to chase someone. □ *The other boys got after him and almost caught him.* □ *Henry got after Bill and almost caught up with him.* **2.** *Fig.* to bother someone about doing something; to scold someone about something. □ *I will get after Fred about his behavior.* □ *Please don't get after me all the time.*

get ahead (in something**)** to advance in one's employment, school, or life in general. □ *I work hard every day, but I*

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can't seem to get ahead in my job. ☐ *I want to get ahead in life.*

get ahead of oneself *Fig.* [for someone] to do or say something sooner than it ought to be done so that the proper explanation or preparations have not been made. ☐ *I have to stick to my notes or I will get ahead of myself in my lecture.* ☐ *When he bought a new little bicycle before the baby was born, he was getting ahead of himself.*

get along 1. [for people or animals] to be amiable with one another. ☐ *Those two just don't get along.* ☐ *They seem to get along just fine.* **2.** to leave; to be on one's way. ☐ *I've got to get along. It's getting late.* ☐ *It's time for me to get along. See you later.*

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get along (on a shoestring) and **get by (on a shoestring)** *Fig.* to be able to afford to live on very little money. ☐ *For the last two years, we have had to get along on a shoestring.* ☐ *With so many expenses, it's hard to get by on a shoestring.*

get along on something *Fig.* to manage to survive with just something. ☐ *I think we can get along on what I earn.* ☐ *I can't get along on what they pay me.*

Get along with you! *Rur.* to go on; to depart; to go and "take oneself along." (Only with *you*.) ☐ *Get along with you, now. Get going!* ☐ *Get along with you, Sally!*

get along without (someone or something**)** to manage without someone or something; to do without someone or something. ☐ *I don't think I can get along without my secretary.* ☐ *My secretary just quit, and I don't think I will be able to get along without.*

get an amount of money **for** something to receive an amount of money in exchange for something; to sell something for a specific price. (See also **get** something **for** an amount of money.) ☐ *I got nearly two thousand dollars for my car.* ☐ *How much did they get for their house?*

get around Go to **get about**.

get around someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to cluster around someone or something. ☐ *Tell everyone to get around the cat so she won't run away.* ☐ *Let's get around Mary and sing "Happy Birthday" to her.* **2.** to manage to go around someone or something. ☐ *We couldn't get around the fallen tree, so we turned back.* ☐ *Mary couldn't get around the people standing in the hallway.* **3.** *Fig.* to avoid or elude an authority or regulation that constitutes a barrier; to circumvent someone or something in order to get one's way. ☐ *We knew she would oppose us, so we got around her and got it approved by someone else.* ☐ *I know I can find a way to get around the rule.*

get around to doing something to find time to do something; to do something after a long delay. (See also **get (around) to** someone or something.) ☐ *I finally got around to buying a new coat.* ☐ *It took Sally years to get around to visiting her aunt.*

get (around) to someone or something to be able to deal with someone or something eventually. (See also **get around to** doing something.) ☐ *I will get around to you in a moment. Please be patient.* ☐ *The mechanic will get around to your car when possible.*

get at someone *Fig.* to find a way to irritate someone; to manage to wound someone, physically or emotionally. (See also **get at** someone or an animal.) ☐ *Mr. Smith found a way to get at his wife.* ☐ *John kept trying to get at his teacher.*

get at someone or an animal *Fig.* to attack or strike someone or an animal. ☐ *The cat jumped over the wall to get at the mouse.* ☐ *Ok, you guys. There he is. Get at him!*

get at something **1.** *Fig.* to explain or understand something. ☐ *We spent a long time trying to get at the answer.* ☐ *I can't understand what you're trying to get at.* **2.** *Fig.* begin doing something. (See also **Have at it!**) ☐ *I won't be able to get at it until the weekend.* ☐ *I'll get at it first thing in the morning.*

get away to move away. (Often a command.) ☐ *Get away! Don't bother me!* ☐ *I tried to get away, but he wouldn't let me.*

get away (from someone or something**) 1.** to escape from someone, something, or some place. ☐ *Max did get away from the prison guard but was caught soon after.* ☐ *Mary couldn't get away from the telephone all morning.* **2.** Go to **away (from** someone or something**)**.

get away with murder 1. *Lit.* to commit murder and not get punished for it. (See also **get away with** something.) ☐ *Don't kill me! You can't get away with murder!* **2.** *Fig.* to do something very bad and not get punished for it. ☐ *That guy always gets away with murder—just because he's cute.* ☐ *You will spoil your son if you let him get away with murder. You should punish him for his backtalk.*

get away with someone or something to escape, taking someone or something with one. ☐ *The kidnapper got away with little Brian.* ☐ *The burglars got away with a lot of cash and some diamonds.*

get away with something and **get by with** something to do something and not get punished for it. (See also **get away with murder**.) ☐ *You can't get away with that!* ☐ *Larry got by with the lie.*

get axed *Fig.* to get fired. ☐ *Betty and two of her friends got axed today.*

get back (to someone**) (on** something**)** *Fig.* to continue talking with someone (at a later time); to find out information and tell it to a person (at a later time). ☐ *I don't have the answer to that question right now. Let me find out and get back to you.* ☐ *Okay. Please try to get back early tomorrow.*

get back to something to return to dealing with something. ☐ *I will have to get back to my work now.* ☐ *I want to get back to my knitting.*

get better to improve. ☐ *I had a bad cold, but it's getting better.* ☐ *Business was bad last year, but it's getting better.* ☐ *I'm sorry you're ill. I hope you get better.*

get between someone or something **and** someone or something else to position oneself between people and things, in any combination. ☐ *She got between Dan and his career.* ☐ *The dog got between the archer and the target.*

get busy to start working; to work or appear to work harder or faster. ☐ *The boss is coming. You'd better get busy.* ☐ *I've got to get busy and clean this house up.*

get by (on a shoestring) Go to **get along (on a shoestring)**.

get by (on a small amount of money**)** to survive with only a small amount of money. □ *I can't get by on that much money.* □ *That is a very small amount of money to live on. No one could get by.*

get by (someone or something**)** to move past someone or something. □ *I need to get by this intersection, and then I will stop and look at the tires.* □ *Please let me get by.*

get by (with something**) 1.** to satisfy the minimum requirements. □ *I was failing geometry, but managed to get by with a D.* □ *I took the bar exam and just barely got by.* **2.** Go to **get away with** something.

get by (without someone or something**)** to survive without someone or something. □ *I can't get by without you.* □ *We can probably get by without two cars.*

get carried away *Fig.* to be overcome by emotion or enthusiasm (in one's thinking or actions). □ *Calm down, Jane. Don't get carried away.* □ *Here, Bill. Take this money and go to the candy store, but don't get carried away.*

get cracking *Rur.* to get to work. □ *If you want to finish that quilt by Labor Day, you best get cracking.* □ *Sit down to your homework and get cracking!*

get down 1. *Sl.* to lay one's money on the table. (Gambling.) □ *Okay, everybody get down.* □ *Get down, and let's get going!* **2.** *Sl.* to concentrate; to do something well. □ *I'm flunking two subjects, man. I gotta get down.* □ *Come on, Sam, pay attention. Get down and learn this stuff.* **3.** *Sl.* to copulate. □ *Hey, let's get down!* □ *All Steve wants to do is get down all the time.*

get down (from something**)** to get off something; to climb down from something. □ *Please get down from there this instant!* □ *Get down before you fall!*

get (down) off one's **high horse** *Fig.* to become humble; to be less haughty. □ *It's about time that you got down off your high horse.* □ *Would you get off your high horse and talk to me?*

get down (on all fours) to position oneself on one's hands and knees. □ *He got down on all fours and played with the children.* □ *Mary got down and walked around like a dog.*

get down to brass tacks *Fig.* to begin to talk about important things; to get down to business. □ *Let's get down to brass tacks. We've wasted too much time chatting.* □ *Don't you think that it's about time to get down to brass tacks?*

get down to business and **get down to work** to begin to get serious; to begin to negotiate or conduct business. □ *All right, everyone. Let's get down to business. There has been enough chitchat.* □ *When the president and vice president arrive, we can get down to business.*

get down to cases to begin to discuss specific matters; to **get down to business.** □ *When we've finished the general discussion, we'll get down to cases.* □ *Now that everyone is here, we can get down to cases.*

get down to (doing) something to begin doing some kind of work in earnest. □ *I have to get down to my typing.* □ *John, you get in here this minute and get down to that homework!*

get down to the facts to begin to talk about things that matter; to get to the truth. □ *The judge told the lawyer that the time had come to get down to the facts.* □ *Let's get down to the facts, Mrs. Brown. Where were you on the night of January 16?*

get down to the nitty-gritty to get down to the basic facts. □ *Stop messing around and get down to the nitty-gritty.* □ *If we could only get down to the nitty-gritty and stop wasting time.*

get down to the nuts and bolts *Fig.* to get down to the basic facts. (See also **nuts and bolts.**) □ *Stop fooling around. Get down to the nuts and bolts.* □ *Let's stop wasting time. We have to get down to the nuts and bolts.*

get down to work Go to **get down to business.**

get enough courage up† (to do something**)** Go to **get enough nerve up† (to** do something**).**

get enough guts up† (to do something**)** Go to next.

get enough nerve up† (to do something**)** and **get enough courage up† (to** do something**); get enough guts up† (to** do something**); get enough pluck up† (to** do something**); get enough spunk up† (to** do something**); get the nerve up† (to** do something**); get the courage up† (to** do something**); get the guts up† (to** do something**); get the pluck up† (to** do something**); get the spunk up† (to** do something**)** *Fig.* to work up enough courage to do something. □ *I hope I can get enough nerve up to ask her for her autograph.* □ *I wanted to do it, but I couldn't get up enough nerve.* □ *I thought he would never get up the courage to ask me for a date.*

get euchred out of something to get cheated out of something. (Alludes to losing in the card game euchre.) □ *Joe's dad left him a farm, but he got euchred out of it by some city slicker real estate agent.* □ *I got euchred out of ten bucks by a con artist with a hard-luck story.*

get free of someone or something and **get free from** someone or something **1.** to rid oneself of the burden of someone or something. □ *Can't I get free of this problem?* □ *I can't seem to get free of Randy.* **2.** to liberate oneself from someone or something. □ *I tried to get free of Mr. Franklin, but he kept talking and wouldn't let me interrupt.* □ *Is there any way that somebody can get free of Tom?* □ *I couldn't get free of the nail that had snagged my sleeve.*

get going 1. to start moving. □ *Let's get going! We can't stand here all day.* **2.** to depart. □ *What time should we get going in the morning?*

get hell (about someone or something**)** Go to **catch hell (about** someone or something**).**

get hip to someone or something Go to **hip to** someone or something.

get home to someone or something to manage to return home to someone or something there. □ *The infantryman wants to get home to his wife.* □ *I like to get home to a nice warm house.*

get in deeper *Fig.* to get in more and more trouble; to get more deeply involved with someone or something. □ *Everytime he opened his mouth to complain, he just got in deeper.*

get inside something **1.** *Lit.* to go inside of something or some place. □ *Get inside the house and wait for me.* □ *Get inside the car so you won't get wet.* **2.** *Fig.* to learn about the inner workings of something or some organization. □

I can't wait to get inside that company and see what makes it tick. ☐ *Someone needs to get inside the boardroom and straighten things out.*

get into a mess 1. *Lit.* to get some part of one into a sloppy or messy substance. ☐ *Look at your shoes! You really got into a mess.* ☐ *Please don't get into a mess in the park.* **2.** and **get into a jam** *Fig.* to get into difficulty; to get into trouble. ☐ *Now you have really gotten into a mess.* ☐ *I got into a real mess at work.*

get into an argument (with someone**) (about** someone or something**)** and **get into an argument (with** someone**) (over** someone or something**)** to enter a quarrel with someone about someone or something. ☐ *I don't want to get into an argument with you about Dan.* ☐ *Mary got into an argument about money with Fred.* ☐ *I really don't want to get into an argument.*

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get into bed with someone *Fig.* to work closely as business partners; to merge businesses. ☐ *Have you heard? The company's getting into bed with Acme Industries.* ☐ *I want you to get into bed with the other department supervisors and sort this problem out.*

get into one's **stride 1.** *Lit.* [for a runner] to reach a comfortable and efficient pace. ☐ *I got into my stride right away, and that helped win the race.* ☐ *She never got into her stride, and that's why she lost.* **2.** *Fig.* to reach one's most efficient and productive rate of doing something. ☐ *When I get into my stride, I'll be more efficient.* ☐ *Amy will be more efficient when she gets into her stride.*

get into something **1.** to tamper with something; to open something and disturb the contents. ☐ *Who got into my desk?* ☐ *Someone has been getting into my work after the office closes.* **2.** to put oneself into clothing. ☐ *As soon as I get into this coat, I will help you load the car.* ☐ *Let me get into my boots, and then I'll be with you.* **3.** to enter something or some place. ☐ *I got into the theater just before the rain started.* ☐ *Let's get into the car and go.* **4.** *Sl.* to become involved in something; to develop an interest in something. ☐ *I can really get into sailing, I think.* ☐ *No matter how hard I try, I can't get into basketball.* **5.** to enter a particular type of business; to deal in a particular product in business. ☐ *Yes, I used to work for the government, but now have gotten into private industry.*

get in(to) the act *Fig.* to participate in something; to try to be part of whatever is going on. (As if someone were trying to get on stage and participate in a performance.) ☐ *Everybody wants to get into the act! There is not room here for everyone.* ☐ *I want to get in the act.*

get in(to) the swing of things *Fig.* to join in with people and their activities; to become more social and up-to-date. ☐ *Come on, Bill. Try to get into the swing of things.* ☐ *John just couldn't seem to get in the swing of things.*

get it Go to **get** something.

get it (all) together *Fig.* to become fit or organized; to organize one's thinking; to become relaxed and rational. ☐ *Bill seems to be acting more normal now. I think he's getting it all together.* ☐ *I hope he gets it together soon. His life is a mess.*

get it in the neck *Sl.* to receive trouble or punishment. ☐ *You are going to get it in the neck if you are not home on time.* ☐ *I got it in the neck for being late.*

get it off *Sl.* to achieve sexual release; to copulate. (Potentially offensive. Use only with discretion. Compare this with **get it off with** someone.) ☐ *Harry kept saying he had to get it off or die. What's wrong with Harry?* ☐ *The entire crew of the yacht came ashore to get it off.*

get it off with someone *Sl.* to have sexual intercourse with someone. ☐ *She said she wanted to get it off with him.* ☐ *She said all he wanted was to get it off with just anybody.*

get it on 1. *Sl.* to begin something. ☐ *Time to go back to work. Let's get it on!* ☐ *Get it on, you guys! Time to start your engines.* **2.** *Sl.* to begin dancing. ☐ *Let's go out there and get it on!* ☐ *He wanted to get it on, but my feet hurt.* **3.** *Sl.* [for people] to copulate. (Potentially offensive. Use only with discretion.) ☐ *Come on, baby, let's get it on.* ☐ *I don't want to get it on with you or any other creep.* **4.** *Sl.* to undertake to enjoy oneself. ☐ *I can really get it on with that slow jazz.* ☐ *Let's go listen to some new age and get it on.*

get it out *Fig.* to tell someone about a problem; to pour out one's grief. (Fixed order.) ☐ *Come on, get it out. You'll feel better.* ☐ *He would feel better if he could get it out.*

get it wrong to misunderstand someone or something. ☐ *Oh, Otto, you've got it wrong again!* ☐ *Why do you have to get it wrong every time?*

get laid to have sexual intercourse. (Use caution.) ☐ *Tommy wanted nothing more out of life than to get laid.*

get lost 1. to become lost; to lose one's way. ☐ *We got lost on the way home.* ☐ *Follow the path, or you might get lost.* **2.** *Inf.* Go away!; Stop being an annoyance! (Always a command.) ☐ *Stop bothering me. Get lost!* ☐ *Get lost! I don't need your help.*

get mad (at something**)** to muster all one's physical and mental resources in order to do something difficult. ☐ *Come on, Bill. If you're going to lift your end of the piano, you're going to have to get mad at it.* ☐ *The sergeant keeps yelling, "Work, work! Push, push! Come on, you guys, get mad!"*

get married to become united as husband and wife. ☐ *Bill and Sally got married when they were in college.* ☐ *We got married in Texas just after we graduated from college.*

get moving to get busy; to get started; to work harder or faster. ☐ *Come on, everybody. Get moving!* ☐ *The director is coming. You had better get moving.*

get nowhere fast *Fig.* not to make progress; to get nowhere. ☐ *I can't seem to make any progress. No matter what I do, I'm just getting nowhere fast.* ☐ *Come on. Speed up this car. We're getting nowhere fast.*

get off 1. to start off (on a friendship). ☐ *Tom and Bill had never met before. They seemed to get off all right, though.* ☐ *I'm glad they got off so well.* **2.** to leave; to depart. ☐ *What time did they get off?* ☐ *We have to get off early in the morning before the traffic gets heavy.* **3.** Go to **get off (easy)**; **get off (of)** someone or something; **get off (of)** something; **get off** something; **get off to** something; **get off with** something.

get off a few good ones *Fig.* to tell a few good jokes; to land a few good punches; to manage to make a few strong criticisms. ☐ *The comedian managed to get off a few good ones, but most of his material was old or obscene.*

get off (easy) and **get off (lightly)** to receive very little punishment (for doing something wrong). ☐ *It was a seri-*

ous crime, but Mary got off easy. ☐ *Billy's punishment was very light. Considering what he did, he got off lightly.*

Get off it! 1. *Inf.* Stop acting so arrogant! ☐ *Get off it, you jerk!* ☐ *Get off it! That's too much!* **2.** *Inf.* You're lying! ☐ *Get off it, you liar!* ☐ *Get off it! That can't be true.*

get off kilter Go to **out of kilter.**

get off (lightly) Go to **get off (easy).**

Get off my back! *Inf.* Stop harassing me!; Leave me alone about this matter! ☐ *Tom: You'd better get your paper written. Bill: I'll do it when I'm good and ready. Get off my back!* ☐ *Alice: I'm tired of your constant criticism! Get off my back! Jane: I was just trying to help.*

get off (of) someone or something and **get off** to get down from someone or something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Please get off of me. I can't play piggyback anymore.* ☐ *Get off of the sofa!*

get off (of) something and **get off** *Inf.* to stop discussing the topic that one is supposed to be discussing [and start discussing something else]; to stray from the topic at hand. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *I wish you wouldn't get off the subject so much.* ☐ *This writer gets off of his topic all the time.*

get off one's **ass** and **get off** one's **rear; get off** one's **butt** *Sl.* to get up and get busy; to stop loafing and get to work. (Caution with *ass*. *Butt* is also offensive to some people.) ☐ *Get off your ass and get busy!* ☐ *It's time you got off your butt and started to work.*

get off one's **butt** Go to previous.

get off one's **rear** Go to **get off** one's **ass.**

get off scot-free Go to **go scot-free.**

Get off someone's **back!** Go to next.

Get off someone's **case!** and **Get off** someone's **back!** *Fig. Inf.* Leave someone alone!; Stop picking on someone! (Usually a command.) ☐ *I'm tired of your criticism, Bill. Get off my case!* ☐ *Quit picking on her. Get off her back!*

get off someone's **tail 1.** *Fig.* to stop following someone closely, usually in an automobile. ☐ *Get off my tail! Keep your distance!* ☐ *I wish that car behind me would get off my tail.* **2.** *Fig.* to stop bothering someone; to stop monitoring someone's actions. ☐ *Get off my tail! I can manage without you.* ☐ *Who needs your help? Get off my tail!*

get off (something**)** to climb down from something. ☐ *Please get off the stairs. You know you shouldn't play on the stairs.* ☐ *I wish that the children would get off that ladder before they fall off.*

get off the dime *Sl.* to start moving; to get out of a stopped position. ☐ *Why don't you get off the dime and complete some of these projects that you started?* ☐ *As soon as the board of directors gets off the dime on this proposal, we will have some action.*

get off to sleep to manage to get to sleep finally. ☐ *About midnight everyone finally got off to sleep.* ☐ *I wasn't able to get off to sleep until dawn.*

get off (to something**)** to leave for something. ☐ *I've got to get off to my violin lesson.* ☐ *We have to get off to the hospital immediately!*

get off (with something**)** to receive only a light punishment for something. ☐ *Let's hope John gets off with a light sentence.* ☐ *Max got off with only a few years in prison.*

get on 1. to get along; to thrive. ☐ *Well, how are you two getting on?* ☐ *We are getting on okay.* **2.** Go to **get on** something and **get on (with** someone**).**

get on (in years) to grow older; to be aged. ☐ *Aunt Mattie is getting on in years.* ☐ *They were both getting on in years.*

get on one's **horse** *Sl.* to prepare to leave. (Usually fig., with no horse present.) ☐ *It's time to get on my horse and get out of here.* ☐ *I've got to get on my horse and go.*

get on someone *Fig.* to pester someone (about something); to pressure someone. ☐ *John is supposed to empty the trash every day. He didn't do it, so I will have to get on him.* ☐ *It's time to get on Bill about his homework. He's falling behind.*

get on (something**)** to enter a conveyance; to get aboard something; to climb onto something. ☐ *They just announced that it's time to get on the airplane.* ☐ *The bus stopped, and I got on.* ☐ *The child was afraid to get on the train.* ☐ *Where did you get on?*

get on the phone Go to **on the telephone.**

get on the track of someone or something Go to **on the trail of** someone or something.

get on (with someone**)** and **get along (with** someone**)** to be friends with someone; to have a good relationship with someone. (The friendship is always assumed to be good unless it is stated to be otherwise.) ☐ *How do you get on with John?* ☐ *I get along with John just fine.* ☐ *We get along.*

get on with something to continue doing something. ☐ *Let's get on with the game!* ☐ *We need to get on with our lives.*

get on (without someone or something**)** to survive and carry on without someone or something. ☐ *I think we can get on without bread for a day or two.* ☐ *Can you get on without your secretary for a while?*

get one **on** one's **feet** and **put** one **on** one's **feet 1.** *Lit.* to help someone stand up after a fall or prolonged bed rest. ☐ *We had to get him on his feet, but he was able to walk without much help.* ☐ *We put the child on his feet and he took off running again.* **2.** *Fig.* to get someone back to normal, financially, medically, mentally, etc. ☐ *When he gets himself on his feet, Tom will buy a new car.* ☐ *We will put him on his feet and help him along.* ☐ *When I get myself on my feet, things will be better.*

get one **right here** *Fig.* to affect one deeply in a specific way. (Usually accompanied with a hand gesture showing exactly where one is affected: the heart = lovingly, the stomach or bowels = sickeningly.) ☐ *That sort of thing gets me right here.* ☐ *Pete clasped his hand to his chest and said, "That sort of thing gets me right here."*

get one's **act together** to get oneself organized and on schedule. ☐ *I've got to get my act together and start getting my work done.* ☐ *When I have my act together, I'll get a job.*

get one's **ass in gear** and **get one's tail in gear** *Sl.* to get moving; to get organized and get started. (Use cau-

tion.) □ *Come on, you guys. Get moving. Get your ass in gear!*

get one's **bowels in an uproar** *Sl.* to get oneself anxious or excited. (Normally fig.) □ *Cool it! Don't get your bowels in an uproar.* □ *Fred's always getting his bowels in an uproar about nothing.*

get one's **comeuppance** to get a deserved punishment. □ *I can't wait till that snobbish girl gets her comeuppance.* □ *Joe got his comeuppance when the teacher caught him making fun of her.*

get one's **ducks in a row** *Fig.* to get one's affairs in order or organized. □ *Jane is organized. She really gets all her ducks in a row right away.* □ *You can't hope to go into a company and sell something until you get your ducks in a row.*

G

get one's **ears pinned back** *Fig.* to experience a severe scolding. □ *Jimmy was ordered to report to the principal's office and got his ears pinned back.*

get one's **ears set out** and **get** one's **ears lowered** *Fig.* to get one's ears made more visible by getting a haircut. □ *Well, I see you got your ears set out!* □ *Better get my ears lowered because I'm getting a little shaggy.*

get one's **feet wet** *Fig.* to get a little first-time experience with something. (Obvious literal possibilities.) □ *Of course he can't do the job right. He's hardly got his feet wet yet.* □ *I'm looking forward to learning to drive. I can't wait to get behind the steering wheel and get my feet wet.*

get one's **fingers burned** *Fig.* to receive harm or punishment for one's actions. (Normally fig.) □ *I had my fingers burned the last time I questioned the company policy.* □ *I tried that once before and got my fingers burned. I won't try it again.*

get one's **foot in the door** *Fig.* to complete the first step in a process. (Alludes to people selling things from door-to-door and blocking the door with a foot so it cannot be closed on them.) □ *I think I could get the job if I could only get my foot in the door.* □ *It pays to get your foot in the door. Try to get an appointment with the boss.*

get one's **hands dirty** and **dirty** one's **hands; soil** one's **hands 1.** *Fig.* to get closely involved in a difficult task. □ *You have to get your hands dirty if you expect to get the gutters cleaned out.* **2.** *Fig.* to become involved with something illegal; to do a shameful thing; to do something that is beneath one. □ *The mayor would never get his hands dirty by giving away political favors.* □ *I will not dirty my hands by breaking the law.*

get one's **head above water** and **have** one's **head above water 1.** *Lit.* to get one's head above the surface of the water while swimming. (See also keep one's head above water.) □ *He finally got his head above water and was able to get a good breath.* **2.** *Fig.* to manage to get oneself caught up with one's work or responsibilities. □ *I can't seem to get my head above water. Work just keeps piling up.* □ *I'll be glad when I have my head above water.*

get one's **head together** to get one's thoughts or attitude properly organized. □ *I've got to get my head together and get going.* □ *I need to take some time off and get my head together.*

get one's **hooks in(to)** someone or something and **get** one's **hooks in†** *Fig.* to obtain a strong and possessive hold on someone or something. □ *She just can't wait to get her hooks into him.* □ *He finally got in his hooks and guarded her jealously.*

get one's **just deserts** and **get** one's **just reward(s); get** one's [specified by context] to get what one deserves. □ *I feel better now that Jane got her just deserts. She really insulted me.* □ *The criminal who was sent to prison got his just rewards.* □ *You'll get yours!*

get one's **just reward(s)** Go to previous.

get one's **kicks (from** someone or something**)** *Fig. Inf.* to get pleasure from someone or something. □ *Do you get your kicks from this sort of thing?* □ *I get my kicks from Billy Simpson. What a great entertainer!*

get one's **knuckles rapped 1.** *Lit.* to get one's knuckles struck with a ruler as a punishment. □ *I got my knuckles rapped for whispering too much.* □ *You will have your knuckles rapped if you are not careful.* **2.** *Fig.* to receive a minor punishment. □ *The lawyer got his knuckles rapped for talking back to the judge.* □ *Better watch your tongue if you don't want to get your knuckles rapped.*

get one's **lumps** *Inf.* to get the result or punishment one deserves. (See also take one's lumps.) □ *If she keeps acting that way, she'll get her lumps.* □ *We will see that Dave gets his lumps.*

get one's **nose out of joint** and **have** one's **nose out of joint; put** one's **nose out of joint** *Fig.* to resent that one has been slighted, neglected, or insulted. □ *You get your nose out of joint too easily about stuff like that.* □ *Now, don't get your nose out of joint. She didn't mean it.*

get one's **nose out of** someone's **business** *Fig.* to stop interfering in someone else's business; to mind one's own business. □ *Go away! Get your nose out of my business!* □ *Bob just can't seem to get his nose out of other people's business.*

get one's **rocks off (on** something**) 1.** *Sl.* [for a male] to ejaculate. (Considered coarse.) *Boys normally don't talk about getting their rocks off.* **2.** *Sl.* to enjoy something. (Fixed order.) □ *I really get my rocks off on heavy metal.* □ *I've listened to the stuff, but I sure don't get my rocks off on it.*

get one's **shit together** and **get** one's **stuff together 1.** *Fig.* to get one's possessions organized. (*Shit* is usually taboo.) □ *Let me get my shit together, and I'll be right with you.* □ *I'll get my shit together and be right with you.* □ *Will you all please get your stuff together so we can get going?* **2.** *Fig.* to get oneself mentally organized. (Shit is usually taboo.) □ *As soon as I get my shit together, I can be of more help.* □ *When you have your shit together you can start living independently again.*

get one's **stuff together** Go to previous.

get one's **tail in gear** Go to get one's ass in gear.

get one's **teeth into** something and **sink** one's **teeth into** something; **get** one's **teeth in†; sink** one's **teeth in†** *Fig.* to begin to do something; to get completely involved in something. □ *I can't wait to get my teeth into that Wallace job.* □ *Here, sink your teeth into this and see if you can't manage this project.* □ *He'll find it easier when he sinks in his teeth.*

get one's **ticket punched** *Sl.* to die; to be killed. (Literally, to be cancelled.) □ *Poor Chuck got his ticket punched*

while he was waiting for a bus. ☐ *Watch out there, or you'll get your ticket punched.*

get one's **wits about** one and **have** one's **wits about** one *Fig.* to keep one's thinking in order or make one's mind work smoothly, especially in a time of stress. (See also **keep** one's **wits about** one.) ☐ *Let me get my wits about me so I can figure this out.* ☐ *I don't have my wits about me at this time of the morning.*

get (oneself**) into a stew (over** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to be worried or upset about someone or something. ☐ *Please don't get yourself into a stew over Walter.* ☐ *Liz is the kind of person who gets into a stew over little problems.*

get oneself **up 1.** to arise from bed; to rise to one's feet. ☐ *I've got to get myself up and get going.* ☐ *Get yourself up and get going.* **2.** *Rur.* to dress oneself up. ☐ *I got myself up in my Sunday best.* ☐ *Jane got herself up as if she were a movie star.*

get on(to) someone **(about** something**)** *Fig.* to remind someone about something. ☐ *I'll have to get onto Sarah about the deadline.* ☐ *I'll get on Gerald right away.*

get on(to) the (tele)phone and **get on(to) the (telephone) extension** to pick up a telephone receiver to talk to someone or make a telephone call. ☐ *I'll get onto the extension and talk with Fred.* ☐ *I'll get on the phone and call Fran right away.*

get out 1. [for someone or an animal] to depart to the outside or to escape. ☐ *When did your dog get out and run away?* ☐ *When did he get out of jail?* **2.** [for information or a secret] to become publicly known. ☐ *We don't want the secret to get out.* ☐ *The word soon got out that he had a prison record.*

get out of a jam *Fig.* to get free from a problem or a bad situation. ☐ *Would you lend me five hundred dollars? I need it to get out of a jam.* ☐ *I need some help getting out of a jam.*

get out of a mess *Fig.* to get free of a bad situation. (Also with *this, such a,* etc.) ☐ *How can anyone get out of a mess like this?* ☐ *Please help me get out of this mess!*

get out of (doing) something to manage not to have to do something. ☐ *I was supposed to go to a wedding, but I got out of it.* ☐ *Jane had an appointment, but she got out of it.*

Get out (of here)! Go away!; Leave this place! ☐ *John: I've heard enough of this! Get out of here! Bill: I'm going! I'm going!* ☐ *Where have you been? You smell like a sewer! Get out of here!*

Get out of my sight! Go away immediately! (Usually said in anger.) ☐ *Get out of my sight!* ☐ *Please get out of my sight forever!*

get out of one's **face** *Lit. Inf.* to stop bothering or intimidating someone. ☐ *Look, get out of my face, or I'll poke you in yours!* ☐ *He told you to get out of his face, you creep!*

get out of someone's **hair** *Fig. Inf.* to stop annoying someone. ☐ *Will you get out of my hair! You are a real pain!*

get out of the road Go to out of the way.

get out of time (with someone or something**)** Go to out of step (with someone or something).

Get out of town! Beat it!; Get out of here! ☐ *Go away, you bother me! Get out of town!* ☐ *You'd better get out of town, my friend. You are a pest.*

get out of wind Go to out of breath.

get (out) while the gettin(g)'s good and **get (out) while the goin(g)'s good** to leave while it is still safe or possible to do so. ☐ *I could tell that it was time for me to get while the gettin's good.* ☐ *I told her she should get out while the goin's good.*

Get out with it! Get it said! ☐ *Stop stuttering around! Get out with it!* ☐ *Get out with it! I don't have all day to wait for you!*

get out with one's **life** *Fig.* to survive a serious or life-threatening incident or an accident without dying. ☐ *We were lucky to get out with our lives.*

Get over it! Forget about it and be done with it! (Said to someone who is fretting and stewing over some kind of problem.) ☐ *Forget about her. She's gone. Get over it!*

get over someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to move or climb over someone or something. ☐ *I managed to get over the sand dunes and moved on toward the shoreline.* ☐ *I couldn't get over the huge rock in the path, so I went around it.* **2.** *Fig.* to recover from difficulties regarding someone or something. (See also Get over it!.) ☐ *I almost never got over the shock.* ☐ *Sharon finally got over Tom. He had been such a pest.*

get over something to recover from a disease. (See also **get over** someone or something.) ☐ *It took a long time to get over the flu.* ☐ *I thought I would never get over the mumps.*

get over (to some place**) 1.** to go to some place. ☐ *I have to get over to Molly's place and pick up some papers.* ☐ *Go ahead and start without me. I'll get over as soon as I can.* **2.** to cross over something to get somewhere. ☐ *I want to get over to the other side.* ☐ *I can't find a way to get over!*

get past (someone or something**) 1.** to move around or ahead of someone or something that is in the way. ☐ *We have to get past the cart that is blocking the hallway.* ☐ *We just couldn't get past.* **2.** to pass ahead of someone or something that is moving. ☐ *I want to get past this truck, then we can get into the right lane.* ☐ *When we get past, I'll stop and let you drive.*

Get real! *Inf.* Start acting realistically! ☐ *Hey, chum! You are way off base! Get real!* ☐ *Get real! Wake up to reality!*

get religion *Fig.* to become serious (about something), usually after a powerful experience. (Sometimes literal.) ☐ *When I had an automobile accident, I really got religion. Now I'm a very safe driver.*

get right on something to do something immediately. ☐ *I know it has to be done today. I'll get right on it.* ☐ *Please get right on these reports as soon as possible.*

get rolling *Fig.* to get started. ☐ *Come on. It's time to leave. Let's get rolling!* ☐ *Bill, it's 6:30. Time to get up and get rolling!*

get screwed 1. *Sl.* to have sexual intercourse. (Considered a crude usage.) ☐ *A lot of the college kids on spring break in Florida do nothing but get drunk and get screwed.* **2.** *Sl.* to get cheated. ☐ *I really got screwed on that last deal.*

Get serious! *Inf.* Get realistic!; Stop horsing around! ☐ *Oh, come on! Get serious! You don't really mean that!*

get shed of someone or something Go to next.

get shut of someone or something and **get shed of** someone or something; **get shet of** someone or something *Rur.* to get rid of someone or something. ☐ *I can't wait to get shut of that old refrigerator.* ☐ *Tom followed me around for months, but I finally got shed of him.*

get smart (with someone**)** *Fig.* to become fresh with someone; to talk back to someone. ☐ *Don't you get smart with me!* ☐ *If you get smart again, I'll bop you.*

get some kind of **mileage out of** something **1.** *Lit.* to achieve some level of efficiency with a vehicle. (*Some kind of* typically includes *more, better, good,* etc.) ☐ *Do you get good mileage out of a vehicle like this.* **2.** *Fig.* to get [sufficient] use or service from something. ☐ *I wish I could get better mileage out of this car.* ☐ *He knows how to get a lot of mileage out of a pair of shoes.*

G

get (some) steam up† **1.** *Lit.* [for a steam engine] to build up steam pressure and become more powerful. ☐ *As the engine got up steam, it began to move faster.* **2.** *Fig.* to begin to be stronger and more powerful. ☐ *The movement to cut taxes is getting up some steam.* ☐ *Our little organization just couldn't get up enough steam to become effective.*

get some weight off one's **feet** *Fig.* to sit down. ☐ *Come in and get some weight off your feet.* ☐ *I need to sit down and get some weight off my feet.*

get someone **across (in a good way)** Go to put someone across (in a good way).

get someone **(all) wrong** to misunderstand someone's intentions or character. ☐ *I think you've got me all wrong. I want to be your friend, not your enemy.*

get someone **around the table** *Fig.* to collect people together for discussion or bargaining. ☐ *We have to get everyone around the table on this matter.* ☐ *If I can get them around the table, I'm sure I can make them agree.*

get someone **down** to depress a person; to make a person very sad. ☐ *My dog ran away, and it really got me down.* ☐ *Oh, that's too bad. Don't let it get you down.*

get someone **going** to get someone excited; to get someone talking excitedly. ☐ *I guess I really got him going on the subject of politics.* ☐ *The whole business really makes me mad. Don't get me going.*

get someone **in a family way** Go to in a family way.

get someone **in(to)** something **1.** *Lit.* to manage to put someone into a confining area or into clothing. ☐ *I couldn't get Billy into his boots!* **2.** *Fig.* to manage to get someone enrolled into a school, club, organization, class, etc.; to manage to get someone accepted into something. ☐ *Somehow, we managed to get Jody into a fine private school.* ☐ *We got her in the group at last!* ☐ *Well, I managed to get myself into the class I wanted.*

get someone **off 1.** to get someone cleared of a criminal charge. ☐ *Ted's lawyer got him off, although we all knew he was guilty.* ☐ *I hope someone can get her off. She is innocent no matter how it looks.* **2.** to get someone freed from a responsibility. (See also get off the hook.) ☐ *I think I can get you off.* ☐ *What do I need to do to get myself off?*

get someone **on(to)** someone or something to assign someone to attend to someone or something. ☐ *Get someone onto the injured man in the hall right now.* ☐ *Get someone on the telephone switchboard at once!*

get someone or something **across** something and **get** someone or something **across** to transport someone or something across something. ☐ *We have to get everyone across the bridge before the floodwaters rise any more.* ☐ *Let's get the truck across also.* ☐ *It's foolhardy to try to get your car across the desert without a few gallons of water with you.*

get someone or something **away from** someone or something to take someone or something away from someone or something, in any combination. ☐ *Please get that cigar away from me!* ☐ *See if you can get Timmy away from the horse.*

get someone or something **back**† to receive someone or something back; to recover someone who had been taken away; to recover something that had been taken away. ☐ *Beth finally got her car back from the service station.* ☐ *She got back her car.*

get someone or something **by** someone or something and **get** someone or something **by** to get someone or something past an inspection. ☐ *Do you think I can get my cousin by the border guards?* ☐ *I don't think I can get this sausage by the customs desk.*

get someone or something **down**† **(from** something**)** to bring someone or something down from a higher place. ☐ *See if you can get my cat down from the tree.* ☐ *Please get down the sugar from the top shelf.*

get someone or something **down** something and **get** someone or something **down** to manage to put or force something downward. ☐ *We finally got her down the stairs, but it was a struggle.* ☐ *Don had to push and push to get his laundry down the chute.*

get someone or something **free (from** someone or something**)** to liberate someone or something from someone or something. ☐ *We finally got cousin George free from the talkative old man.* ☐ *We managed to get the animal's paw free from the trap.*

get someone or something **in(to)** something and **get** someone or something **in**† to manage to fit someone or something into something. ☐ *I will try to get you into the beginning of the line.* ☐ *The key is bent, but I think I can get it in.* ☐ *He struggled to get in the key.*

get someone or something **off** someone or something and **get** someone or something **off** to remove someone or something from someone, oneself, or something. ☐ *Come in and get those wet clothes off.* ☐ *Get him off of me!*

get someone or something **out of** one's **mind** and **get** someone or something **out of** one's **head** to manage to forget someone or something; to stop thinking about or wanting someone or something. (Almost the same as put someone or something out of one's mind.) ☐ *I can't get him out of my mind.* ☐ *Mary couldn't get the song out of her mind.*

get someone or something **out of** one's **sight** *Fig.* to remove someone or something from one's presence. (Often said in anger.) ☐ *Get that child out of my sight!* ☐ *Please get that cake out of my sight.*

get someone or something **out of** someone or something and **get** someone or something **out**† to release or extricate someone or something from someone, something, or some place. ☐ *See if you can get the cat out of this cabinet.*

☐ *I can't get the nail out of the board.* ☐ *I can get out almost anything with my pry bar.*

get someone or something **through (to** someone or something**)** to manage to get someone or something transported or connected to someone or something. ☐ *I hope I can get her through to her hometown in Italy.* ☐ *Do you think I can get this parcel through to Istanbul?*

get someone or something **together** to gather people or things together. ☐ *Let's see if we can get both sides together and discuss this.* ☐ *I want to get Tom and Sharon together for a conference.*

get someone **out of a jam** *Fig.* to get someone out of trouble. ☐ *Thanks for getting my brother out of that jam.* ☐ *How am I going to get myself out of this jam?*

get someone **out of** one's **hair** *Fig. Inf.* to cause someone to stop annoying oneself. ☐ *What do I have to do to get this guy out of my hair.*

get someone's **attention** Go to **grab** someone's **attention.**

get someone's **back up** Go to **get** someone's **dander up.**

get someone's **blood up** *Fig.* to get someone or oneself angry. (Fixed order.) ☐ *That kind of language really gets my blood up.* ☐ *That will really get his blood up!*

get someone's **dander up** and **get** someone's **back up; get** someone's **hackles up; get** someone's **Irish up; put** someone's **back up** *Fig.* to make someone get angry. (Fixed order.) ☐ *Now, don't get your dander up. Calm down.* ☐ *I insulted him and really got his hackles up.* ☐ *Bob had his Irish up all day yesterday. I don't know what was wrong.* ☐ *Now, now, don't get your back up. I didn't mean any harm.*

get someone's **drift** *Fig.* to understand what someone is saying or implying. (Akin to **if you get my drift.**) ☐ *I don't want to hear anymore about her or you. Do you get my drift?*

get someone's **eye** Go to **catch** someone's **eye.**

get someone's **goat** *Fig.* to irritate someone; to annoy and arouse someone to anger. ☐ *I'm sorry. I didn't mean to get your goat.* ☐ *Jean got Sally's goat and Sally made quite a fuss about it.*

get someone's **hackles up** Go to **get** someone's **dander up.**

get someone's **Irish up** Go to **get** someone's **dander up.**

get someone **through** something and **get** someone **through 1.** *Lit.* to manage to help someone move through some kind of barrier or tight opening. ☐ *I will do what I can to get you through the front office. From then on, it's up to you.* ☐ *The first opening is tight. I can help you get through, but not beyond that.* **2.** *Fig.* to help someone survive some ordeal. ☐ *The medication got her through the pain of the surgery.* ☐ *We will get you through while you recover. Don't worry.*

get someone **through (to** someone or something**)** to manage to get something to someone or some place. ☐ *Can I get a message through to Rome?* ☐ *I hope Bob can get word through to his cousin.*

get someone **up** to wake someone up; to get someone out of bed. ☐ *I've got to get John up, or he will be late for work.* ☐ *Can you get yourself up, or should I call you?*

get someone **up (for** something**)** to get someone into peak condition for something; to prepare someone for something. ☐ *I hope we can get Walter up for the race.* ☐ *Sharon was not quite prepared for the race, and the trainer did everything possible to get her up.*

get something and **get it 1.** to receive punishment. ☐ *Bill broke the window, and he's really going to get it.* ☐ *John got it for arriving late at school.* **2.** to receive the meaning of a joke; to understand a joke. ☐ *John told a joke, but I didn't get it.* ☐ *Bob laughed very hard, but Mary didn't get it.*

get something **across (to** someone**)** Go to **put** something **across (to** someone**).**

get something **down**† **1.** to manage to swallow something, especially something large or unpleasant. ☐ *The pill was huge, but I got it down.* ☐ *I get down all the pills despite their size.* ☐ *It was the worst food I have ever had, but I got it down somehow.* **2.** Go to next.

get something **down (in black and white)** and **get** something **down (on paper); get** something **down**† *Fig.* to record some important information in writing. (Alludes to the black of ink and the white of paper.) ☐ *Be sure to get his statement down in black and white.* ☐ *I'm glad we have agreed on a price. I want to get it down in black and white.* ☐ *Get down every word of it!* ☐ *This is important. Please get it down on paper.*

get something **down (on paper)** Go to previous.

get something **for** an amount of money to buy something for a certain amount of money. (See also **get** an amount of money **for** something.) ☐ *I got my car for only $1500.* ☐ *She got her dinner for a song.*

get something **for** someone to obtain something for the use or benefit of someone. ☐ *I will get a new book for you. Sorry I messed the old one up.* ☐ *Would you get a glass of water for me?*

get something **for** something to obtain a part or attachment for an object. ☐ *I need to get a part for the vacuum cleaner.* ☐ *Would you please get a bulb for my flashlight?*

get something **from** someone or something **1.** to receive something from someone or something. ☐ *I got this belt from my aunt for my birthday.* ☐ *I got a letter from the bank about the loan we applied for.* **2.** to contract a disease from someone or something. ☐ *I got chicken pox from my son.* ☐ *I probably got my cold from walking in the rain.*

get something **going with** someone to start a romance or affair with someone. ☐ *Todd got something going with Amy, and they both look pretty happy.* ☐ *I want to get something going with Chuck.*

get something **home to** someone or something to carry something home [quickly] to someone or something. ☐ *I have to get this pizza home to my parents before it gets cold.* ☐ *Please get this ice cream home to the refrigerator.*

get something **into a mess** to cause something to become messy or untidy; to cause something to become unmanageable. ☐ *When he made the spaghetti sauce, he got the kitchen into a real mess.* ☐ *You have got these accounts into a mess!*

get something **in(to)** someone to make something enter someone or something. ☐ *Get that morphine into her before she goes into shock.* ☐ *Let's get some food into him. He looks starved.*

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get something **into** someone's **thick head** Go to **get** something **through** someone's **thick skull.**

get something **in(to)** something to manage to put something into something. □ *I got the notice into tomorrow's newspaper.* □ *I will get the replacement battery into the car right away.*

get something **off†** Go to **get** something **off (to** someone or something**).**

get something **off** one's **chest** to unburden oneself; to confess something; to criticize or make a personal complaint to someone. □ *You will feel better if you get it off your chest.* □ *I have to get this off my chest. I'm tired of your rudeness to me!*

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get something **off the ground 1.** *Lit.* to get something into the air. □ *I'll announce the weather to the passengers as soon as we get the plane off the ground.* □ *I hope they get this plane off the ground soon.* **2.** *Fig.* to get something started. (Alludes to an airplane beginning a flight.) □ *When we get this event off the ground we can relax.* □ *It is my job to get the celebration plans off the ground.*

get something **off (to** someone or something**)** and **get** something **off†** to send something to someone or something. □ *I have to get a letter off to Aunt Mary.* □ *Did you get off all your packages?*

get something **out† 1.** *Lit.* to remove or extricate something. □ *Please help me get this splinter out.* □ *Would you help me get out this splinter?* □ *The tooth was gotten out without much difficulty.* **2.** *Fig.* to manage to get something said. □ *He tried to say it before he died, but he couldn't get it out.* □ *I had my mouth full and couldn't get out the words.*

get something **out of** one's **system 1.** *Lit.* to get something like food or medicine out of one's body, usually through natural elimination. □ *He'll be more active once he gets the medicine out of his system.* □ *My baby, Mary, ate applesauce and has been crying for three hours. She'll stop when she gets the applesauce out of her system.* **2.** *Fig.* to be rid of the desire to do something; to do something that you have been wanting to do so that you aren't bothered by wanting to do it anymore. □ *I bought a new car. I've been wanting to for a long time. I'm glad I finally got that out of my system.* □ *I can't get it out of my system! I want to go back to school and earn a degree.* **3.** *Fig.* to do so much of something that one does not want or need to do it anymore. □ *I got riding roller coasters out of my system when I was young.*

get something **out of** someone to cause or force someone to give specific information. □ *We will get the truth out of her yet.* □ *The detective couldn't get anything out of the suspect.* □ *They got a confession out of him by beating him.*

get something **out (of** someone or something**)** to remove something from someone or something. (See also **get** something **out of someone; get** something **out of** something.) □ *He probably will be okay when they get the tumor out of him.* □ *Please get that dog out of the living room.*

get something **out of** something to get some kind of benefit from something. □ *I didn't get anything out of the lecture.* □ *I'm always able to get something helpful out of our conversations.*

get something **over (to** someone**) 1.** to deliver something to someone. □ *Get these papers over to Mr. Wilson's office right away.* □ *He needs it now, so try to get it over as soon as you can.* **2.** to make someone understand something; to succeed in explaining something to someone. □ *I finally got the basic concepts of trigonometry over to him.* □ *He tries to understand what I'm talking about, but I can't get it over.*

get something **past (**someone or something**) 1.** *Lit.* to move something around or ahead of someone or something that is in the way. □ *Let's get the piano past the bump in the floor, then we'll figure out how to move it farther.* □ *See if you can get the ball past their goalie by shooting high.* **2.** *Fig.* to get someone or a group to approve something; to work something through a bureaucracy. □ *Do you think we can get this past the censors?* □ *I will never get this size increase past the board.*

get something **straight** *Fig.* to understand something clearly. □ *Now get this straight. You're going to fail history.* □ *Let me get this straight. I'm supposed to go there in the morning?*

get something **straight from the horse's mouth** *Prov.* to get information from the person most directly involved or best informed. □ *Jill: Sue is going to have a baby. Jane: Who told you that? Jill: I got it straight from the horse's mouth.* □ *There's a rumor that Randolph is moving to Alaska, but I won't believe it until I get it straight from the horse's mouth.*

get something **through** someone's **thick skull** and **get** something **into** someone's **thick head** *Fig.* to manage to get someone, including oneself, to understand something. □ *He can't seem to get it through his thick skull that he has to study to pass the exam.* □ *If I could get this into my thick head once, I'd remember it.*

get something **to** someone to have something delivered or transported to someone. □ *Will you please get this to Joe Wilson today?* □ *I'll try to get it to you by the end of the day.*

get something **together (for a** particular time**)** to arrange a party or other gathering for a certain time. (Fixed order.) □ *I'll try to get a meeting together for Friday afternoon.* □ *I'm sure we can get something together.*

get something **up†** to organize, plan, and assemble something. □ *Let's get a team up and enter the tournament.* □ *I think we can get up a team quite easily.*

get something **wrapped up** Go to **sewed up.**

get started on something to begin doing something; to take the first steps to do something. □ *When do we get started on this project?* □ *I want to get started on this right away.*

get the ball rolling and **set the ball rolling; start the ball rolling** *Fig.* to get a process started. (See also **keep the ball rolling.**) □ *If I could just get the ball rolling, then other people would help.* □ *Who else would start the ball rolling?* □ *I had the ball rolling, but no one helped me with the project.*

get the courage up† (to do something**)** Go to **get enough nerve up† (to** do something**).**

get the draw on someone *Fig.* to be faster than one's opponent in a fight. (Alludes originally to an Old West gunfight.) □ *The sheriff got the draw on Arizona Slim and shot him in the arm.* □ *Bill's competitor got the draw on*

him. She was the first one in town to start selling those popular new shoes.

get the drift of something *Fig.* to understand the general idea of something. □ *I knew enough German to get the drift of this article.* □ *I don't get the drift of what you're trying to tell me.*

get the drop on someone **1.** *Sl.* [for person A] to manage to get a gun aimed at person B before person B can aim back at person A. (The gun is then "dropped" by person B.) □ *Fred got the drop on Wilbur in a flash.* □ *Wilbur was too stoned to get the drop on Fred.* **2.** *Sl.* to succeed in getting an advantage over someone. □ *I guess I got the drop on you because I was early.* □ *I got the drop on almost everybody by sending in my registration by e-mail.*

get the facts straight and **have the facts straight** *Fig.* to have an understanding of the real facts. □ *Ask a lot of questions and get all of your facts straight.* □ *Please be sure you have the facts straight before you make a decision.*

get the final word Go to the last word.

get the gate *Inf.* to be sent away; to be rejected. □ *I thought he liked me, but I got the gate.* □ *I was afraid I'd get the gate, and I was right.*

get the go-by *Inf.* to be ignored or passed by. □ *It was my turn, but I got the go-by.* □ *Tom stood on the road for fifteen minutes trying to get a ride, but all he could get was the go-by.*

get the hell out (of here) *Inf.* to depart as rapidly as possible. □ *Time for us all to get the hell out of here, I think. The cafe is closing now.* □ *He got the hell out before he was fired.*

get the kinks (ironed) out *Fig.* to fix a problem associated with something. □ *The actors had to get the kinks out before they were ready to present the play to an audience.* □ *That'll be a right nice car, when you get the kinks ironed out in the engine.*

get the lead out and **shake the lead out** *Inf.* to hurry; to move faster. (This originally refers to getting lead weights (used in exercise) off so you can move faster.) □ *Come on, you guys. Get the lead out!* □ *If you're going to sell cars, you're going to have to shake the lead out.*

Get the message? and **Get the picture?** *Inf.* Do you understand?; Are you able to figure out what is meant? (See also (Do you) get my drift?) □ *Things are tough around here, and we need everyone's cooperation. Get the picture?* □ *We don't need lazy people around here. Get the message?*

get the most out of someone or something to achieve the greatest output of work, effort, production, etc., out of someone or something. □ *I do what I can to get the most out of life.* □ *I try to get the most out of my employees.*

Get the picture? Go to Get the message?

get the point (of something**)** to understand the purpose, intention, or central idea of something. □ *I wish he would stop telling jokes and get to the point of his speech.*

get the shaft *Sl.* to be cheated; to be taken advantage of; to be mistreated. (See also give someone the shaft.) □ *Why do I get the shaft when I did nothing wrong?*

get the show on the road and **get this show on the road** *Fig.* to get (something) started. □ *Let's get started! Get the show on the road!* □ *Get this show on the road. We don't have all day.*

get the spunk up† (to do something**)** Go to get enough nerve up† (to do something).

get the word *Fig.* to receive an explanation; to receive the final and authoritative explanation. □ *I'm sorry, I didn't get the word. I didn't know the matter had been settled.* □ *Now that I have gotten the word, I can be more effective in answering questions.*

get the wrinkles out (of something**)** **1.** *Lit.* to remove the wrinkles from fabric by ironing or flattening in some way. □ *This has been packed in my suitcase for a week, and I know I'll never be able to get the wrinkles out of it.* **2.** *Fig.* to eliminate some initial, minor problems with an invention, a procedure, a computer program, or a mechanical device. □ *I need more time working with this system to get the wrinkles out.*

get through (something**)** **1.** *Lit.* to penetrate something. □ *We couldn't get through the hard concrete with a drill, so we will have to blast.* □ *The hardest drill bit we have couldn't get through.* **2.** *Fig.* to complete something; to manage to finish something. □ *I can't wait till I get through school.* □ *I'll get through college in five years instead of four.* **3.** *Fig.* to survive something; to go through something. □ *This is a busy day. I don't know how I'll get through it.* □ *Sally hopes to get through college while still working full-time and being a mother.*

get through (to someone**)** **1.** *Lit.* to reach someone; to manage to communicate to someone. □ *I called her on the telephone time after time, but I couldn't get through to her.* □ *I tried every kind of communication, but I couldn't get through.* **2.** *Lit.* to pass through (something) to reach someone. □ *The crowd was so thick that I couldn't get through to him.* □ *I couldn't get through security without taking off my shoes and being searched.* **3.** *Fig.* to make someone understand something; to get something through someone's thick skull. □ *Why don't you try to understand me? What do I have to do to get through to you?* □ *Can anybody get through, or are you just stubborn?*

get through (to something**)** to make contact by radio or telephone with a company, organization, or group. □ *I could not get through to the police because the telephone line was down.* □ *Harry couldn't get through to his office.*

get through (with someone or something**)** **1.** to manage to transport someone or something through difficulties or barriers. □ *Customs was a mess, but we got through with all our baggage in only twenty minutes.* □ *I got through with my aged father without any trouble.* **2.** Go to through with someone or something.

get to first base (with someone or something**)** and **reach first base (with** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to make a major advance with someone or something. □ *I wish I could get to first base with this business deal.* □ *John adores Sally, but he can't even reach first base with her. She won't even speak to him.*

get to one's **feet** *Fig.* to stand up. □ *On a signal from the teacher, the students got to their feet.* □ *I was so weak, I could hardly get to my feet.*

get to someone **1.** *Lit.* to manage to locate and meet someone; to manage to communicate with someone. (See also

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get to something.) ☐ *I got to her on the telephone and told her what to do.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone or something] to annoy someone. ☐ *The whole business began to get to me after a while.* ☐ *Her high-pitched voice got to me after a while.* **3.** *Fig.* [for someone or something] to please or entice someone. ☐ *Lovely flowers and things like that get to me.* ☐ *Sad music gets to me and makes me cry.*

get to something **1.** *Lit.* to reach something physically. (See also **get to** someone.) ☐ *I couldn't get to the telephone in time.* ☐ *I got to him just in time to help him.* **2.** *Fig.* to arrive at a topic of discussion. ☐ *Money? We will get to that in a minute.* ☐ *We will get to the question of where your office will be after we discuss whether you are hired or not.* **3.** *Fig.* to start on [doing] something; to begin doing something. ☐ *I'll get to it as soon as possible.* ☐ *Have you managed to get to my repair job yet?* ☐ *Your complaining is getting to bother me.*

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get to the bottom of something *Fig.* to get an understanding of the causes of something. ☐ *We must get to the bottom of this problem immediately.* ☐ *There is clearly something wrong here, and I want to get to the bottom of it.*

get to the point (of something**)** *Fig.* to arrive at a discussion or explanation of the purpose of something. ☐ *Please get to the point of all this.* ☐ *Will you kindly get to the point?*

get to the top (of something**) 1.** *Lit.* to get to the highest point of something. ☐ *We finally got to the top of the mountain and planted the flag.* ☐ *We had tried twice before to get to the top.* **2.** *Fig.* to work up to the highest status in something. ☐ *She got to the top of her field in a very short time.* ☐ *It takes hard work to get to the top.*

get together (with someone**) (on** someone or something**) 1.** and **get together (with** someone**) (about** someone or something**)** *Lit.* to meet with someone about someone or something. ☐ *I would like to get together with you on this Wilson matter. What would be a good time for you?* ☐ *Let's get together on Fred and his department at our next meeting.* **2.** *Fig.* to agree with someone about someone or something. ☐ *I would like to get together with you on this, but we are still nowhere near agreement.* ☐ *I want to get together on price with the suppliers.*

get tough (with someone**)** to become firm with someone; to use physical force against someone. ☐ *The teacher had to get tough with the class because the students were acting badly.* ☐ *I've tried nicely to get you to behave, but it looks like I'll have to get tough and really punish you.*

get under someone's **skin** *Fig.* to bother or irritate someone. ☐ *John is so annoying. He really gets under my skin.* ☐ *I know he's bothersome, but don't let him get under your skin.*

get under something to get beneath something. ☐ *The cat came in and got under the sofa where she couldn't be seen.* ☐ *Why don't you get under the table where Billy won't find you?*

get up to wake up and get out of bed. ☐ *What time do you usually get up?* ☐ *I get up when I have to.*

get up a (full) head of steam 1. *Lit.* [for a steam engine] to build steam pressure in order to start operating. ☐ *It took nearly thirty minutes to get up a full head of steam so that the locomotive could start moving.* **2.** *Fig.* to develop sufficient energy, enthusiasm, commitment, or determination to undertake something. ☐ *It's nearly noon before I can get up a full head of steam and accomplish something.*

get up a thirst and **work up a thirst** *Fig.* to do something that will make one thirsty. (Fixed order.) ☐ *Jogging makes me work up a thirst.* ☐ *Doing this kind of work always gets up a thirst with me.*

get up against someone or something to press close against someone or something. ☐ *I got up against the wall, out of the way.* ☐ *The child got up against his father to stay warm.*

get up an appetite *Fig.* to do something to make one very hungry. (Usually in this order.) ☐ *He can't seem to get up an appetite these days.* ☐ *Whenever I jog, I really get up an appetite.*

get up (from something**)** to go to a standing position from a lower position. ☐ *She got up from the chair and walked to the door.* ☐ *I don't want to get up from this hammock unless I just have to.*

get up (off (of) something**)** to rise up and get off something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Please get up off the sofa. I have to turn the cushions over.* ☐ *Get up off of it!*

get up on one's **hind legs** *Fig.* to get angry and assertive. (Alludes to the action of a horse when it is excited or frightened.) ☐ *She got up on her hind legs and told them all to go to blazes.* ☐ *She has a tendency to get up on her hind legs and tell people off.*

get up on the wrong side of bed and **get out of the wrong side of bed** *Fig.* to seem grouchy on a particular day. ☐ *Did you get out of the wrong side of bed this morning? You are a real grouch.*

get up something to manage to climb something. ☐ *I was so tired I couldn't get up the stairs.* ☐ *The entire group was able to get up the side of the mountain.*

get up to something **1.** *Lit.* to climb up to something, at a certain height or level. ☐ *We finally got up to the top.* ☐ *How long will it take to get up to the tenth floor?* **2.** *Fig.* to arrive as far as something. ☐ *We got up to the halfway point and stopped.* ☐ *Will I ever get up to the finish line? I'm so tired of running!*

get well to become healthy again. ☐ *Ann had a cold for a week, and then she got well.* ☐ *Hurry up and get well!*

get wet to become moist or soaked with water. ☐ *Get out of the rain or you'll get wet.* ☐ *Don't get wet, or you'll catch a cold.*

get wind of something and **catch wind of** something *Fig.* to learn of something; to hear about something. ☐ *The police got wind of the illegal drug deal.* ☐ *John caught wind of the gossip being spread about him.*

get with it 1. *Inf.* to modernize one's attitudes and behavior. ☐ *Get with it, Martin. Go out and buy some new clothes!* ☐ *You really have to get with it, Ernie.* **2.** *Inf.* to hurry up and get busy; to be more industrious with something. ☐ *Get with it; we've got a lot to do.* ☐ *Let's get with it. There's a lot of work to be done.*

get with something to become alert. (Often with *it.*) ☐ *Hey, stupid. Get with it!* ☐ *Wake up, Bill. Get with what's going on!*

get with the program *Fig.* follow the rules; do what you are supposed to do. (Implies that there is a clearly known method or "program" that is usually followed.) ☐ *Come on, Mark. Get with the program. Do what you are told.* ☐ *Jane just can't seem to get with the program. She has to do everything her way, right or wrong.*

Get your ass over here! and **Get your buns over here!; Get your butt over here!** *Sl.* Get yourself over here, now! ☐ *Get your butt over here and help me move this trunk.*

Get your buns over here! Go to previous.

Get your head out of the clouds! *Inf.* Stop daydreaming! ☐ *Get your head out of the clouds and watch where you are driving! You're going to kill us all.*

Get your nose out of my business. Go to Mind your own business.

a **ghost of a chance** even the slightest chance. (Usually negative.) ☐ *She can't do it. She doesn't have a ghost of a chance.* ☐ *There is just a ghost of a chance that I'll be there on time.*

giggle at someone or something to snicker or chuckle at someone or something. ☐ *Are you giggling at me?* ☐ *Fran giggled at the antics of the clown.*

gild the lily *Fig.* to add ornament or decoration to something that is pleasing in its original state; to attempt to improve something that is already fine the way it is. (Often refers to flattery or exaggeration.) ☐ *Your house has lovely brickwork. Don't paint it. That would be gilding the lily.* ☐ *Oh, Sally. You're beautiful the way you are. You don't need makeup. You would be gilding the lily.*

Gimme a break! Go to Give me a break!

gird up one's **loins** *Fig.* to get ready, especially for hard work; to prepare oneself (for something). ☐ *Well, I guess I had better gird up my loins and go to work.* ☐ *Somebody has to do something about the problem. Why don't you gird up your loins and do something?*

give a good account of oneself *Fig.* to do (something) well or thoroughly. ☐ *John gave a good account of himself when he gave his speech last night.* ☐ *Mary was not feeling well, and she didn't give a good account of herself in last night's game.*

give a little 1. *Lit.* to give a small amount of something, probably money. ☐ *If everyone will just give a little, we can have enough money to provide a nice Thanksgiving dinner for the needy.* **2.** *Fig.* to move a slight amount. ☐ *When he pressed on the wall, it gave a little where the water had soaked in.* **3.** *Fig.* to yield a little bit on a point to someone. ☐ *She is so stubborn. If she would just give a little, she could get more cooperation from other people.*

give an account of someone or something **(to** someone**)** and **give someone an account of** someone or something to tell a narrative about someone or something to someone. ☐ *You are going to have to give an account of yourself to your parole officer.* ☐ *Please give an account of your day to my secretary.* ☐ *Give me an account of every minute.*

give (an) ear to someone or something and **give** one's **ear to** someone or something *Fig.* to listen to someone or to what someone is saying. (Compare this with get someone's ear.) ☐ *I gave an ear to Mary so she could tell me her problems.* ☐ *She wouldn't give her ear to my story.* ☐ *He gave ear to the man's request.*

give as good as one **gets** *Fig.* to give as much as one receives; to pay someone back in kind. (Usually in the present tense.) ☐ *John can take care of himself in a fight. He can give as good as he gets.* ☐ *Sally usually wins a formal debate. She gives as good as she gets.*

give birth to someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to have a child; [for an animal] to bring forth young. ☐ *She gave birth to a baby girl.* ☐ *The cat gave birth to a large number of adorable kittens.* **2.** *Fig.* to bring forth a new idea, an invention, a nation, etc. ☐ *The company gave birth to a new technology.* ☐ *The basic idea of participatory democracy gave birth to a new nation.*

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give cause for something to serve as a just cause for something; to warrant something. ☐ *Your comments give cause for further investigation.* ☐ *I didn't give cause for you to worry so much.*

give chase (to someone or something**)** to chase someone or something. ☐ *The dogs gave chase to the fox.* ☐ *A mouse ran by, but the cat was too tired to give chase.*

give credence to someone or something to consider someone or something as believable or trustworthy. ☐ *How can you give credence to a person like Henry?* ☐ *I can't give any credence to Donald.* ☐ *He tells lies. Don't give credence to what he says.* ☐ *Please don't give credence to that newspaper article.*

Give credit where credit is due. *Prov.* Acknowledge someone's contribution or ability. ☐ *Jill: Jane, that was a wonderful meal. Jane: I must give credit where credit is due; Alan helped with all of the cooking.* ☐ *Ellen: Roger is pompous, petty, and immature. I think he's completely worthless. Jane: Now, Ellen, give credit where credit is due; he's also extremely smart.*

give currency to something to spread a story around. (With a negative if there is doubt about what is said.) ☐ *I can't give any currency to anything Ralph Jones says.* ☐ *We give no currency to those stories.* ☐ *His actions gave currency to the rumor that he was about to leave.*

give evidence of something to show signs of something; to give proof of something. ☐ *You are going to have to give evidence of your good faith in this matter. A nominal deposit would be fine.* ☐ *She gave evidence of being prepared to go to trial, so we settled the case.*

give forth with something and **give out with** something to say or shout something. ☐ *The kids in the street gave forth with cries of excitement.* ☐ *Walter gave out with a loud whoop when he heard the good news.*

give free rein to someone and **give someone free rein** *Fig.* to allow someone to be completely in charge (of something). (Alludes to loosening the reins of a horse and therefore control.) ☐ *The boss gave the manager free rein with the new project.* ☐ *The principal gave free rein to Mrs. Brown in her classes.*

give ground 1. *Lit.* to retreat, yielding land or territory. ☐ *I approached the barking dog, but it wouldn't give ground.* **2.** *Fig.* to "retreat" from an idea or assertion that one has made. ☐ *When I argue with Mary, she never gives ground.*

Give her the gun. Go to Give it the gun.

give in cave in; to push in. ☐ *The rotting door gave in when we pushed, and we went inside.* ☐ *The wall gave in where I kicked it.*

give in (to someone or something**)** to yield to someone or something; to give up to someone or something. ☐ *He argued and argued and finally gave in to my demands.* ☐ *I thought he'd never give in.*

Give it a rest! *Inf.* Stop talking so much. Give your mouth a rest. (Familiar or rude. Compare this with **Give me a rest!**) ☐ *Mary: So, I really think we need to discuss things more and go over all our differences in detail. Bill: Stop! I've heard enough. Give it a rest! Mary: Oh, am I disturbing you?* ☐ *Tom: Now, I would also like to say something else. Alice: Give it a rest, Tom. We're tired of listening to you.*

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Give it all you've got! *Inf.* Do your very best! ☐ *Go out there and try. Give it all you've got!*

Give it the gun. and **Give her the gun.** *Fig.* to make a motor or engine run faster; to rev up an engine. (The *her* is often pronounced "er.") ☐ *Bill: How fast will this thing go? Bob: I'll give it the gun and see.* ☐ *Hurry up, driver. Give 'er the gun. I've got to get there immediately.*

Give it time. Be patient.; In time, things will change. (Usually said to encourage someone to wait or be patient.) ☐ *Things will get better. Don't worry. Give it time.* ☐ *Of course, things will improve. Give it time.*

give it to someone **(straight)** to tell something to someone clearly and directly. ☐ *Come on, give it to me straight. I want to know exactly what happened.* ☐ *Quit wasting time, and tell me. Give it to me straight.*

Give it up! *Inf.* Stop trying!; You are wasting your time! (Fixed order.) ☐ *Bob: I just can't understand calculus! Bill: Give it up! Get out of that course and get into something less cruel.* ☐ *Tom: I'm just not a very good singer, I guess. Sue: It's no good, Tom. Give it up! Tom: Don't you think I'm doing better, though? Sue: Give it up, Tom!*

Give me a break! and **Gimme a break! 1.** *Inf.* Don't be so harsh to me!; Give me another chance! ☐ *I'm sorry! I'll do better! Give me a break!* ☐ *I was only late once! Give me a break!* **2.** *Inf.* That is enough, you're bothering me!; Stop it! ☐ *Do you have to go on and on? Give me a break!* ☐ *Give me a break, you guys! That's enough of your bickering!* **3.** *Inf.* I don't believe you!; You don't expect anyone to believe that! ☐ *You say a gorilla is loose in the city? Gimme a break!* ☐ *Tom said he was late again because the back stairs caved in. His boss said, "Gimme a break!"*

Give me a call. and **Give me a ring.** Please call me (later) on the telephone. ☐ *Mary: See you later, Fred. Fred: Give me a call if you get a chance.* ☐ *"When you're in town again, Sue, give me a call," said John.* ☐ *Bob: When should we talk about this again? Bill: Next week is soon enough. Give me a ring.*

Give me a chance! 1. Please give me an opportunity to do something! ☐ *Mary: I just know I can do it. Oh, please give me a chance! Sue: All right. Just one more chance.* ☐ *Bob: Do you think you can do it? Jane: Oh, I know I can. Just give me a chance!* **2.** Please give me a fair chance and enough time to complete the task. ☐ *Alice: Come on! I need more time to finish the test. Give me a chance! Teacher: Would another ten minutes help?* ☐ *Bob: You missed that one! Bill: You moved it! There was no way I could hit it. Give me a chance! Hold it still!*

Give me a rest! *Inf.* Stop being such a pest!; Stop bothering me with this problem! (Compare this with **Give it a rest!**) ☐ *"Go away and stop bothering me!" moaned Bob. "Give me a rest!"* ☐ *Bob: I need an answer to this right away! Bill: I just gave you an answer! Bob: That was something different. This is a new question. Bill: Give me a rest! Can't it wait?*

Give me a ring. Go to **Give me a call.**

Give me five! and **Give me (some) skin!; Skin me!; Slip me five!; Slip me some skin!** *Sl.* Slap my hand! (As a greeting or to show joy, etc.) ☐ *"Yo, Tom! Give me five!" shouted Henry, raising his hand.* ☐ *Bob: Hey, man! Skin me! Bill: How you doing, Bob?*

Give my best to someone. and **All the best to** someone. Please convey my good wishes to a particular person. (The *someone* can be a person's name or a pronoun. See also **Say hello to** someone **(for me)**.) ☐ *Alice: Good-bye, Fred. Give my best to your mother. Fred: Sure, Alice. Good-bye.* ☐ *Tom: See you, Bob. Bob: Give my best to Jane. Tom: I sure will. Bye.* ☐ *Bill: Bye, Rachel. All the best to your family. Rachel: Thanks. Bye.*

give of oneself to be generous with one's time and concern. ☐ *Tom is very good with children because he gives of himself.* ☐ *If you want to have more friends, you have to learn to give of yourself.*

give one one's **freedom** to set someone free; to divorce someone. ☐ *Mrs. Brown wanted to give her husband his freedom.* ☐ *Well, Tom, I hate to break it to you this way, but I have decided to give you your freedom.*

give one's **best** Go to **give** something one's **best shot.**

give one's **eyeteeth (for** someone or something**)** Go to **give** one's **right arm (for** someone or something**).**

give (one's**) notice** to formally tell one's employer that one is quitting one's job. ☐ *Did you hear that James is leaving? He gave his notice yesterday.* ☐ *Lisa gave notice today. She got a job offer from another company.*

give one's **right arm (for** someone or something**)** and **give** one's **eyeteeth (for** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to be willing to give something of great value for someone or something. ☐ *I'd give my right arm for a nice cool drink.* ☐ *I'd give my eyeteeth to be there.*

give oneself **airs** Go to **put on airs.**

give oneself **over to** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to surrender to someone or something. ☐ *He went to the station and gave himself over to the police.* ☐ *Max gave himself over to the officer.* **2.** *Fig.* to devote oneself to someone or something. ☐ *Laurie gave herself over to her work and soon forgot her pain.* ☐ *David gave himself over to the religious order.*

give oneself **up (to** someone or something**) 1.** *Lit.* to surrender to someone or something. ☐ *Fran gave herself up to the disease.* ☐ *Walter gave himself up to the police.* **2.** *Fig.* to devote oneself to someone or something; to **give** oneself **over to** someone or something. ☐ *She gave herself up to her children and their care.* ☐ *Fran gave herself up to tennis.* ☐ *Jane refused to give herself up to weight lifting, which is a full-time hobby.*

give out 1. to wear out and stop; to quit operating. ☐ *My old bicycle finally gave out.* ☐ *I think that your shoes are about ready to give out.* **2.** to be depleted. ☐ *The paper napkins gave out, and we had to use paper towels.* ☐ *The eggs gave out, and we had to eat cereal for breakfast for the rest of the camping trip.*

give (out) with something **1.** *Inf.* to give out information. ☐ *Come on, give out with the facts, man.* ☐ *Give with the info. We're in a hurry.* **2.** Go to **give forth with** something.

give rise to something to cause something; to instigate something. ☐ *The attack gave rise to endless arguments.* ☐ *Her ludicrous living gave rise to further speculation as to the source of her money.*

give some thought to something to think about something; to devote some time to thinking about something. ☐ *After I have had time to give some thought to the matter, I will call you.*

give someone **a bang** and **give** someone **a charge; give** someone **a kick** *Fig. Inf.* to give someone a bit of excitement. ☐ *John always gives me a bang.* ☐ *The whole afternoon, with all its silliness, gave me a charge anyway.*

give someone **a blank check** and **give a blank check to** someone **1.** *Lit.* to give someone a signed check that lacks only the amount or payment which can be filled in by anyone. ☐ *Sally sent a blank check to school with Billy to pay for his books.* **2.** *Fig.* to give someone freedom or permission to act as one wishes or thinks necessary. (See also **carte blanche**.) ☐ *He's been given a blank check with regard to reorganizing the workforce.* ☐ *The manager has been given no instructions about how to train the staff. The owner just gave him a blank check.* ☐ *Jean gave the decorator a blank check and said she wanted the whole house done.*

give someone **a blank look** and **give** someone **a blank stare** to look back at someone with a neutral look on one's face. ☐ *After I told her to stop smoking, she just gave me a blank look and kept puffing.*

give someone **a blank stare** Go to previous.

give someone **a buzz** Go to **give** someone **a ring**.

give someone **a call** Go to **give** someone **a ring**.

give someone **a charge** Go to **give** someone **a bang**.

give someone **a crack at** something Go to **a try at** something.

give someone **a dig** *Sl.* to insult someone; to say something which will irritate a person. ☐ *Jane gave Bob a dig about his carelessness with money.* ☐ *The headmaster's daughter gets tired of people giving her digs about favoritism.*

give someone **a (good) bawling out** to bawl someone out; to chastise someone. ☐ *When the teacher caught Billie, he gave him a good bawling out.*

give someone **a kick** Go to **give** someone **a bang**.

give someone **a lift 1.** and **give** someone **a ride** *Fig.* to provide transportation for someone. ☐ *I've got to get into town. Can you give me a lift?* **2.** *Fig.* to raise someone's spirits; to make a person feel better. ☐ *It was a good conversation, and her kind words really gave me a lift.*

give someone **a line** and **feed** someone **a line** to lead someone on; to deceive someone with false talk. ☐ *Don't pay any attention to John. He gives everybody a line.* ☐ *He's always feeding us a line.*

give someone **a pain** *Fig.* to annoy or bother someone. ☐ *Please don't give me a pain. I've had a hard day.* ☐ *You give me a pain!* ☐ *She's such a pest. She really gives me a pain.*

give someone **a pat on the back** Go to **pat** someone **on the back**.

give someone **a piece of** one's **mind** *Fig.* to bawl someone out; to **tell** someone **off**. ☐ *I've had enough from John. I'm going to give him a piece of my mind.* ☐ *Sally, stop it, or I'll give you a piece of my mind.*

give someone **a red face** *Fig.* to make someone visibly embarrassed. ☐ *We really gave him a red face when we caught him eavesdropping.* ☐ *His error gave him a very red face.*

give someone **a ride** Go to **give** someone **a lift**.

give someone **a ring** and **give** someone **a buzz; give** someone **a call** *Fig.* to call someone on the telephone. ☐ *Nice talking to you. Give me a ring sometime.* ☐ *Give me a buzz when you're in town.*

give someone **a whack at** something Go to **a try at** something.

Give someone **an inch and** he'll **take a mile.** and **Give** someone **an inch and** he'll **take a yard.** *Prov.* Be generous to someone and the person will demand even more. (Describes someone who will take advantage of you if you are even a little kind to him or her.) ☐ *If you let Mark borrow your tools for this weekend, he'll wind up keeping them for years. Give him an inch and he'll take a mile.*

Give someone **an inch and** he'll **take a yard.** Go to previous.

give someone **away (to** someone**) 1.** *Fig.* [for the bride's father] to give the bride away to the groom. (Customarily done just prior to the actual marriage ceremony.) ☐ *Mr. Franklin gave Amy away to Terry just as he had done in the rehearsal.* ☐ *He was reluctant to give his daughter away.* **2.** *Fig.* to reveal something secret about someone to someone else. ☐ *Please don't give me away. I don't want anyone to know my plans.* ☐ *Alice did everything she could to keep from giving herself away.*

Give someone **enough rope and** he'll **hang** himself. *Prov.* If you give someone that you suspect of bad behavior the freedom to behave badly, eventually he or she will be caught and punished. ☐ *Jill: I think Matilda's been stealing things out of my desk. Should I tell the boss? Jane: No; give her enough rope and she'll hang herself. One of these days she'll steal something important, the boss will find out for himself, and he'll fire her.*

give someone **Hail Columbia** *Inf.* to scold someone severely. ☐ *The teacher gave her students Hail Columbia over their poor test scores.* ☐ *If Miss Ellen finds out I broke her window, she'll give me Hail Columbia for sure!*

give someone **no quarter** Go to **grant** someone **no quarter**.

give someone **odds that...** to propose a sham bet to someone, the implication being that even at favorable odds the outcome will defy the odds. (Often with a negative.) ☐ *I'll give you odds that you won't be able to order a decent steak at this restaurant.*

give someone or something **a wide berth** *Fig.* to keep a reasonable distance from someone or something; to **steer clear (of** someone or something**)**. (Originally referred to sailing ships.) ☐ *The dog we are approaching is very mean. Better give it a wide berth.* ☐ *Give Mary a wide berth. She's in a very bad mood.*

give someone or something **away†** to reveal a secret about someone or something. ☐ *I thought no one knew where I was, but my loud breathing gave me away.* ☐ *We know that Billy ate the cherry pie. The cherry juice on his shirt gave him away.* ☐ *I had planned a surprise, but John gave away my secret.*

give someone or something **back† (to** someone or something**)** to return someone or something to someone or something. ☐ *Please give it back to me.* ☐ *You took my lunch away from me. You had better give it back.* ☐ *Give back the book right now!*

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give someone or something **up† (for lost)** to abandon someone or something as being lost; to quit looking for someone or something that is lost. ☐ *After a week we had given the cat up for lost when suddenly she appeared.* ☐ *We gave up the cat for lost.*

give someone or something **up† (to** someone**)** to hand someone or something over to someone; to relinquish claims on someone or something in favor of someone else. ☐ *We had to give the money we found up to the police.* ☐ *We gave up the money to the police.*

give someone **pause (for thought)** *Fig.* to cause someone to stop and think. ☐ *When I see a golden sunrise, it gives me pause for thought.* ☐ *Witnessing an accident is likely to give all of us pause.*

give someone **some lip** *Inf.* to speak rudely or disrespectfully to someone; to sass someone. ☐ *Billy gave me some lip, so I whupped him.* ☐ *Jane is always giving the teacher some lip.*

give someone **some skin** *Sl.* [for two people] to touch two hands together in a special greeting, like a handshake. (One hand may be slapped down on top of the other, or they may be slapped together palm to palm with the arms held vertically. Usually said as a command.) ☐ *Hey, Bob, give me some skin!* ☐ *Come over here, you guys. I want you to meet my brother and give him some skin!*

give someone **some sugar** *Rur.* to give someone a kiss. ☐ *Come here, honey, and give me some sugar.* ☐ *"Give me some sugar!" Grandma said when she saw me.*

give someone **static** *Fig.* to argue with someone; to give someone back talk. ☐ *I want you to do it and do it now! Don't give me any static!*

give someone **the eye** *Fig.* to look at someone in a way that communicates romantic interest. ☐ *Ann gave John the eye. It really surprised him.* ☐ *Tom kept giving Sally the eye. She finally got disgusted and left.*

give someone **the finger 1.** *Fig.* to display the middle finger upright as a sign of derision. (The gesture is derisive and offensive. See also **flip** someone **off, flip** someone **the bird.**) ☐ *Did one of you guys give Ted the finger?* ☐ *Somebody gave the cop the finger.* **2.** *Fig. Inf.* to mistreat someone; to insult someone. ☐ *You've been giving me the finger ever since I started working here. What's wrong?* ☐ *I'm tired of everybody giving me the finger around here just because I'm new.*

give someone **the gate** *Sl.* to get rid of someone. ☐ *The chick was a pest, so I gave her the gate.* ☐ *He threatened to give me the gate, so I left.*

give someone **the go-by** to bypass someone; to ignore someone. ☐ *Gert gave us all the go-by when she took up with that rich boyfriend.* ☐ *I didn't mean to give you the go-by. I'm preoccupied, that's all.*

give someone **the raspberry** *Inf.* to make a rude noise with the lips at someone. ☐ *The audience gave him the raspberry, which gave him some second thoughts about his choice of career.* ☐ *Even after his grandstand play, they gave him the raspberry.*

give someone **the shaft** *Sl.* to cheat or deceive someone; to mistreat someone. (See also **get the shaft**.) ☐ *The boss really gave Wally the shaft.* ☐ *Somebody always gives me the shaft.*

give someone **the shirt off** one's **back** *Fig.* to give anything that is asked for, no matter the sacrifice required. ☐ *Tom would give any of his old army buddies the shirt off his back.* ☐ *You can always count on Mark when you're in trouble; he'd give you the shirt off his back.*

give someone **the slip** *Sl.* to escape from a pursuer. ☐ *We were on his tail until he gave us the slip.* ☐ *I can give her the slip in no time at all.*

give someone **tit for tat** *Fig.* to give someone something equal to what was given you; to exchange a series of very similar things, one by one, with someone. ☐ *They gave me the same kind of difficulty that I gave them. They gave me tit for tat.* ☐ *He punched me, so I punched him. Every time he hit me, I hit him. I just gave him tit for tat.*

give someone **to understand** something to explain something to someone; to imply something to someone. (Possibly misleading someone, accidentally or intentionally. See also **given to understand**.) ☐ *Mr. Smith gave Sally to understand that she should be home by midnight.* ☐ *The mayor gave the citizens to understand that there would be no tax increase. He didn't promise, though.*

give someone **up† for dead 1.** *Lit.* to give up hope for someone who is dying; to abandon a dying person as already dead. ☐ *The cowboys gave up their comrade for dead and rode off.* ☐ *We gave up the poor old man for dead and went to telephone the police.* **2.** *Fig.* to abandon hope for someone to appear or arrive. ☐ *We were delighted to see you. We had almost given you up for dead.* ☐ *After an hour, they gave up their guest for dead.*

give something **a go** Go to **give** something **a try**.

give something **a shot** Go to next.

give something **a try** and **give** something **a go; give** something **a whirl; give** something **a shot** to make a try at something. ☐ *Why don't you give it a go and see if you like it?*

give something **a whirl** Go to previous.

give something **away† (to** someone**) 1.** to donate to, or bestow something upon, someone. ☐ *I gave the old clothing away to Tom.* ☐ *I gave away my coat to Tom.* **2.** to tell a secret to someone. ☐ *Please don't give the surprise away to anyone.* ☐ *Don't give away my secret.* **3.** to reveal the

answer to a question, riddle, or problem to someone. ☐ *Don't give the answer away to them!* ☐ *Don't give away the answer!*

give something **back**† **(to** someone**) (with interest) 1.** *Lit.* to return money to someone with an additional amount for interest. ☐ *You are going to have to give that money back to me with interest.* ☐ *Please give back the proper amount...with interest!* **2.** *Fig.* to return something to someone in excess of what was received. ☐ *We will give back all your kindness to you with interest.* ☐ *We will give it all back with interest.*

give something **for** something to exchange something for something. ☐ *I will give two brownies for that piece of cake in your lunch box.* ☐ *Jed gave two pigs for an old motorcycle.*

give something **off**† to release something, such as smoke, a noise, an odor, fragrance, etc. ☐ *The little animal gave a foul smell off.* ☐ *The flower gave off its heavy perfume at dusk.*

give something one's **best shot** and **give** one's **best** *Fig.* to give a task one's best effort. ☐ *I gave the project my best shot.* ☐ *Sure, try it. Give it your best!*

give something **out**† **1.** *Lit.* to distribute something; to pass something out. ☐ *The teacher gave the test papers out.* ☐ *The teacher gave out the papers.* **2.** *Fig.* to make something known to the public. ☐ *When will you give the announcement out?* ☐ *The president gave out the news that the hostages had been released.*

give something **over (to** someone or something**)** to hand something over to someone or something. ☐ *Please give the money over to Sherri, who handles the accounts.* ☐ *She is waiting at the front office. Just go there and give it over.*

give something **to** someone to bestow something, such as a gift, on someone. ☐ *Please give this to Sally Wilson.* ☐ *Who gave this book to me? I want to thank whoever it was.*

give something **under (the) threat of** something to give something only because one is threatened. ☐ *He gave the money under threat of exposure. I think that is blackmail.* ☐ *You are asked to give your testimony under the threat of being jailed if you don't.*

give something **up**† **1.** to forsake something; to stop using or eating something. ☐ *I gave coffee up because of the caffeine.* ☐ *They advised me to give up sugar in all forms.* **2.** to quit doing something. ☐ *Oh, give it up! You're not getting anywhere.* ☐ *You should give up smoking.*

give teeth to something and **put teeth in(to)** something *Fig.* to make something powerful; to give something a real effect. ☐ *The severe penalty really gives teeth to the law.* ☐ *Strong enforcement puts teeth in the regulation.*

give the bride away Go to **give** someone **away (to** someone**)**.

give the devil her due Go to next.

give the devil his due and **give the devil her due** *Fig.* to give your foe proper credit (for something). (This usually refers to a person who has been evil—like the devil.) ☐ *She's very messy in the kitchen, but I have to give the devil her due. She bakes a terrific cherry pie.* ☐ *John is a bit too nosy, but he keeps his yard clean and is a kind neighbor. I'll give the devil his due.*

give the game away *Fig.* to reveal a plan or strategy. ☐ *Now, all of you have to keep quiet. Please don't give the game away.* ☐ *If you keep giving out hints, you'll give the game away.*

give the lie to something *Fig.* to show that something is a lie. ☐ *The evidence gives the lie to your testimony.* ☐ *Your own admission of your part in the conspiracy gives the lie to your earlier testimony.*

give up to quit; to quit trying. ☐ *I give up! I won't press this further.* ☐ *Are you going to give up or keep fighting?*

give up (all) hope to stop hoping for something. (Fixed order.) ☐ *Don't give up hope. There's always a chance.* ☐ *We had given up all hope when a miracle happened.*

give up (on someone or something**)** to give up trying to do something with someone or something, such as being friendly, giving advice, managing, etc. ☐ *I gave up on jogging. My knees went bad.* ☐ *Gloria tried to be friendly with Kelly, but finally gave up.*

give up the fight and **give up the struggle 1.** *Lit.* to quit fighting; to stop trying to do something. ☐ *Don't give up the fight. Keep trying.* ☐ *Mary refused to give up the struggle.* **2.** *Fig.* to give up and die. ☐ *At the end of months of pain, she gave up the fight.* ☐ *In the end, he lost interest in life and just gave up the struggle.*

give up the ghost *Euph.* to die. (Fixed order. Often used to describe machines breaking down.) ☐ *The old man gave up the ghost.* ☐ *My poor old car finally gave up the ghost.*

give up the struggle Go to **give up the fight**.

Give us the tools, and we will finish the job. *Prov.* A reply to someone who wants you to do a task for which you lack the equipment. ☐ *How am I supposed to wash the upstairs windows without a ladder? Give us the tools, and we will finish the job!*

give vent to something *Fig.* to express anger. (The *something* is usually anger, ire, irritation, etc.) ☐ *John gave vent to his anger by yelling at Sally.* ☐ *Bill couldn't give vent to his frustration because he had been warned to keep quiet.*

give voice to something *Fig.* to express a feeling or an opinion in words; to speak out about something. ☐ *The bird gave voice to its joy in the golden sunshine.* ☐ *The protestors gave voice to their anger at Congress.*

give way to someone or something to yield to someone or something; to give preference to someone or something. ☐ *The cars gave way to the pedestrians.* ☐ *The motorboats have to give way to the sailboats.*

give weight to something *Fig.* to attach importance to something. ☐ *I give a lot of weight to your opinion.* ☐ *Kelly gave no weight at all to the comments by Betty.*

give with something *Inf.* to give something to someone; to tell something to someone. ☐ *Come on! Give with the money!* ☐ *You had better give with the information if you know what's good for you.*

given to doing something likely to do something; inclined to do something habitually. ☐ *Mary is given to singing in the shower.* ☐ *Bob is given to shouting when things don't go his way.*

given to understand [of someone] made to believe [something]. (See also **give** someone **to understand**.) ☐ *They were given to understand that there would be no tax*

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increase, but after the election taxes went up. ☐ *She was given to understand that she had to be home by midnight.*

***the glad hand** *Fig.* an overly friendly welcome; a symbol of insincere attention. (*Typically: **get ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Whenever I go into that store, I get the glad hand.* ☐ *I hate to go to a party and get the glad hand.*

glance around (some place**)** to look quickly around some place. ☐ *He glanced around the room, looking for his favorite cap.* ☐ *Mary glanced around, looking for her friend.*

glance at someone or something to look quickly at someone or something. ☐ *Sharon glanced at Todd to see if he looked as if he was ready to go.* ☐ *I glanced at my watch and realized how long all this had taken.*

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glance back (at someone**) 1.** to look quickly at someone who is looking at you. ☐ *He glanced back at Mary, so he could remember her smile.* ☐ *She hoped he would notice her but he never even glanced back.* **2.** to look quickly at someone who is behind you. ☐ *Dan glanced back at the man chasing him and ran on even faster.* ☐ *He glanced back and ran faster.*

glance down (at something**)** to look quickly downward at something. ☐ *Sherri glanced down at her watch and then pressed on the accelerator.* ☐ *She glanced down and hurried off.*

glance off (someone or something**)** to bounce off someone or something. ☐ *The bullet glanced off the huge boulder.* ☐ *The baseball glanced off of Tom and left a bruise on his side where it had touched.*

glance over someone or something to examine someone or something very quickly. ☐ *I only glanced over the papers. They look okay to me.* ☐ *The doctor glanced over the injured woman and called for an ambulance.*

glance through something to look quickly at the contents of something. ☐ *I glanced through the manuscript, and I don't think it is ready yet.* ☐ *Would you glance through this report when you have a moment?*

glare at someone or something to scowl at someone or something. ☐ *Don't glare at me!* ☐ *I glared at the cat and thought mean thoughts.*

glare down on someone or something **1.** [for someone] to scowl down at someone or something. ☐ *The judge glared down on the accused.* ☐ *I glared down on the cat, which ignored me, as usual.* **2.** [for the sun] to burn down brightly on someone or something. ☐ *The sun glared down on the beach and made the sand hot to the touch.* ☐ *The bright sun glared down on the desert rocks.*

glass something **in†** to enclose something, such as a porch, in glass. ☐ *I want to glass this porch in, so we can use it in the winter.* ☐ *We glassed in our porch last year.*

glaze over 1. *Lit.* [for something] to be covered over with a coat of something cloudy or ice. ☐ *The roads glazed over and became very dangerous.* ☐ *The street is glazed over badly.* **2.** *Fig.* [for one's eyes] to assume a dull, bored appearance, signifying an inability to concentrate or a lack of sleep. ☐ *My eyes glaze over when I hear all those statistics.*

gleam with something to sparkle or shine with something. ☐ *The crystal goblets gleamed with the sparkling candlelight.* ☐ *The glass gleamed with a bright reflection.*

glean something **from** something **1.** *Lit.* to gather the leftovers of something from something; to gather the ears of grain left in a field after a harvest. ☐ *The poor people gleaned their entire living from what was left in the fields.* ☐ *We will have to go out and glean something from the fields.* **2.** and **glean something from** someone *Fig.* to figure something out from bits of gossip. ☐ *I was able to glean some important news from Tommy.* ☐ *Tell me the news you gleaned from the people in town.*

glide across something to float or slide across something. ☐ *The skaters glided across the frozen expanse of the river.* ☐ *The small plane glided across the sky.*

glide away (from someone or something**)** to slide or float away from someone or something. ☐ *The skaters glided away from the center of the rink.* ☐ *The canoes glided away from the judge who had started off the canoe race.*

glint with something to sparkle or shine with something. ☐ *Her bright eyes glinted with the sunlight.* ☐ *The crystal goblet glinted with the orange firelight.*

glisten with something to sparkle or shimmer with something. ☐ *The trees glistened with a thin coating of ice from the freezing rain.* ☐ *Fran's eyes glistened with a few tears.*

glitter with something **1.** to sparkle with something. ☐ *Her earrings glittered with many tiny diamonds.* ☐ *The tree glittered with tiny ice crystals.* **2.** [for eyes] to shine with a strong emotion. ☐ *Her eyes glittered with anger.* ☐ *The eyes of the great beast glittered with ravenous hunger.*

gloat over something to rejoice smugly over something; to be glad that something unfortunate has happened to someone else. ☐ *He gloated over his good luck in a way that made all of us angry.* ☐ *Please don't gloat over my misfortune.*

Glory be! *Inf.* an exclamation expressing surprise or shock. (A bit old-fashioned.) ☐ *Mary: Glory be! Is that what I think it is? Sue: Well, it's a kitten, if that's what you thought.* ☐ *Sally: First a car just missed hitting her, then she fell down on the ice. Mary: Glory be!*

glory in something *Fig.* to take great pleasure in something; to revel in something. ☐ *He just glories in all the attention he is getting.* ☐ *Martha tends to glory in doing things just exactly right.*

gloss over something to cover up, minimize, or play down something bad. ☐ *Don't gloss over your own role in this fiasco!* ☐ *I don't want to gloss this matter over, but it really isn't very important, is it?*

The **gloves are off.** *Fig.* There is going to be a serious dispute. (As if boxers had removed their gloves in order to inflict more damage. See also take the gloves off.) ☐ *Bob got mad and yelled, "Ok, the gloves are off!" and started cussing and pounding the table.*

glow with something **1.** *Lit.* [for something] to put out light, usually because of high heat. ☐ *The embers glowed with the remains of the fire.* ☐ *The last of the coals still glowed with fire.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone's face, eyes, etc.] to display some quality, such as pride, pleasure, rage, health. ☐ *Her healthy face glowed with pride.* ☐ *Her eyes glowed with a towering rage.*

glower at someone or something to scowl intently at someone or something. ☐ *The judge glowered at the irate wit-*

ness until order was restored. ☐ *Fred glowered at the painting of his uncle, hating the subject of the picture.*

glue something **down**† to fix something down onto something with cement. ☐ *Glue the edge of the rug down before someone trips over it.* ☐ *You should glue down the rug.*

glue something **on(to)** something and **glue** something **to** something; **glue** something **on**† to attach something to something else with cement. ☐ *Please glue the binding onto this book. Someone pulled it off.* ☐ *Please glue on the binding.*

glue something **together**† to attach the pieces of something together with glue. ☐ *She glued the pieces of the model plane together.* ☐ *She glued together all the loose pieces.*

glued to someone or something *Fig.* following someone everywhere; very close to or touching something. ☐ *His little sister was glued to him all afternoon. Finally he sent her home.*

a **glut on the market** Go to a drug on the market.

glut someone or something **with** something to overfill someone or something with something. ☐ *The hungry lions glutted themselves with the meat of their recent kill.* ☐ *Sally would glut herself with doughnuts, given the chance.*

a **glutton for punishment** *Fig.* someone who is eager for a burden or some sort of difficulty; someone willing to accept a difficult task. ☐ *Tom works too hard. He is a glutton for punishment.* ☐ *I enjoy managing difficult projects, but I am a glutton for punishment.*

gnash one's **teeth** *Fig.* to grind or bite noisily with one's teeth. ☐ *Bill clenched his fists and gnashed his teeth in anger.* ☐ *The wolf gnashed its teeth and chased after the deer.*

a **gnashing of teeth** *Fig.* a show of anger or dismay. (Biblical: "weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth.") ☐ *After a little gnashing of teeth and a few threats, the boss calmed down and become almost reasonable.*

gnaw (away) at someone *Fig.* to worry someone; to create constant anxiety in someone. ☐ *The thought of catching some horrible disease gnawed away at her.* ☐ *A lot of guilt gnawed at him day and night.*

gnaw (away) at someone or something *Lit.* to chew at someone or something. ☐ *I hear a mouse gnawing away at the wall.* ☐ *The mosquitoes are gnawing at me something awful.*

gnaw on something to chew on something. (Usually said of an animal.) ☐ *The puppy has been gnawing on my slippers!* ☐ *This slipper has been gnawed on!*

go a long way toward doing something and **go a long way in** doing something *Fig.* almost to satisfy specific conditions; to be almost right. ☐ *This machine goes a long way toward meeting our needs.* ☐ *Your plan went a long way in helping us with our problem.*

go a mile a minute Go to a mile a minute.

go aboard Go to come aboard.

go about and **go around 1.** [for a rumor] to go from person to person. ☐ *What is this story about you that I hear going about?* ☐ *There was a nasty rumor about Gerald going around.* **2.** [for a disease] to spread. ☐ *There is a lot of this flu going about these days.* ☐ *There is a bad cough going around.* **3.** Go to go around someone or something.

go about one's **business** Go to about one's business.

go about something to approach the doing of something in a particular way. ☐ *How should I go about researching this topic?* ☐ *Would you tell me how to go about it?*

go about with someone or something and **go around with** someone or something to go around in the company of someone or something. ☐ *I always go about with my friends.* ☐ *Fran has been going around with James.*

go above and beyond one's **duty** and **go above and beyond the call of duty** *Fig.* to exceed what is required of one. ☐ *Doing what you ask goes above and beyond my duty.* ☐ *My job requires me to go above and beyond the call of duty almost every day.*

go above and beyond (something**)** Go to above and beyond (something).

go above and beyond the call of duty Go to go above and beyond one's duty.

go above someone Go to above someone.

go above someone or something to travel over someone or something. ☐ *The model airplane swooped low right at us but went above us at the last minute.*

go absent without leave Go to absent without leave.

go across (something**)** to cross something, such as water, a bridge, land, the ocean, etc. ☐ *We went across the ocean in just three hours.* ☐ *How long did it take you to go across?*

go across something **to** someone or something to cross something to someone, something, or some place on the other side. ☐ *We went across the bridge to the island.* ☐ *We came upon a little footbridge and went across to the other side.* ☐ *Timmy went across the street to his mother.*

go after someone to investigate someone or something for possible criminal prosecution. ☐ *The prosecutor went after Max first, knowing that Max was the gang leader.* ☐ *The police detectives went after the whole gang.*

go after someone, something, or an animal **1.** *Lit.* to pursue someone, something, or an animal. (See also go after someone.) ☐ *The dogs went after the burglar.* ☐ *I went after the gang that took my wallet.* **2.** *Fig.* to charge or attack someone or an animal. ☐ *The bear went after the hunters and scared them off.* ☐ *Then the bear went after the hunting dogs and killed two.*

go against someone or something Go to against someone or something.

go against the grain Go to against the grain.

Go ahead. Please do it.; You have my permission and encouragement to do it. ☐ *Alice: I'm leaving. John: Go ahead. See if I care.* ☐ *Jane: Can I put this one in the refrigerator? Sue: Sure. Go ahead.*

(Go ahead,) make my day! 1. Just try to do me harm or disobey me. I will enjoy punishing you. (From a phrase said in a movie where the person saying the phrase is holding a gun on a villain and would really like the villain to do something that would justify firing the gun. Compare this with Keep it up!) ☐ *The crook reached into his jacket for his wallet. The cop, thinking the crook was about to draw a gun, said, "Go ahead, make my day!"* ☐ *As Bill pulled back*

his clenched fist to strike Tom, who is much bigger and stronger than Bill, Tom said, "Make my day!" **2.** Go ahead, ruin my day!; Go ahead, give me the bad news. (A sarcastic version of ①.) ☐ *Tom (standing in the doorway): Hello, I'm with the Internal Revenue Service. Could I come in? Mary: Go ahead, make my day!* ☐ *Sally: I've got some bad news for you. John: Go ahead, make my day!*

go ahead (of someone or something**)** to get in front of and proceed someone or something. ☐ *Please let me go ahead of you.* ☐ *The car carrying the parade marshall went ahead of the others.*

go ahead (with something**) 1.** to continue with something; to continue with plans to do something. ☐ *Can we go ahead with our party plans?* ☐ *Let's go ahead with it.* **2.** to carry something ahead. ☐ *Please go ahead with the baggage. I will meet you at the ticket counter.* ☐ *Will you please go ahead with the cake? I will bring the ice cream in a minute.*

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go all out (for someone or something**)** to do everything possible for someone or something. ☐ *We went all out for George and threw a big party on his return.* ☐ *We went all out and it was not appreciated at all.*

go all the way (with someone**)** and **go to bed (with** someone**)** *Euph.* to have sexual intercourse with someone. ☐ *If you go all the way, you stand a chance of getting pregnant.* ☐ *I've heard that they go to bed all the time.*

go along 1. to continue; to progress. ☐ *Things are going along quite nicely in my new job.* ☐ *I hope everything is going along well.* **2.** to accompany [someone]. ☐ *Can I go along?* ☐ *If you're going to the party, can I go along?*

go along (with someone**) for the ride 1.** *Lit.* to accompany someone just to be taking a ride. ☐ *Why don't you go along with us for the ride?* ☐ *I am going to the store. Do you want to go along for the ride?* **2.** *Fig.* to accompany someone, whether or not riding. ☐ *I'll just go along for the ride to the beach. I don't want to bask in the sun all day.* ☐ *He wasn't actually invited to the party. He just went along for the ride.*

go along with someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to travel along with someone or something. ☐ *Dorothy went along with the scarecrow for a while until they met a lion.* **2.** *Fig.* to agree with someone or agree to something. ☐ *I will go along with you on that matter.* ☐ *I will go along with Sharon's decision, of course.* **3.** *Fig.* to consent on the choice of someone or something. ☐ *I go along with Jane. Tom would be a good treasurer.* ☐ *Sharon will probably go along with chocolate. Everyone likes chocolate!* **4.** *Fig.* to play along with someone or something; to pretend that you are party to someone's scheme. ☐ *I went along with the gag for a while.*

go ape (over someone or something**)** *Sl.* to become very excited over something. ☐ *I just go ape over chocolate.* ☐ *Sam went ape over Mary.*

go arm in arm Go to arm in arm.

go around Go to go about.

go around doing something to move around doing something. ☐ *She keeps going around telling lies about me.* ☐ *Please stop going around knocking things over.* ☐ *She goes around helping whomever she can.*

go (a)round in circles 1. *Lit.* to move over and over on a circular path. ☐ *The model plane went around in circles until it ran out of fuel.* ☐ *The oxen went around in circles, pulling along a beam that was connected to the millstone.* **2.** *Fig.* to act in a confused and disoriented manner. ☐ *I've been going around in circles all day.* ☐ *The children have been going around in circles, waiting for you to arrive.* **3.** *Fig.* to keep going over the same ideas or repeating the same actions, often resulting in confusion, without reaching a satisfactory decision or conclusion. ☐ *We're just going round in circles discussing the problem. We need to consult someone else to get a new point of view.* ☐ *Fred's trying to find out what's happened but he's going round in circles. No one will tell him anything useful.*

go around someone **1.** *Lit.* to walk or travel in such a way as to avoid hitting or touching someone. ☐ *I can't move from this place right now. You'll have to go around me.* **2.** *Idiomatic* to avoid dealing with someone. ☐ *I try to go around Steve. He can be very difficult.* ☐ *We will want to go around the boss. He will say no if asked.*

go (a)round the bend Go to (a)round the bend.

go around (with someone**)** Go to hang around (with someone).

go around with someone or something Go to go about with someone or something.

go as someone or something to pretend to be someone or a type of person. ☐ *There's a costume party this weekend. I'm going as Santa Claus.* ☐ *My husband and I are going as a king and queen.*

go astray 1. *Lit.* to wander off the road or path. ☐ *Stick to the path and try not to go astray.* ☐ *I couldn't see the trail and I almost went astray.* **2.** *Fig.* [for something] to get lost or misplaced. ☐ *My glasses have gone astray again.* ☐ *Mary's book went astray or maybe it was stolen.* **3.** *Fig.* to turn bad or wander from the way of goodness; to make an error. ☐ *I'm afraid your son has gone astray and gotten into a bit of trouble.* ☐ *I went astray with the computer program at this point.*

go at a fast clip Go to at a fast clip.

go at a good clip Go to at a good clip.

go at it hammer and tongs Go to hammer and tongs.

go at it tooth and nail Go to fight someone or something hammer and tongs.

go at one another tooth and nail *Fig.* to fight one another like animals. (*One another* can also be *each other*.) ☐ *The man and his wife went at one another tooth and nail.* ☐ *The children would go at one another tooth and nail almost every evening.*

a **go at** someone Go to a try at someone.

go at someone or something to attack someone or something; to move or lunge toward someone or something. ☐ *The dog went at the visitor and almost bit him.* ☐ *He went at the door and tried to break it down.*

a **go at** something Go to a try at something.

go at something **like a boy killing snakes** *Rur.* to do something with a great deal of energy. ☐ *Once Mary decided to take that test, she went at her books like a boy killing snakes.* ☐ *I hired Joe to weed my garden, and he went at it like a boy killing snakes.*

Go away! Leave me!; Get away from me! ☐ *Mary: You're such a pest, Sue. Go away! Sue: I was just trying to help.* ☐ *"Go away!" yelled the child at the bee.*

go away empty-handed *Fig.* to depart with nothing. ☐ *I hate for you to go away empty-handed, but I cannot afford to contribute any money.* ☐ *They came hoping for some food, but they had to go away empty-handed.*

go away (for something**) 1.** to leave for a period of time. ☐ *I have to go away for a week or two.* ☐ *Sharon went away for a few days.* **2.** to leave in order to get something and bring it back. ☐ *Excuse me. I have to go away for a soft drink.* ☐ *He went away for a pizza. He'll be right back.*

go away with someone or something **1.** to leave in the company of someone or something. ☐ *I saw him go away with Margie.* ☐ *She went away with the others.* **2.** to take someone or a group away with one. ☐ *He went away with the baby in his arms.*

go AWOL to become absent without leave. (Originally military.) ☐ *Private Smith went AWOL last Wednesday. Now he's in a military prison.* ☐ *Tom went AWOL and finally we had to fire him.*

go back to return to the place of origin. ☐ *That's where I came from, and I'll never go back.* ☐ *I don't want to go back.*

go back on one's **promise** Go to next.

go back on one's **word** and **go back on** one's **promise; go back on** one's **pledge** to break a promise that one has made. ☐ *I hate to go back on my word, but I won't pay you $100 after all.* ☐ *Going back on your promise makes you a liar.*

go back to someone or something to return to someone, something, or some place. ☐ *She went back to her husband after a few months.* ☐ *Sharon had to go back to her office for a few minutes.*

go back to square one *Fig.* to return to the starting point. (Alludes to the squares of a board game.) ☐ *It's back to square one. We have to start over.* ☐ *It looks like it's back to square one for you.*

go back to the drawing board *Fig.* to return to the planning stage, so that a failed project can be planned again. ☐ *These plans have to go back to the drawing board.* ☐ *I thought these problems went back to the drawing board once already.*

go back to the salt mines *Fig.* to return to one's work. (Jocular; fig. on the image of menial labor working in salt mines.) ☐ *It's late. I have to go back to the salt mines.* ☐ *What time do you have to go back to the salt mines Monday morning?*

go bad to become rotten, undesirable, evil, etc. ☐ *I'm afraid that this milk has gone bad.* ☐ *Life used to be wonderful. Now it has gone bad.*

go badly with someone or something [for something] to proceed badly for someone or something. ☐ *I hope that things are not still going badly with you.* ☐ *Things are going very badly with the project.*

go ballistic and **go postal** *Fig.* to become irrationally enraged. (*Ballistic* refers to a missile launching; *postal* refers to an enraged post office employee attacking those at his place of work. See also **go into orbit**.) ☐ *The boss went ballistic when he saw my expense report.* ☐ *She was so mad, I thought she was going to go postal.*

go bananas *Sl.* to go mildly crazy. ☐ *Sorry, I just went bananas for a minute.* ☐ *I thought he was going to go bananas.*

go before someone Go to **before** someone.

go before someone or something **1.** to precede someone or something. ☐ *Do you wish to go before me?* ☐ *I will go before the other waiters and clear the aisles.* **2.** to appear before someone or something. ☐ *Sharon went before a magistrate and laid out her complaint.* ☐ *Mary went before the entire board of directors with her proposal.*

go begging *Fig.* to be left over, unwanted, or unused. (As if a thing were begging for an owner or a user.) ☐ *There is still food left. A whole lobster is going begging. Please eat some more.* ☐ *There are many excellent books in the library just going begging because people don't know they are there.*

go behind someone's **back 1.** *Lit.* to move behind someone; to locate oneself at someone's back. ☐ *The mugger went behind my back and put a gun to my spine.* ☐ *Bob went behind my back and pushed me through the opening.* **2.** *Fig.* to do something that is kept a secret from someone affected by it. ☐ *I hate to go behind her back, but she makes so much trouble about things like this.* ☐ *Please don't try to go behind my back again!*

go belly up Go to **turn belly up**.

go below to go beneath the main deck of a ship. (Nautical.) ☐ *I will have to go below and fiddle with the engine.* ☐ *The captain went below to escape the worst of the storm.*

go berserk to go crazy. ☐ *She went berserk and strangled her cat.*

go between someone or something **and** someone or something else to get in between people or things, in any combination. ☐ *The dog went between Mr. Franklin and the wall.* ☐ *The arrow went between Jed and Tex, injuring neither of them.*

go beyond someone or something to pass ahead of someone or something. ☐ *I went beyond the place where I should have turned off.* ☐ *Fred went beyond me a half block before he remembered who I was. Then he came back and said hello.*

go beyond something **1.** *Lit.* to do more of something than the expected amount; to go further with something than was required. ☐ *You clearly went beyond what was required of you.* ☐ *Sharon went beyond the basic requirements.* **2.** *Fig.* to go past something or some place. ☐ *We went beyond the town and lost our way.* ☐ *They went beyond the turnoff.*

go broke to completely run out of money and other assets. ☐ *This company is going to go broke if you don't stop spending money foolishly.* ☐ *I made some bad investments last year, and it looks as if I may go broke this year.*

go by (someone or something**)** to pass by someone or something. ☐ *We went by Alice without even noticing her.* ☐ *We went by because we were in a hurry.*

go by the board *Fig.* to get ruined or lost. (This is originally a nautical expression meaning "to fall or be washed overboard.") ☐ *I hate to see good food go by the board.*

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Please eat up so we won't have to throw it out. ☐ *Your plan has gone by the board. The entire project has been canceled.*

go by the book Go to by the book.

go by the name of something to be known by a specific name. ☐ *She goes by the name of Gladys George.* ☐ *I used to go by the name of George.*

Go chase yourself! and **Go climb a tree!; Go fly a kite!; Go jump in the lake!** *Inf.* Go away and stop bothering me! ☐ *Bob: Get out of here. Bill! You're driving me crazy! Go chase yourself! Bill: What did I do to you? Bob: You're just in the way.* ☐ *Bill: Dad, can I have ten bucks? Father: Go climb a tree!* ☐ *Fred: Stop pestering me, John. Go jump in the lake! John: What did I do?* ☐ *Bob: Well, Bill, don't you owe me some money? Bill: Go fly a kite!*

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go cold turkey *Inf.* to stop (doing something) without tapering off. (Originally drug slang. Now concerned with breaking any habit.) ☐ *I had to stop smoking, so I went cold turkey. It's awful!* ☐ *When heroin addicts go cold turkey, they get terribly sick.*

go crazy and **go nuts** to become crazy, disoriented, or frustrated. ☐ *It is so busy here that I think I will go crazy.* ☐ *Bob went nuts because his car got a flat tire.*

go down 1. to sink below a normal or expected level or height. ☐ *The plane went down in flames.* ☐ *The ship went down with all hands aboard.* **2.** to descend to a lower measurement. ☐ *Her fever went down.* ☐ *The price of the stock went down yesterday.* **3.** to be swallowed. ☐ *The medicine went down without any trouble at all.* ☐ *The pill I took simply would not go down.* **4.** to fall or drop down, as when struck or injured. ☐ *Sam went down when he was struck on the chin.* ☐ *The deer went down when it was hit with the arrow.* **5.** *Sl.* to happen. ☐ *Hey, man! What's going down?* ☐ *Something strange is going down around here.* **6.** *Sl.* to be accepted. ☐ *We'll just have to wait awhile to see how all this goes down.* ☐ *The proposal didn't go down very well with the manager.* **7.** *Sl.* to be arrested. (Underworld.) ☐ *Lefty didn't want to go down for a crime he didn't do.* ☐ *Mr. Big said that somebody had to go down for it, and he didn't care who.*

go down fighting *Fig.* to continue the struggle until one is completely defeated. ☐ *I won't give up easily. I'll go down fighting.* ☐ *Sally, who is very determined, went down fighting.*

go down for the count Go to down for the count.

go down for the third time *Fig.* to be just on the verge of failing. (From the notion that a boxer who is knocked down three times in one round normally loses the fight.) ☐ *I was going down for the third time when I thought of a plan that would save my job.*

go down in defeat and **go down to defeat** *Fig.* to submit to defeat; to be defeated. ☐ *The team went down in defeat again.* ☐ *She fears going down in defeat.*

go down in flames 1. *Lit.* [for a plane] to crash. ☐ *The enemy fighter planes went down in flames, ending the battle.* ☐ *The pilot and crew went down in flames near the airport.* **2.** *Fig.* to fail spectacularly. ☐ *The whole project went down in flames.* ☐ *Todd went down in flames in his efforts to win the heart of Marsha.*

go down (in history) (as someone or something**)** to be recorded for history as a significant person or event. ☐ *You will go down in history as the most stubborn woman who ever lived.* ☐ *She will go down as a very famous woman.*

go down on one's **knees** to kneel down. ☐ *The people went down on their knees and prayed.* ☐ *Larry went down on his knees and asked for forgiveness.*

go down something to descend something; to fall down something. ☐ *She went down the ladder very carefully.* ☐ *I did not want to go down those steep stairs.*

go down the chute and **go down the drain; go down the tube(s)** *Sl.* to fail; to be thrown away or wasted. ☐ *Everything we have accomplished has gone down the chute.* ☐ *The whole project went down the drain.*

go down the drain Go to previous.

go down the line to go from person to person or thing to thing in a line of people or things. ☐ *She went down the line, asking everyone for a dollar for a cup of coffee.* ☐ *Sam went down the line, passing out tickets.*

go down the tube(s) Go to go down the chute.

go down to defeat Go to go down in defeat.

go down to someone or something to travel to someone, something, or some place that is downtown, at a lower level, or in the South. ☐ *We went down to Amy's aunt in Memphis.* ☐ *Fran went down to Tiffany's place on the first floor.*

go down to something [for something] to decline or diminish to some level. ☐ *His temperature has gone down to normal.* ☐ *Will the temperature go down to freezing tonight?*

go down with something *Fig.* to be stricken with a disease. ☐ *Beth went down with the flu.* ☐ *She went down with a high fever.*

go downhill [for something] to decline and grow worse and worse. ☐ *This industry is going downhill. We lose money every year.* ☐ *As one gets older, one's health tends to go downhill.*

go Dutch [for each person in a pair or a group] to pay for himself or herself. ☐ *I don't want you to pay for my ticket. Let's go Dutch.* ☐ *Is it still considered a date if you go Dutch?*

go easy on someone or something to be gentle on someone or something; not to be too critical of someone or something; to take it easy on someone or something. (See also go easy on something.) ☐ *Go easy on Sherri. She's my friend.* ☐ *Try to go easy on criticizing their report. They did the best they could in the time allotted.*

go easy on something to use something sparingly. (See also take it easy on something; go easy on someone or something.) ☐ *Go easy on the mustard. That's all there is.* ☐ *Please go easy on the onions. I don't like them very much.*

go fifty-fifty (on something**)** to divide the cost of something in half with someone. ☐ *Todd and Jean decided to go fifty-fifty on dinner.* ☐ *The two brothers went fifty-fifty on a replacement for the broken lamp.*

Go figure. It's really strange.; Just try to figure it out. ☐ *She says she wants to have a conversation, but when I try, she does all the talking. Go figure.*

Go fly a kite! Go to Go chase yourself!

go for broke to risk everything; to try as hard as possible. ☐ *Okay, this is my last chance. I'm going for broke.* ☐

Look at Mary starting to move in the final hundred yards of the race! She is really going for broke.

Go for it! *Inf.* Go ahead! Give it a good try! ☐ *Sally: I'm going to try out for the basketball team. Do you think I'm tall enough? Bob: Sure you are! Go for it!* ☐ *Bob: Mary can't quit now! She's almost at the finish line! Bill: Go for it, Mary!*

go for nothing 1. *Lit.* [for something] to be done for no purpose. ☐ *All our work went for nothing.* ☐ *Our efforts at helping out went for nothing.* **2.** *Fig.* [for something] to be sold for a very low price. ☐ *This merchandise can go for nothing; let's just clear it out at 90 percent off.* ☐ *I don't want this good stuff to just go for nothing.*

go for someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to go out for someone or something; to go fetch someone or something. ☐ *I am going for bread—do we need anything else from the store?* ☐ *Roger went for his aunt, who had arrived at the station.* **2.** *Fig.* to find someone or something interesting or desirable. ☐ *I really go for chocolate in any form.* ☐ *Tom really goes for Gloria in a big way.* **3.** *Fig.* to believe or accept something or something that someone says. ☐ *It sounds pretty strange. Do you think they'll go for it?*

go forward with something *Fig.* to continue with something; to do something that is planned. ☐ *We will go forward with our plans.* ☐ *Let's go forward with the plan.*

go from bad to worse to progress from a bad situation to one that is worse. ☐ *Things went from bad to worse in a matter of days.* ☐ *I'm afraid that things are going from bad to worse.*

go from one extreme to the other to change from one thing to its opposite. ☐ *You go from one extreme to another about Tom—one day angry, the next day perfectly happy.*

Go fry an egg! Go away and stop bothering me! ☐ *Go away and stop bothering me. Go fry an egg!* ☐ *Get out of my way! Go fry an egg!*

go hand in hand Go to **hand in hand.**

go haywire *Rur.* to go wrong; to malfunction; to break down. ☐ *I was talking to Mary when suddenly the telephone went haywire. I haven't heard from her since.* ☐ *There we were, driving along, when the engine went haywire. It was two hours before the tow truck came.*

go hog wild *Rur.* to behave wildly. ☐ *Have a good time at the party, but don't go hog wild.* ☐ *The teacher cannot control a class that is going hog wild.*

go home in a box *Sl.* to be shipped home dead. (Often said in exaggeration.) ☐ *Hey, I'm too young to go home in a box.* ☐ *You had better be careful on this camping trip, or you'll go home in a box.*

go home to mama to give up something—such as a marriage—and return to one's mother's home. ☐ *I've had it. I'm going home to mama.* ☐ *Mary left him and went home to mama.*

go hungry to miss a meal and end up hungry. ☐ *The kids were late for dinner so they had to go hungry.*

go in Go to **go into** something.

go in a body Go to **in a body.**

go in and out (of something**)** to pass in and out of something or some place. ☐ *The nervous little mouse kept going in and out of its hole.* ☐ *The cat kept going in and out of the back door.*

go in for something to take part in something; to enjoy (doing) something. ☐ *John doesn't go in for sports.* ☐ *None of them seems to go in for swimming.*

go in one ear and out the other *Cliché Fig.* [for something] to be heard and then soon ignored or forgotten. ☐ *Everything I say to you seems to go in one ear and out the other. Why don't you pay attention?* ☐ *I can't concentrate. Things people say to me just go in one ear and out the other.*

go in someone's **favor** [for something] to change to someone's benefit. (Alludes to very changeable things like game scores, wind direction, or chance in general.) ☐ *Things appear to be going in our favor—finally.* ☐ *The game was going in our favor during the first half.*

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go in the hole Go to **in the hole.**

go in the right direction 1. *Lit.* to head or travel in the right direction. ☐ *Are you sure we are going in the right direction?* ☐ *We were supposed to turn back there. We are not going in the right direction.* **2.** *Fig.* [for plans or intentions] to be progressing sensibly. ☐ *Well, everything seems to be going in the right direction—for now anyway.* ☐ *Do you feel that this project is going in the right direction?*

go in with someone **(on** something**)** *Fig.* to join together with someone to work on a project; to pool financial resources with someone to buy something. ☐ *I would be happy to go in with you on the charity ball. I'll find a hall.* ☐ *Yes, we can pool our money. I'll go in with you.*

go into a huddle 1. *Lit.* [for team members] to get into a small circle and plan what they are going to do next. ☐ *They went into a huddle to plan their strategy.* ☐ *The players will go into a huddle and decide what to do.* **2.** *Fig.* [for people] to group together to talk and decide what to do. ☐ *We went into a huddle to plan our sales strategy.* ☐ *Top-level management needs to go into a huddle and come up with a good plan.*

go into a nosedive and **take a nosedive 1.** *Lit.* [for an airplane] suddenly to dive toward the ground, nose first. ☐ *It was a bad day for flying, and I was afraid we'd go into a nosedive.* ☐ *The small plane took a nosedive. The pilot was able to bring it out at the last minute, so the plane didn't crash.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to fall to the ground face first. ☐ *She took a nosedive and injured her face.* **3.** *Fig.* to go into a rapid emotional or financial decline, or a decline in health. ☐ *Our profits took a nosedive last year.* ☐ *After he broke his hip, Mr. Brown's health went into a nosedive, and he never recovered.*

go into a song and dance (about something**)** and **go into the same old song and dance about** something *Fig.* to start repeating excuses or stories about something. (See also **go into** one's **act.**) ☐ *Please don't go into your song and dance about how you always tried to do what was right.* ☐ *John went into his song and dance about how he won the war all by himself.* ☐ *He always goes into the same old song and dance every time he makes a mistake.*

go into a tailspin 1. *Lit.* [for an airplane] to lose control and spin to the earth, nose first. ☐ *The plane shook and then suddenly went into a tailspin.* ☐ *The pilot was not able to bring the plane out of the tailspin, and it crashed into the sea.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to become disoriented or pan-

icked; [for someone's life] to fall apart. ☐ *Although John achieved great success, his life went into a tailspin. It took him a year to get straightened out.* ☐ *After her father died, Mary's world fell apart, and she went into a tailspin.*

go into action and **swing into action** to start doing something. ☐ *I usually get to work at 7:45, get some coffee, and I go into action at 8:00.* ☐ *When the ball is hit in my direction, you should see me swing into action.*

go into detail(s) to give all the details; to present and discuss the details. ☐ *The clerk went into detail about the product with the customer.* ☐ *I just want a simple answer. Don't go into details.*

go into effect and **take effect** [for a law or a rule] to become effective. ☐ *When does this new law go into effect?* ☐ *The new tax laws won't go into effect until next year.*

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go into heat Go to in heat.

go into hiding to conceal oneself in a hidden place for a period of time. ☐ *The political dissident went into hiding.* ☐ *After robbing the bank, the bandits went into hiding for months.*

go into hock go into debt. ☐ *We will have to go into hock to buy a house.* ☐ *I go further into hock every time I use my credit card.*

go into one's **act** *Fig.* to begin to behave in a way typical to oneself. ☐ *The curtain opened and Steve went into his act.*

go into orbit 1. *Lit.* [for a rocket, satellite, etc.] to rotate around a heavenly body in a fixed path. ☐ *The satellite went into orbit just as planned.* ☐ *When did the moon go into orbit?* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to get very excited. (See also go ballistic.) ☐ *She was so upset, she went into orbit.* ☐ *Todd went into orbit when he heard the price.*

go into service to start operating. ☐ *When will the new elevator go into service?* ☐ *It has already gone into service.*

go into something **1.** and **go in** *Lit.* to enter something; to penetrate something. ☐ *The needle went into the vein smoothly and painlessly.* ☐ *It went in with no trouble.* **2.** *Fig.* to enter some line of business or a profession. ☐ *He went into accounting when he got out of college.* ☐ *I want to prepare to go into law enforcement.* **3.** *Fig.* to examine or study something; to discuss and explain something. (See also go there.) ☐ *I need to go into this more.* ☐ *When we have time, we need to go into this question more thoroughly.*

go into the bull pen Go to in the bull pen.

go into the red Go to in the red.

go into the same old song and dance about something Go to go into a song and dance (about something).

go into the service to enter one of the military services. ☐ *She went into the service when she got out of high school.* ☐ *I chose not to go into the service.*

go it alone to do something by oneself. ☐ *Do you need help, or will you go it alone?* ☐ *I think I need a little more experience before I go it alone.*

Go jump in the lake! Go to Go chase yourself!

go like clockwork *Fig.* to progress with regularity and dependability. ☐ *The building project is progressing nicely. Everything is going like clockwork.* ☐ *The elaborate pageant was a great success. It went like clockwork from start to finish.*

go like stink Go to like stink.

go like the wind Go to like the wind.

go near (to) someone or something to approach someone or something. ☐ *Don't go near Sue. She's got chicken pox.* ☐ *Now, don't go near the water!*

go nuts Go to go crazy.

go off 1. *Lit.* [for an explosive device] to explode. ☐ *The fireworks all went off as scheduled.* ☐ *The bomb went off and did a lot of damage.* **2.** *Lit.* [for a sound-creating device] to make its noise. ☐ *The alarm went off at six o'clock.* ☐ *The siren goes off at noon every day.* **3.** *Fig.* [for an event] to happen or take place. ☐ *The party went off as planned.* ☐ *Did your medical examination go off as well as you had hoped?*

go off (by oneself**)** to go into seclusion; to isolate oneself. ☐ *She went off by herself where no one could find her.* ☐ *I have to go off and think about this.*

go off half-cocked *Fig.* to go into action too early or without thinking. (Originally refers to a flintlock or matchlock gun firing prematurely, before the trigger was pulled.) ☐ *Don't go off half-cocked. Plan out what you're going to do.* ☐ *Bill went off half-cocked and told everybody he was running for the state legislature.*

go off (into something**)** to go away to something; to depart and go into something. ☐ *He went off into the army.* ☐ *Do you expect me just to go off into the world and make a living?*

go off kilter Go to out of kilter.

go off on a tangent *Fig.* to pursue a somewhat related or irrelevant course while neglecting the main subject. ☐ *Don't go off on a tangent. Stick to your job.* ☐ *Just as we started talking, Henry went off on a tangent about the high cost of living.*

go off on someone *Sl.* to berate someone. ☐ *Don't go off on me! I'm not the cause of your problems!* ☐ *The teacher went off on poor little Harry.*

go off the deep end and **jump off the deep end 1.** *Lit.* to jump into a swimming pool where the water is over one's head and one needs to be able to swim ☐ *You are still only learning to swim. Are you ready to go off the deep end?* ☐ *He jumped off the deep end where he would make a bigger splash.* **2.** *Fig.* to become deeply involved (with someone or something) before one is ready. (Applies especially to falling in love.) ☐ *Look at the way Bill is looking at Sally. I think he's about to go off the deep end.* **3.** *Fig.* to act irrationally, following one's emotions or fantasies. ☐ *Now, John, I know you really want to go to Australia, but don't go jumping off the deep end. It isn't all perfect there.*

go off (to the side) with someone Go to off (to the side) with someone.

go off (with someone**)** to go away with someone. ☐ *Tom just now went off with Maggie.* ☐ *I think that Maria went off with Fred somewhere.*

Go on. 1. *Lit.* Please continue. ☐ *Alice: I guess I should stop here. Tom: No. Don't stop talking. I'm very interested. Go on.* ☐ *Bill: Don't turn here. Go on. It's the next corner. Bob: Thanks. I didn't think that was where we should turn.* **2.** *Lit.*

to happen. ☐ *What went on here last night?* ☐ *The teacher asked what was going on.* **3.** *Fig.* That's silly!; You don't mean that! (Usually **Go on!**) ☐ *John: Go on! You're making that up! Bill: I am not. It's the truth!* ☐ *Bill: Gee, that looks like a snake there in the path. Bob: Go on! That isn't a snake. No snake is that big.*

go on a binge to do too much of something, especially to drink too much. ☐ *Jane went on a binge last night and is very sick this morning.* ☐ *Bill loves to spend money on clothes. He's out on a binge right now—buying everything in sight.*

go on a diet Go to on a diet.

go on a fishing expedition Go to a fishing expedition.

go on a fool's errand Go to on a fool's errand.

go on a power trip Go to on a power trip.

go on a rampage to get very disturbed or angry. ☐ *The angry bull went on a rampage and broke the fence.* ☐ *My boss went on a rampage because the report wasn't finished.*

go on an errand Go to run an errand.

go on and on to (seem to) last or go forever. ☐ *You talk too much, Bob. You just go on and on.* ☐ *The road to their house is very boring. It goes on and on with nothing interesting to look at.*

go on (and on) (about someone or something**)** to talk endlessly about someone or something. ☐ *She just went on and on about her new car.* ☐ *Albert went on about the book for a long time.*

go on (at someone**)** to rave at someone. ☐ *He must have gone on at her for ten minutes—screaming and waving his arms.* ☐ *I wish you would stop going on at me.*

go on before (someone**) 1.** *Lit.* to precede someone. ☐ *Please go on before me. I will follow.* ☐ *She went on before.* **2.** *Euph.* to die before someone. ☐ *Uncle Herman went on before Aunt Margaret by a few years.* ☐ *He went before her, although we had all thought it would be the other way around.*

go on doing something Go to go on with something.

go on for an age and **go on for ages** *Fig.* to continue for a very long time. ☐ *The symphony seemed to go on for an age.* ☐ *It seemed to go on for ages.*

go on something **1.** *Lit.* to begin something, such as a diet, rampage, drunk, etc. ☐ *I went on a diet for the second time this month.* ☐ *Fred went on a rampage and broke a window.* **2.** *Fig.* to start acting on some information. ☐ *We can't go on this! We need more information before we can act on this matter!* ☐ *Can you please give us more information to go on?*

go on the block *Fig.* [for something] to go up for auction; [for something] to be placed on the auction block. ☐ *Our farm went on the block last week. Got a good price.* ☐ *When this painting goes on the block, I hope I get a lot for it.*

go on to a better land *Euph.* to die. ☐ *After a long illness, Reggie went on to a better land.* ☐ *When I finally go on to a better land, I hope there is enough money for a proper funeral.*

go on to something to advance to something or to doing something. ☐ *After a few years she went on to even greater heights.* ☐ *Larry went on to found his own company.*

go on tour [for a performing group] to go from place to place, performing. ☐ *Our play went on tour across the state.* ☐ *If we make the play a success, we will go on tour.*

go on with something and **go on** doing something to continue with something. ☐ *I can't go on with this. I have to rest.* ☐ *You simply cannot go on behaving like this!*

Go on (with you)! *Inf.* Go away! (Always a command. No tenses.) ☐ *It's time you left. Go on with you!* ☐ *Go on. Get yourself home.*

go out 1. to leave one's house. ☐ *Call me later. I'm going out now.* ☐ *Sally told her father that she was going out.* **2.** to become extinguished. ☐ *The fire finally went out.* ☐ *The lights went out and left us in the dark.* **3.** Go to go out of fashion.

go out for someone or something to leave in order to bring back someone or something. ☐ *Albert just went out for a newspaper.* ☐ *Fran went out for Bob, who was on the back porch, smoking a cigarette.*

go out (for something**) 1.** *Lit.* to go outside to get something or to do something. ☐ *Jill just went out for a breath of fresh air.* ☐ *He just went out, and should be back any minute.* **2.** *Fig.* to try out for something. (Usually refers to a sport.) ☐ *Mary went out for the soccer team.* ☐ *Tom went out for baseball.*

go out for the count Go to out for the count.

go out from something Go to out from something.

go out in force Go to out in force.

go out in search of someone or something to leave to find someone or something. ☐ *I went out in search of someone to help me.* ☐ *Mary went out in search of Gloria.*

go out of bounds Go to out of bounds.

go out of business to stop doing commerce or business. ☐ *The new shop will probably go out of business if sales don't get better.* ☐ *I have to work hard to keep from going out of business.*

go out of control Go to out of control.

go out of fashion and **go out of style; go out** to become unfashionable; to become obsolete. ☐ *That kind of furniture went out of style years ago.* ☐ *I hope this kind of thing never goes out of fashion.* ☐ *It went out years ago.*

go out of favor (with someone**)** Go to out of favor (with someone).

go out of focus Go to out of focus.

go out of kilter Go to out of kilter.

go out of one's **head** Go to out of one's mind.

go out of one's **mind** Go to out of one's mind.

go out of one's **senses** Go to out of one's mind.

go out of one's **skull** Go to out of one's skull.

go out of one's **way (to** do something**) 1.** *Lit.* to travel an indirect route or an extra distance in order to do something. ☐ *I'll have to go out of my way to give you a ride home.* ☐ *I'll give you a ride even though I have to go out of my way.* **2.** *Fig.* to make an effort to do something; to accept the bother of doing something. ☐ *We went out of*

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our way to please the visitor. ☐ *We appreciate anything you can do, but don't go out of your way.*

go out of practice Go to **out of practice.**

go out of service [for something] to stop working; [for something] to have been turned off so it cannot be used. ☐ *This elevator went out of service last week.* ☐ *How long has it been since this thing went out of service?*

go out of sight Go to **out of sight.**

go out (of something**)** to leave something or some place. ☐ *I went out of there feeling sorry for myself.* ☐ *I went out with a smile on my face.*

go out of style Go to **go out of fashion.**

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go out of the frying pan into the fire Go to **out of the frying pan into the fire.**

go out on a limb Go to **out on a limb.**

go (out) on strike and **go out (on strike)** [for a group of people] to quit working at their jobs until certain demands are met. ☐ *If we don't have a contract by noon tomorrow, we'll go out on strike.* ☐ *The entire workforce went on strike at noon today.*

go out to someone [for one's sympathy, heart, etc.] to be aimed toward someone. ☐ *All of my sympathy went out to her. I knew just how she felt.* ☐ *My thanks go out to you all.*

go out (with someone**) 1.** *Lit.* to go out with someone for entertainment. ☐ *The Smiths went out with the Franklins to a movie.* ☐ *Those guys don't have much time to go out.* **2.** *Fig.* to go on a date with someone; to date someone regularly. ☐ *Is Bob still going out with Sally?* ☐ *No, they've stopped going out.*

go out with something to go out of fashion at the same time as something else went out of fashion. ☐ *That style of dress went out with the bustle.* ☐ *Your thinking went out with the horse and buggy.*

go over *Euph.* to leave one's country and go to ideologically opposed or enemy country; to defect. ☐ *When the ballet company visited New York, two of the dancers went over.* ☐ *He had been spying for the Americans for many years, and he finally went over.*

go over big (with someone**)** to be very much appreciated by someone. ☐ *Your jokes did not exactly go over big with my parents.* ☐ *We hope that the musical will go over big with the audience.*

go over like a lead balloon *Fig.* to fail completely; to go over badly. ☐ *Your joke went over like a lead balloon.* ☐ *If that play was supposed to be a comedy, it went over like a lead balloon.* ☐ *Her suggestion went over like a lead balloon.*

go over someone Go to **over** someone.

go over someone or something to examine someone or something. ☐ *The doctor will go over you very carefully, I'm sure.* ☐ *I went over the papers and found nothing wrong.*

go over someone's **head** Go to **over** someone's **head.**

go over something **with a fine-tooth comb** and **search** something **with a fine-tooth comb; go through** something **with a fine-tooth comb** *Fig.* to search through something very carefully. ☐ *I can't find my calculus book. I went over the whole place with a fine-tooth comb.* ☐ *I searched this place with a fine-tooth comb and didn't find my ring.*

go over something **(with** someone**)** to review or explain something. ☐ *The teacher went over the lesson with the class.* ☐ *Can you please go over it again, more slowly?*

go over the hill Go to **over the hill.**

go over the wall Go to **over the wall.**

go over to some place to travel some distance or cross water to get to some place. ☐ *We went over to Cedar Point and spent the day having fun.* ☐ *John went over to the other side of the stadium for the rest of the tournament.*

go over (well) [for someone or something] to be accepted or well received. ☐ *The party went over very well.* ☐ *The play really went over with the audience.*

go over with a bang 1. *Fig.* [for something] to be funny or entertaining. ☐ *Our presentation was a success. It really went over with a bang.* ☐ *That's a great joke. It went over with a bang.* **2.** *Fig.* to succeed spectacularly. ☐ *The play was a success. It really went over with a bang.* ☐ *That's a great joke. It went over with a bang.*

go overboard 1. *Fig.* to fall out of a boat or off of a ship; to fall overboard. ☐ *Be careful or you will go overboard.* ☐ *Someone went overboard in the fog.* **2.** *Fig.* to do too much; to be extravagant. ☐ *Look, Sally, let's have a nice party, but don't go overboard. It doesn't need to be fancy.* ☐ *Okay, you can buy a big comfortable car, but don't go overboard on price.*

go past someone or something to pass by someone or something. ☐ *You went right past Tom. Did you mean to?* ☐ *Did I go past it?*

go past something Go to **past** something.

go places to become very successful. ☐ *I knew that Sally, with all her talent, would go places.* ☐ *I really want to go places in life.*

Go play in the traffic. Go to **Take a long walk off a short pier.**

go postal Go to **go ballistic; go into orbit.**

go public (with something**) 1.** to sell to the public shares of a privately owned company. (Securities markets.) ☐ *The company decided not to go public because the economy was so bad at the time.* ☐ *We'll go public at a later time.* **2.** to reveal something to the public. ☐ *It's too early to go public with the story.* ☐ *Just let me know when we can go public with this press release.*

go (right) through someone and **go through** someone **like a dose of the salts** *Fig.* [for something] to be excreted very soon after being eaten; [for something] to go immediately through the alimentary canal of a person. (Use with discretion.) ☐ *No, thanks. This stuff just goes right through me.* ☐ *The coffee went through me like a dose of salts.*

go scot-free and **get off scot-free** to go unpunished; to be acquitted of a crime. (This *scot* is an old word meaning "tax" or "tax burden.") ☐ *The thief went scot-free.* ☐ *Jane cheated on the test and got caught, but she got off scot-free.*

go sky-high *Fig.* to go very high. ☐ *Prices go sky-high whenever there is inflation.* ☐ *Oh, it's so hot. The temperature went sky-high about noon.*

go so far as to say something to put something into words; to risk saying something. ☐ *I think that Bob is dishonest, but I wouldn't go so far as to say he's a thief.* ☐ *Red meat may be harmful, but I can't go so far as to say it causes cancer.*

go (someone**) one better** and **do** someone **one better** to do something superior to what someone else has done; to top someone. ☐ *That was a great joke, but I can go you one better.* ☐ *Your last song was beautifully sung, but Mary can do you one better.*

go (somewhere**) by shank's mare** Go to by shank's mare.

go sour *Fig.* to turn bad or unpleasant. ☐ *It looks like all my plans are going sour.* ☐ *My whole life is going sour right now.*

go South and **head South 1.** *Sl.* to make an escape; to disappear. (Not necessarily in a southerly direction.) ☐ *Lefty went South the minute he got out of the pen.* ☐ *The mugger headed South just after the crime.* **2.** *Sl.* to fall; to go down. (Securities markets.) ☐ *All the stock market indexes went South today.* ☐ *The market headed South today at the opening bell.* **3.** *Sl.* to quit; to drop out of sight. ☐ *Fred got discouraged and went South. I think he gave up football permanently.* ☐ *After pulling the bank job, Wilbur went South for a few months.*

go stag to go to an event (which is meant for couples) without a member of the opposite sex. (Originally referred only to males.) ☐ *Is Tom going to take you, or are you going stag?* ☐ *Bob didn't want to go stag, so he took his sister to the party.*

go steady with someone Go to go with someone.

go stir-crazy Go to stir-crazy.

go straight to stop breaking the law and lead a lawful life instead. ☐ *The judge encouraged the thief to go straight.* ☐ *After Bob was arrested, he promised his mother he would go straight.*

go (straight) to the top *Fig.* to attempt to confer with the person at the top of the chain of command, bypassing the intermediate people. ☐ *When I want something, I always go straight to the top. I don't have time for a lot of bureaucracy.*

go the distance *Fig.* to do the whole amount; to play the entire game; to run the whole race. (Originally sports use.) ☐ *That horse runs fast. I hope it can go the distance.* ☐ *This is going to be a long, hard project. I hope I can go the distance.*

go the extra mile to try harder to please someone or to get the task done correctly; to do more than one is required to do to reach a goal. ☐ *I like doing business with that company. They always go the extra mile.* ☐ *My teacher goes the extra mile to help us.*

go the limit *Fig.* to do as much as possible; to get as much as possible. ☐ *Let's plan to do everything we can. Let's go the limit.* ☐ *We'll go the limit. To heck with the cost.*

go the way of the dodo and **go the way of the horse and buggy** *Fig.* to become extinct; to become obsolete. ☐ *The floppy disc has gone the way of the horse and buggy.*

go the way of the horse and buggy Go to previous.

go there to begin a discussion of something; to take up a certain topic. (Similar to go into something. Often in the negative. This has nothing to do with traveling or going to a place.) ☐ *A: How are things going at your place of business? B: Please! I don't want to go there.* ☐ *We don't have time to discuss your health problems, so let's not go there.*

go through to be approved; to succeed in getting through the approval process. ☐ *I sent the board of directors a proposal. I hope it goes through.* ☐ *We all hope that the new law goes through.*

go through channels Go to go through (the proper) channels.

go through someone **1.** *Lit.* to travel through someone's body; to go (right) through someone. ☐ *That medicine went right through me.* **2.** *Fig.* to work through someone; to use someone as an intermediary. ☐ *I can't give you the permission you seek. You will have to go through our main office.* ☐ *I have to go through the treasurer for all expenditures.*

G

go through someone **like a dose of the salts** Go to go (right) through someone.

go through someone or something [for something sharp] to penetrate someone or something. ☐ *The sword went through the knight cleanly and quickly.* ☐ *The nail went through all three boards.*

go through something **1.** to search through something. ☐ *She went through his pants pockets, looking for his wallet.* ☐ *He spent quite a while going through his desk, looking for the papers.* **2.** to use up all of something rapidly. ☐ *We have gone through all the aspirin again!* ☐ *How can you go through your allowance so fast?* **3.** [for something] to pass through an opening. ☐ *The piano wouldn't go through the door.* ☐ *Do you think that such a big truck can go through the tunnel under the river?* **4.** to pass through various stages or processes. ☐ *The pickles went through a number of processes before they were packed.* ☐ *Johnny is going through a phase where he wants everything his way.* **5.** to work through something, such as an explanation or story. ☐ *I went through my story again, carefully and in great detail.* ☐ *I would like to go through it again, so I can be sure to understand it.* **6.** to experience or endure something. ☐ *You can't believe what I've gone through.* ☐ *Mary has gone through a lot lately.* **7.** to rehearse something; to practice something for performance. ☐ *They went through the second act a number of times.* ☐ *We need to go through the whole play a few more times.*

go through something **with a fine-tooth comb** Go to go over something with a fine-tooth comb.

go through the changes *Fig.* to experience life's changes. ☐ *A good day, a bad day—it's all part of going through the changes.* ☐ *Nothing new with me, just going through the changes.*

go through the cracks Go to through the cracks.

go through the mill Go to through the mill.

go through the motions *Fig.* to make a feeble effort to do something; to do something insincerely or in cursory fashion. ☐ *Jane isn't doing her best. She's just going through the motions.* ☐ *Bill was supposed to be raking the yard, but he was just going through the motions.*

go through (the proper) channels to use the proper procedure, working through the correct people and offices to get something done; to cooperate with a bureaucracy. ☐ *I'm sorry. I can't help you. You'll have to go through the proper channels.* ☐ *I didn't get what I wanted because I didn't go through channels.*

go through the roof 1. *Fig. Inf.* to become very angry. ☐ *She saw what had happened and went through the roof.* ☐ *My father went through the roof when he saw what I did to the car.* **2.** *Fig. Inf.* [for prices] to become very high. ☐ *These days, prices for gasoline are going through the roof.* ☐ *The cost of coffee is going through the roof.*

go through with something to complete something the outcome of which is troubling or doubtful; to do something in spite of problems and drawbacks. ☐ *I have to go through with it, no matter what.* ☐ *I just couldn't go through with it.*

G

Go to! *Inf.* Go to hell! ☐ *Oh, you're terrible. Just go to!* ☐ *Go to, you creep!*

go to any length *Fig.* to do whatever is necessary. (See also go to great lengths (to do something).) ☐ *I'll go to any length to secure this contract.* ☐ *I want to get a college degree, but I won't go to any length to get one.*

go to bat against someone *Fig.* to aid someone against someone else. ☐ *I would be happy to go to bat against Dan.* ☐ *We refused to go to bat against one of our friends.*

go to bat for someone *Fig.* to support or help someone. ☐ *I tried to go to bat for Bill, but he said he didn't want any help.* ☐ *I heard them gossiping about Sally, so I went to bat for her.*

go to bed to go to where one's bed is, get into it, and go to sleep. ☐ *It's time for me to go to bed.* ☐ *I want to go to bed, but there is too much work to do.*

go to bed (with someone**)** Go to go all the way (with someone).

go to bed with the chickens *Fig.* to go to bed at sundown—at the same time that chickens go to sleep. ☐ *They say that farmers go to bed with the chickens.* ☐ *We always go to bed with the chickens and get up early too.*

go to bed with the sun *Fig.* to go to bed early, at sunset. ☐ *The campers went to bed with the sun.* ☐ *The children had to go to bed with the sun. The grown-ups stayed up a little later.*

Go to blazes! *Inf.* Go to hell! ☐ *Go to blazes! Stop pestering me!* ☐ *I'm sick of your complaining. Go to blazes!*

go to Davy Jones's locker Go to Davy Jones's locker.

go to extremes (to do something**)** to be excessive in one's efforts to do something. ☐ *Auntie Jane will go to extremes to make us all comfortable.* ☐ *Let's not go to extremes! We've already spent enough on gifts for the kids.*

go to great lengths (to do something**)** and **go to any lengths (to** do something**)** to work very hard to accomplish something; to expend great efforts in trying to do something. (See also go to any length.) ☐ *I went to great lengths to explain to him that he was not in any trouble.*

go to hell and **go to (the devil) 1.** *Inf.* to go to hell and suffer the agonies therein. (Often a command. Caution with *hell*.) ☐ *Oh, go to hell!* ☐ *Go to hell, you creep!* **2.** *Inf.* to become ruined; to go away and stop bothering someone. (Use *hell* with caution.) ☐ *This old house is just going to hell. It's falling apart everywhere.* ☐ *Leave me alone! Go to the devil!* ☐ *Oh, go to, yourself!*

go to hell in a bucket and **go to hell in a handbasket** *Fig.* to get rapidly worse and worse. ☐ *The school system in this district is going to hell in a bucket, and no mistake.* ☐ *His health is going to hell in a handbasket ever since he started drinking again.*

go to it 1. *Lit.* to start something actively; to do something with vigor. ☐ *Time to play ball. Go to it!* ☐ *Let's go to it, you guys!* **2.** *Inf.* to fight. ☐ *Come on, let's go to it! I'm gonna beat the daylights out of you!*

go to one's **(just) reward** *Euph.* to die. ☐ *Let us pray for our departed sister, who has gone to her just reward.* ☐ *Bill: How's your grandma these days? Tom: She went to her reward last winter, may she rest in peace.*

go to pieces 1. *Lit.* [for something] to fall apart into many pieces. ☐ *The vase—which had been repaired many times—just went to pieces when I put it down.* ☐ *When the window was hit by the ball, it went to pieces.* **2.** *Fig.* [for something] to become nonfunctional. ☐ *His plan went to pieces.* ☐ *All her hopes and ideas went to pieces in that one meeting.* **3.** *Fig.* [for someone] to have a mental collapse. ☐ *Poor Jane went to pieces after her divorce.* ☐ *Fred went to pieces during the trial.*

go to pot and **go to the dogs** *Fig.* to go to ruin; to deteriorate. ☐ *My whole life seems to be going to pot.* ☐ *My lawn is going to pot. I had better weed it.*

go to press [for a publication] to be sent to the printing presses. ☐ *The book went to press last week. We expect finished books by the first of the month.* ☐ *The book you want to order hasn't even gone to press yet.*

go to press with something [for someone] to cause something to be printed. ☐ *The columnist went to press with the rumor without checking any of her usual sources.* ☐ *We are going to press with a series of books on textiles.*

go to rack and ruin and **go to wrack and ruin** to become ruined. (The words *rack* and *wrack* mean "wreckage" and are found only in this expression.) ☐ *That lovely old house on the corner is going to go to rack and ruin.* ☐ *My lawn is going to wrack and ruin.*

go to sea to become a sailor. ☐ *I went to sea at an early age.* ☐ *When I get older, I'm going to go to sea too.*

go to seed 1. and **run to seed** *Lit.* [for a plant] to grow long enough to produce seed; [for a plant] to spend its energy going to seed. ☐ *The lettuce went to seed and we couldn't eat it.* ☐ *Plants like that ought not to be allowed to go to seed.* **2.** and **run to seed** *Fig.* [for a lawn or a plant] to produce seeds because it has not had proper care. ☐ *You've got to mow the grass. It's going to seed.* ☐ *Don't let the lawn go to seed. It looks so—seedy!* **3.** *Fig.* [for something] to decline in looks, status, or utility due to lack of care. (The same as run to seed.) ☐ *This old coat is going to seed. Have to get a new one.* ☐ *The front of the house is going to seed. Let's get it painted.*

go to someone **(about** someone or something**)** to discuss one's problems with someone or something with someone else. ☐ *I went to the boss about the new secretary.* ☐ *This is a real problem. I'll have to go to the manager.*

go to someone or something to travel to or toward someone or something. ☐ *We went to her as soon as she called saying she needed us.* ☐ *Are you going to the bank?*

go to someone's **head 1.** *Fig.* [for something, such as fame or success] to make someone conceited. ☐ *Don't let all this praise go to your head.* ☐ *Too much success will go to her head.* **2.** *Fig.* [for alcohol] to affect someone's brain. ☐ *That last glass of champagne went right to her head.* ☐ *Any kind of liquor goes to my head.*

go to the bathroom 1. *Fig. Euph.* to go into and use a restroom, bathroom, or toilet. ☐ *Bill: Where is Bob? Jane: He went to the bathroom.* ☐ *John went to the bathroom to brush his teeth.* **2.** *Fig. Euph.* to eliminate bodily wastes. ☐ *Mommy! The dog went to the bathroom on the carpet!* ☐ *Billy's in there going to the bathroom. Don't disturb him.*

go to the bother (of doing something**)** Go to go to the trouble (of doing something).

go to the crux of the matter Go to the crux of the matter.

go to (the devil) Go to go to hell.

go to the dogs Go to go to pot.

go to the expense (of doing something**)** to pay the (large) cost of doing something. ☐ *I hate to have to go to the expense of painting the house.* ☐ *It needs to be done, so you'll have to go to the expense.*

go to the heart of the matter Go to the crux of the matter.

go to the lavatory *Euph.* to go into a restroom and use a toilet. ☐ *Bob requested to leave the room to go to the lavatory.* ☐ *Please stop the car. I have to go to the lavatory.*

go to the limit to do as much as is possible to do. ☐ *Okay, we can't afford it, but we'll go to the limit.* ☐ *How far shall I go? Shall I go to the limit?*

go to the polls to go to a place to vote; to vote. ☐ *What day do we go to the polls?* ☐ *Our community goes to the polls in November.*

go to the root of the matter Go to the crux of the matter.

go to the toilet *Fig. Euph.* to use a toilet for defecation or urination. ☐ *Jimmy washed his hands after he went to the toilet.* ☐ *Excuse me, I have to go to the toilet.*

go to the trouble (of doing something**)** and **go to the trouble (to** do something**); go to the bother (of** doing something**); go to the bother (to** do something**)** to endure the effort or bother of doing something. ☐ *I really don't want to go to the trouble to cook.* ☐ *Should I go to the bother of cooking something for her to eat?* ☐ *Don't go to the trouble. She can eat a sandwich.*

go to the wall (on something**)** to take on great risk or to hold out to the very last on some issue. (See also push someone to the wall.) ☐ *I will go to the wall on this point.* ☐ *This is a very important matter and I will go to the wall if necessary.*

go to town 1. *Lit.* to travel into town or a city. ☐ *I have to go to town today.* **2.** *Fig.* to work hard or very effectively. ☐ *Look at all those ants working. They are really going to town.* ☐ *Come on, you guys. Let's go to town. We have to finish this job before noon.*

go to trial [for a case] to go into court to be tried. ☐ *When will this case go to trial?* ☐ *We go to trial next Monday.*

go to war (over someone or something**)** to wage a war over someone or something. (Often an exaggeration.) ☐ *We aren't going to go to war over this, are we?* ☐ *Do you want to go to war over Sarah? Is she that important to you?*

go to waste [for something] to be wasted; to be unused (and therefore thrown away). ☐ *Eat your potatoes! Don't let them go to waste.* ☐ *We shouldn't let all those nice herbs go to waste. Let's pick some before the first hard frost.*

go to work (on someone or something**)** to begin working on someone or something. ☐ *The masons went to work on repairing the wall.* ☐ *The surgeons went to work on the patient.* ☐ *Come on! Let's go to work!*

go to wrack and ruin Go to go to rack and ruin.

Go to your room! Go to On your bike!

go together 1. *Lit.* [for two or more things] to look, sound, or taste good together. ☐ *Do you think that this pink one and this purple one go together?* ☐ *Milk and grapefruit don't go together.* **2.** *Fig.* [for two people] to date each other regularly. ☐ *Bob and Ann have been going together for months.* ☐ *Tom and Jane want to go together, but they live too far apart.*

go too far to do more than is acceptable. ☐ *I didn't mind at first, but now you've gone too far.* ☐ *If you go too far, I'll slap you.*

go toward someone or something to move toward someone or something. ☐ *The child went toward the open door.* ☐ *The dog went toward the cat and the cat ran away.*

go under 1. to sink beneath the surface of the water. ☐ *After capsizing, the ship went under very slowly.* ☐ *I was afraid that our canoe would go under in the rapidly moving water.* **2.** *Fig.* [for something] to fail. ☐ *The company went under exactly one year after it opened.* ☐ *We tried to keep it from going under.* **3.** *Fig.* to become unconscious from anesthesia. ☐ *After a few minutes, she went under and the surgeon began to work.* ☐ *Tom went under and the operation began.*

go under (someone or something**) 1.** to pass beneath someone or something. ☐ *The boats went under us as we stood on the bridge.* ☐ *The boat went under the bridge.* **2.** to belong beneath someone or something. ☐ *That box goes under the bed.* ☐ *All the Christmas presents go under the tree after the children are asleep.*

go under the hammer Go to come under the hammer.

go under the knife *Fig.* to submit to surgery; to have surgery done on oneself. ☐ *She goes under the knife tomorrow for her gallbladder.* ☐ *Frank lives in constant fear of having to go under the knife.*

go under the name of something [for someone or something] to be known under a particular name. ☐ *Now she goes under the name of Suzanne.* ☐ *The man you just met goes under the name of Walter Sampson.*

go under the wrecking ball *Fig.* to be wrecked or torn down. ☐ *That lovely old building finally went under the wrecking ball.* ☐ *I hate to see good architecture go under the wrecking ball.*

G

go up [for something] to go higher. ☐ *Gasoline prices are still going up.* ☐ *Prices keep going up and up, no matter what.*

go up a blind alley Go to **up a blind alley.**

go up against someone to compete with someone; to face someone in competition. ☐ *She is going up against Rodney in the spelling bee.* ☐ *The champ went up against the challenger in a match last Friday.*

go up against someone or something Go to **up against** someone or something.

go up for auction Go to **up for auction.**

go up in flames and **go up in smoke 1.** *Lit.* to burn up completely. ☐ *The entire forest went up in flames!* ☐ *The expensive house went up in smoke.* **2.** *Fig.* [for value or investment] to be lost suddenly and totally. ☐ *Everything we own has gone up in flames with the stock crash.* ☐ *The entire investment went up in smoke.*

go up in smoke Go to previous.

go up something to climb up something. ☐ *The monkey went up the tree in no time.* ☐ *How fast can you go up this rope?*

go up the wall 1. *Lit.* to climb or run up the wall. ☐ *Look at that silly cat go up the wall! How can its claws hold onto the brick?* **2.** *Fig.* to exhibit great frustration, as if trying to climb up a wall. ☐ *I was so upset, I almost went up the wall.* ☐ *We went up the wall waiting for you.*

go up to someone or something to approach someone or something. ☐ *The temperature will go up to near one hundred today.* ☐ *I went up to her and asked her for a match.*

go well with someone or something [for something] to proceed nicely for someone or something. ☐ *I hope things are going well with you.* ☐ *Things are going very well with the project.*

go whole hog to do everything possible; to be extravagant. ☐ *Let's go whole hog. Order steak* and *lobster.* ☐ *Show some restraint. Don't go whole hog all the time.*

go wild *Fig.* to get very excited. ☐ *At the end of the football game, the kick was good and the crowd went wild.*

go window-shopping to go about looking at goods in store windows without actually buying anything. ☐ *The office workers go window-shopping on their lunch hour, looking for things to buy when they get paid.* ☐ *Joan said she was just going window-shopping, but she bought a new coat.*

go with it Go to **go with the flow.**

go with someone and **go steady with** someone to have a romantic relationship with someone. (*Go steady* is dated.) ☐ *Sally has been going with Mark for two months now.* ☐ *He wants to go steady with her. He doesn't want her to see other guys.*

go with (someone or something**)** to depart in the company of someone or a group. ☐ *Jim's not here. He went with the last busload.* ☐ *I'm leaving now. Do you want to go with?*

go with something **1.** *Lit.* to accompany something agreeably. ☐ *Milk doesn't go with grapefruit.* ☐ *Pink doesn't go with orange.* **2.** *Fig.* to choose something (over something else). ☐ *I think I'll go with the yellow one.* ☐ *We decided to go with the oak table rather than the walnut one.*

go with the flow and **go with it** *Inf.* to cope with adversity; to accept one's lot. ☐ *No, just relax and go with the flow.* ☐ *Go with it. Don't fight it.*

go with the territory Go to **come with the territory.**

go with the tide *Fig.* to move along with the effect of outside forces. ☐ *I just go with the tide. I never fight fate.* ☐ *She just goes with the tide, never giving a thought to thinking for herself.*

go without and **do without** to manage while not having any of something that is needed; to not have any of something. ☐ *We were a poor family and usually went without.* ☐ *I didn't have enough money to buy a new coat so I did without.*

go without (someone or something**)** to manage without a particular type of person or thing. ☐ *I can't go without a doctor much longer.* ☐ *I need a doctor now. I simply can't go without.* ☐ *We can go without food for only so long.*

go wrong to fail; [for something bad] to happen. ☐ *The project failed. I don't know what went wrong.* ☐ *I'm afraid that everything will go wrong.*

goad someone **into** something to urge or coerce someone into doing something. ☐ *Don't try to goad me into it. I just won't do it!* ☐ *We goaded Mary into going with us.*

goad someone **on** to urge someone onward, possibly with jeers or challenges; to urge someone to continue. (Usually in this order.) ☐ *The cheering crowd goaded the team on to victory.* ☐ *I goaded Jed on to taking the risk.*

gobble someone or something **up†** to eat someone or something completely and rapidly. ☐ *The wolf said that he was going to gobble the little girl up.* ☐ *The wolf wanted to gobble up the little pig.*

gobble something **down†** to eat something very fast, swallowing large chunks. ☐ *The dog gobbled the meat down in seconds.* ☐ *The cat gobbled down the sardines.*

gobble something **up†** to use up, buy up, or occupy all of something. ☐ *The shoppers gobbled all the sale merchandise up in a few hours.* ☐ *They gobbled up everything.*

God forbid! and **Heaven forbid!** a phrase expressing the desire that God would forbid the situation that the speaker has just mentioned from ever happening. ☐ *Tom: It looks like taxes are going up again. Bob: God forbid!* ☐ *Bob: Bill was in a car wreck. I hope he wasn't hurt! Sue: God forbid!*

God helps them that help themselves. and **God helps those who help themselves.** *Prov.* You cannot depend solely on divine help, but must work yourself to get what you want. ☐ *You can't spend your days waiting for a good job to find you. God helps those that help themselves.* ☐ *If you want a better education, start studying. God helps those who help themselves.*

God only knows! *Inf.* Only God knows.; No one knows but God. ☐ *Tom: How long is all this going to take? Alice: God only knows!* ☐ *Bob: Where are we going to find one hundred thousand dollars? Mary: God only knows!*

God rest someone's **soul.** May God bless a previously mentioned person who has died. ☐ *I remember what my mother, God rest her soul, used to say about that.*

God's gift (to women) *Fig.* a desirable or perfect man. (Usually sarcastic.) ☐ *Tom thinks he's God's gift to women, but if the truth were known, they laugh at him behind his*

back. ☐ *He acted like he was God's gift and I should be real grateful to be going out with him.*

God takes soonest those he loveth best. *Prov.* Good people often die young. ☐ *The minister told the boy's grieving parents that God takes soonest those he loveth best.* ☐ *It may seem to us that Nancy was too young to die, but God takes soonest those he loveth best.*

God willing. If God wants it to happen. (An expression indicating that there is a high certainty that something will happen, so high that only God could prevent it.) ☐ *John: Please try to be on time. Alice: I'll be there on time, God willing.* ☐ *Bob: Will I see you after your vacation? Mary: Of course, God willing.*

God willing and the creek don't rise and **Lord willing and the creek don't rise** *Rur.* If all goes well. ☐ *Tom: Will you be able to get the house painted before the cold weather sets in? Jane: Yes, God willing and the creek don't rise.* ☐ *We'll be able to visit our daughter for Christmas, Lord willing and the creek don't rise.*

God's in his heaven; all's right with the world. *Prov.* Everything is just as it should be. (Used to express satisfaction, joy, or contentment.) ☐ *Now that my wife has returned from her long trip, God's in his heaven; all's right with the world.*

The **gods send nuts to those who have no teeth.** *Prov.* People often get good fortune that is no use to them. ☐ *Soon after Melissa lost her hearing, she won season tickets to the symphony. The gods send nuts to those who have no teeth.*

goggle at someone or something to stare at someone or something with bulging eyes. ☐ *Don't stand there goggling at me!* ☐ *The child stood there and goggled at the newborn lamb.*

going, going, gone 1. [in an auction] close to being sold, almost sold, sold. ☐ *Going, going, gone. The new owner is the handsome gentleman in the back row.* **2.** *Fig.* disappearing and finally gone. ☐ *The little car is going, going, gone.*

going great guns *Fig.* going fast or energetically. ☐ *I'm over my cold and going great guns.* ☐ *Business is great. We are going great guns selling ice cream.*

going on happening; occurring. ☐ *What is going on here?* ☐ *Something is going on in the center of town. Can you hear the sirens?*

the **going rate** the current rate or the current charges for something. ☐ *The going interest rate for your account is 10 percent.* ☐ *Our babysitter charges us the going rate.*

going strong functioning well or energetically. ☐ *We are still well and going strong.*

going to tattle Go to next.

going to tell and **going to tattle** a threat that one is going to report someone's misdeed to someone in authority. ☐ *If you do that again, I'm going to tell!* ☐ *Sue just went to the teacher. She's going to tattle.*

gol dang Go to next.

gol dern and **gol dang** *Rur.* God damn.; God-damned. ☐ *Gol dern it, Mary, shut the screen door! Them bugs is gettin' in here in droves.* ☐ *The gol dang car's in the shop again.*

a **gold mine of information** *Fig.* someone or something that is full of information. ☐ *Grandfather is a gold mine of information about World War I.* ☐ *The new encyclopedia is a positive gold mine of useful information.*

A **golden key can open any door.** *Prov.* Sufficient money can accomplish anything. ☐ *Jill: I'm amazed that Sally got into a good university; her grades were so poor. Jane: Well, she comes from a wealthy family, and a golden key can open any door.* ☐ *Jane: How did Fred manage to get invited to the party at the country club? It's so exclusive there. Alan: Yes, but a golden key can open any door.*

a **golden opportunity** *Fig.* an excellent opportunity that is not likely to be repeated. ☐ *When I failed to finish college, I missed my golden opportunity to prepare myself for a good job.*

G

gone but not forgotten *Cliché* gone or dead and still remembered. ☐ *The good days we used to have together are gone, but not forgotten.* ☐ *Uncle Harry is gone but not forgotten. The stain where he spilled the wine is still visible in the parlor carpet.*

gone goose someone or something that has departed or run away. ☐ *Surely, the burglar is a gone goose by now.* ☐ *The child was a gone goose, and we did not know where to look for him.*

gone on *Euph.* died. ☐ *My husband, Tom—he's gone on, you know—was a great one for golf.* ☐ *Let us remember those who have gone on before.*

gone to meet one's **maker** *Euph.* died. ☐ *Poor old Bob has gone to meet his maker.* ☐ *After a long illness, Reggie went to meet his maker.*

gone with the wind *Fig.* gone as if taken away by the wind. (A phrase made famous by the Margaret Mitchell novel and subsequent film *Gone with the Wind.* The phrase is used to make *gone* have a stronger force.) ☐ *Everything we worked for was gone with the wind.*

a **goner** a dead or dying creature or person. ☐ *The boy brought the sick fish back to the pet store to get his money back. "This one is a goner," he said.* ☐ *John thought he was a goner when his parachute didn't open.*

(Good) afternoon. 1. the appropriate greeting for use between noon and supper time. ☐ *Sally: How are you today? Jane: Good afternoon. How are you? Sally: Fine, thank you.* ☐ *Bob: Afternoon. Nice to see you. Bill: Good afternoon. How are you? Bob: Fine, thanks.* **2.** an expression used on departure or for dismissal between noon and supper time. (Meaning "I wish you a good afternoon.") ☐ *Sally: See you later, Bill. Bill: Afternoon. See you later.* ☐ *Mary: Nice to see you. Tom: Good afternoon. Take care.*

good and something very or completely something. (*Something* is a state of being.) ☐ *Joe never does anything till he's good and ready.* ☐ *Mary's good and mad, all right.*

***good as done** the same as being done; almost done. (*Also: **as ~**. Many different words can replace *done* in this phrase, according to context: *cooked, dead, finished, painted, typed,* etc.) ☐ *This job is as good as done. It'll just take another second.* ☐ *Yes, sir, if you hire me to paint your house, it's as good as painted.* ☐ *When I hand my secretary a package to be shipped, I know that it's as good as delivered right then and there.*

***good as gold** *Cliché* very good. (Usually used to describe children. *Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Mother: Thank you for taking care of Gretchen; I hope she hasn't been too much trouble. Grandmother: Not at all; she's been as good as gold.* ☐ *We knew that Daddy would not read us a bedtime story unless we behaved, so we tried to be good as gold.*

***good as new** *Cliché* as good as when it was new; as well or as healthy as normal. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *A little rest and I'll be as good as new.*

a **good bet** *Fig.* a great likelihood. ☐ *It's a good bet that he will be late because of the rain.*

the **Good Book** the Bible. ☐ *I read some in the Good Book every day.* ☐ *Sally's always quoting from the Good Book.*

G

The **good die young.** *Prov.* Good people tend to die at an early age. ☐ *Marshall's twenty-year-old son died in a car crash; it did not comfort Marshall to think that the good die young.* ☐ *Jill: It doesn't seem fair that Laurie is dead. She was such a wonderful person. Jane: They always say that the good die young.*

a **good egg** *Fig.* a good and dependable person. ☐ *He seems like a good egg. I'll take a chance on him.*

Good enough. That's good.; That's adequate. ☐ *Bill: Well, now. How's that? Bob: Good enough.* ☐ *Bob: I'll be there about noon. Tom: Good enough. I'll see you then.*

good enough for government work Go to close enough for government work.

good enough for someone or something adequate for someone or something. ☐ *This seat is good enough for me. I don't want to move.* ☐ *I'm happy. It's good enough for me.* ☐ *That table is good enough for my office.*

(Good) evening. 1. the appropriate greeting for use between supper time and the time of taking leave for the night or by midnight. (Compare this with Good night.) ☐ *Bob: Good evening, Mary. How are you? Mary: Evening, Bob. Nice to see you.* ☐ *"Good evening," said each of the guests as they passed by Mr. and Mrs. Franklin.* **2.** the appropriate phrase used for leave-taking between supper time and before the time of final leave-taking to go to bed. ☐ *Mary: Let's call it a day. See you tomorrow, Bill. Bill: Yes, it's been a long and productive day. Good evening, Mary.* ☐ *Bob: Nice seeing you, Mr. Wilson. Mr. Wilson: Good evening, Bob.*

Good fences make good neighbors. *Prov.* It is easier to be friendly with your neighbor if neither of you trespasses upon the other's property or privacy. ☐ *Jane: The guy next door is letting his party guests wander across our lawn again. Alan: I guess we'll have to build a fence there. Good fences make good neighbors, like they say.*

good for what ails you *Rur.* able to cure any problem or illness. (Usually used to describe food or liquor.) ☐ *Have a sip of this whiskey. It's good for what ails you.* ☐ *Sally's beef broth is good for what ails you.*

Good for you! a complimentary expression of encouragement for something that someone has done or received. ☐ *Sue: I just got a raise. Bill: Good for you!* ☐ *Jane: I really told him what I thought of his rotten behavior. Sue: Good for you! He needs it.*

Good going! Go to Nice going!

Good golly, Miss Molly! *Inf.* Good grief!; Wow! ☐ *Good golly, Miss Molly! This place is a mess!* ☐ *Good golly, Miss Molly, that's awful!*

a **(good) grasp of** something Go to a (solid) grasp of something.

Good grief! *Inf.* an exclamation of surprise, shock, or amazement. ☐ *Alice: Good grief! I'm late! Mary: That clock's fast. You're probably okay on time.* ☐ *Bill: There are seven newborn kittens under the sofa! Jane: Good grief!*

(Good) heavens! *Inf.* an exclamation of surprise, shock, or amazement. (See also (My) heavens!) ☐ *John: Good heavens! Look at that diamond ring she has! Bill: I bet it's not real.* ☐ *Jane: Ouch! John: Good heavens! What happened? Jane: I just stubbed my toe.*

A **good husband makes a good wife.** and A **good Jack makes a good Jill.** *Prov.* If a husband or man wants his wife or girlfriend to be respectful and loving to him, he should be respectful and loving to her. ☐ *Don't blame your wife for being short-tempered with you; you've been so unpleasant to her lately. A good husband makes a good wife.*

The **good is the enemy of the best.** *Prov.* Instead of making things the best that they can, people often settle for making them merely good. ☐ *Mother: Aren't you going to rewrite your paper? Child: Why? It's good enough. Mother: The good is the enemy of the best.*

A **good Jack makes a good Jill.** Go to A good husband makes a good wife.

Good job! Go to Nice going!

Good luck! 1. a wish of good luck to someone. ☐ *Mary: I have my recital tonight. Jane: I know you'll do well. Good luck!* ☐ *Sally: I hear you're leaving for your new job tomorrow morning. Bob: That's right. Sally: Well, good luck!* **2.** You will certainly need luck, but it probably will not work. (Sarcastic.) ☐ *Bill: I'm going to try to get this tax bill lowered. Sue: Good luck!* ☐ *Bill: I'm sure I can get this cheaper at another store. Clerk: Good luck!*

A **good man is hard to find.** Go to Good men are scarce.

a **good many** quite a few. ☐ *I have a good many kinfolk in Texas.* ☐ *Mary owns a good many acres of land.*

Good men are scarce. and A **good man is hard to find.** *Prov.* Men who make good husbands or workers are rare. ☐ *Larry is the best employee I've ever had, and I'll go to a good deal of effort to keep him, because good men are scarce.* ☐ *"I think you should marry John," Sue advised her daughter. "He's a good man, and a good man is hard to find."*

(Good) morning. the standard greeting phrase used any time between midnight and noon. ☐ *Bob: Good morning. Bill: Good morning, Bob. You sure get up early!*

(Good) night. 1. the appropriate departure phrase for leave-taking after dark. (This assumes that the speakers will not see one another until morning at the earliest. *Night* alone is familiar.) ☐ *John: Bye, Alice. Alice: Night. See you tomorrow.* ☐ *Bill: Good night, Mary. Mary: Night, Bill.* **2.** the appropriate phrase for wishing someone a good night's sleep. ☐ *Father: Good night, Bill. Bill: Night, Pop.* ☐ *Father: Good night. Mother: Good night.*

good old boy and **good ole boy** *Rur.* a good guy; a dependable companion. ☐ *Old Tom is a good old boy. He'll help.* ☐ *One of these good ole boys will give you a hand.*

the **good old days** back in an earlier time which everyone remembers as a better time, even if it really wasn't. ☐ *Back in the good old days, during World War I, they used real cactus needles in record players.* ☐ *The good old days didn't start until they had indoor bathrooms.*

good riddance (to bad rubbish) *Cliché* [It is] good to be rid (of worthless persons or things). (See also Good-bye and good riddance.) ☐ *She slammed the door behind me and said, "Good riddance to bad rubbish!"* ☐ *"Good riddance to you, madam," thought I.*

Good seed makes a good crop. *Prov.* Starting with good materials will help you get good results. ☐ *Jill: Elsie and Jim are going to have a baby. Jane: I'm sure it will be a good child, since they're both such good people. Good seed makes a good crop.* ☐ *I am sure Robert's business will flourish. He's capable and honest, and good seed makes a good crop.*

a **good sport** someone who can accept a loss in a competition or can accept being the butt of a joke. ☐ *Bob is usually a good sport, but this time he didn't seem to appreciate your joke.*

Good things come in small packages. Go to The best things come in small packages.

Good things come to him who waits. and **Everything comes to him who waits.** *Prov.* If you are patient you will get what you want. ☐ *Fred: Why is it taking you so long to get dinner ready? Can't you hurry up? Ellen: Good things come to him who waits.* ☐ *Jill: I wish our train would get here. Jane: Everything comes to her who waits.*

A **good time was had by all.** *Cliché* Everyone had a good time. ☐ *Jill: How was the party? Jane: A good time was had by all.* ☐ *After seeing the movie, the ten of us went out for ice cream, and a good time was had by all.*

good to go *Inf.* all ready to go; all checked and pronounced ready to go. ☐ *I've checked everything and we are good to go.* ☐ *Everything's good to go and we will start immediately.*

*a **(good) working over** a good scolding. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *The boss gave me a good working over before firing me.* ☐ *She got a working over about her performance on the project.*

Good-bye and good riddance. *Cliché* a phrase marking the departure of someone or something unwanted. ☐ *Fred: Supposing I was to just walk out of here, just like that? Mary: I'd say good-bye and good riddance.* ☐ *As the garbage truck drove away, carrying the drab old chair that Mary hated so much, she said, "Good-bye and good riddance."*

Good-bye for now. and **(Good-bye) until next time.; Till next time.; Bye for now.; Till we meet again.; Until we meet again.** Good-bye, I'll see you soon.; Good-bye, I'll see you next time. (Often said by the host at the end of a radio or television program.) ☐ *Alice: See you later. Good-bye for now. John: Bye, Alice.* ☐ *Mary: See you later. Bob: Good-bye for now.* ☐ *The host of the talk show always closed by saying, "Good-bye until next time. This is Wally Ott, signing off."*

(Good-bye) until then. and **(Good-bye) till then.; (Good-bye) till later.; (Good-bye) until later.** Good-bye until sometime in the future. ☐ *Sally: See you tomorrow. Good-bye until then. Sue: Sure thing. See you.* ☐ *Mary: See you later. Bob: Until later.* ☐ *The announcer always ended by saying, "Be with us again next week at this time. Good-bye until then."*

*the **goods on** someone something potentially damaging or embarrassing about someone. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *John beat me unfairly in tennis, but I'll get even. I'll get the goods on him and his cheating.* ☐ *The authorities are going to get the goods on Mr. Smith. He has been selling worthless land again.*

G

goof around to act silly. ☐ *The kids were all goofing around, waiting for the bus.* ☐ *Stop goofing around!*

goof off to waste time. ☐ *John is always goofing off.* ☐ *Quit goofing off and get to work!*

goof on someone *Inf.* to tease or kid someone. ☐ *I don't believe you. I think you're just goofing on me.*

goof someone or something **up**† *Inf.* to mess someone or something up; to ruin someone's plans; to make something nonfunctional. ☐ *Who goofed this machine up?* ☐ *Who goofed up the machine?*

goof up (on something**)** *Inf.* to make an error with something; to blunder while doing something. ☐ *Please don't goof up on this job.* ☐ *If you goof up one more time, you're finished.*

goofed (up) 1. *Inf.* messed up; out of order. ☐ *All my papers are goofed up.* ☐ *Everything on my desk is goofed. Who's been here?* **2.** *Inf.* confused; distraught. ☐ *I'm sort of goofed up today. I think I'm coming down with something.* ☐ *I was up too late last night, and now I'm all goofed up.*

***goose bumps** and ***goose pimples** *Fig.* a prickly feeling related to having bumps on one's skin due to fear, excitement, or cold. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *When I hear that old song, I get goose bumps.* ☐ *I never have goose pimples, but my teeth chatter when it's cold.*

goose egg 1. *Fig.* a raised bump on the skull as when one's head has been struck. ☐ *I walked into the edge of the door and got a terrible goose egg.* **2.** *Fig.* in a sports score, zero. ☐ *At the end of the game there was nothing but goose eggs next to our name.*

goose pimples Go to goose bumps.

gorge oneself **on** something and **gorge** oneself **with** something to eat something to the point of fullness. ☐ *Don't gorge yourself on the snacks. Dinner is in ten minutes.* ☐ *You have gorged yourself with cheese! No wonder you're not hungry.* ☐ *Claire gorged herself on the doughnuts that Fred bought.*

gorge someone or something **with** something to fill someone or something by eating something. ☐ *She gorged the dog with canned food.* ☐ *The puppy gorged itself with all the hamburger Paul had set out to thaw.*

gorked (out) *Sl.* heavily sedated; knocked out. ☐ *Once the patient was gorked, he was more cooperative.* ☐ *The guy in Room 226 is totally gorked out now.*

the **gospel truth** *Fig.* the undeniable truth. ☐ *The witness swore he was telling the gospel truth.* ☐ *I told my parents the gospel truth about how the vase broke.*

gossip about someone or something to talk maliciously about someone or something. ☐ *Who are you gossiping about now?* ☐ *They are gossiping about what happened last weekend.*

got to fly Go to I've got to fly.

gotta get up pretty early in the morning to do something *Rur.* it would be difficult to do something (specified) because of the ability or quality involved. ☐ *You gotta get up pretty early in the morning to cheat Bill Johnson. He's a sharp businessman for sure.* ☐ *You gotta get up pretty early in the morning to know your Bible better than Preacher Harris.*

G

gouge something **out**† Go to gouge something out of something.

gouge something **out of** someone to cheat someone out of something. (Compare this with chisel something out of someone.) ☐ *They gouged the money out of the old man.* ☐ *The crooks gouged the life savings out of the old lady.*

gouge something **out of** something and **gouge** something **out**† to scoop or chisel something out of something. ☐ *Tom gouged a horrible furrow out of the wood of the piano bench.* ☐ *He gouged out a horrible scratch.*

Governments have long arms. Go to Kings have long arms.

grab a bite (to eat) Go to a bite (to eat).

grab a chair and **grab a seat** *Fig.* to quickly sit down in a seat. ☐ *Grab a chair and join the group!*

grab a seat Go to previous.

grab at someone or something and **grab for** someone or something to grasp quickly at someone or something; to try to seize someone or something. ☐ *He grabbed at me, but I got away unscathed.* ☐ *I grabbed at the rope, but missed.* ☐ *The teacher grabbed for the little boy and held him.*

grab for someone or something Go to previous.

grab on(to someone or something**)** to grasp someone or something; to hold onto someone or something. ☐ *Here, grab onto this rope!* ☐ *Grab on and hold tight.*

grab someone or something **away**† **(from** someone or something**)** to snatch someone or something away from someone or something. ☐ *Harry's aunt grabbed the dirty candy away from him before he got it in his mouth.* ☐ *I grabbed away the meat from the dog.*

grab someone's **attention** and **get** someone's **attention; grip** someone's **attention** *Fig.* to draw or attract someone's attention. ☐ *The bright colors on the poster are there to grab your attention.* ☐ *The scary movie gripped my attention.*

grace someone or something **with** one's **presence** *Fig.* to honor someone or something with one's presence. ☐ *"How nice of you to grace us with your presence," Mr. Wilson told Mary sarcastically as she entered the classroom late.* ☐ *The banquet was graced with the presence of the governor.*

grace something **with** something *Fig.* to adorn something or some place with something, especially a person's presence. ☐ *The lovely lady graced our home with her presence.* ☐ *The stage was graced with flowers and a few palm trees.*

graced with something made elegant by means of some ornament or decoration. ☐ *The altar was graced with lovely white flowers.* ☐ *The end of the beautiful day was graced with a beautiful sunset.*

***graceful as a swan** very graceful. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *The boat glided out onto the lake as graceful as a swan.* ☐ *Jane is graceful as a swan.*

a **gracious plenty** and an **elegant sufficiency** *Euph.* enough (food). ☐ *No more, thanks. I have a gracious plenty on my plate.* ☐ *At Thanksgiving, we always have an elegant sufficiency and are mighty thankful for it.*

grade someone **down (on** something**)** to give someone a low ranking, rating, or score on some performance. ☐ *I had to grade you down on your essay because of your spelling.* ☐ *Please don't grade me down for a minor mistake.*

graduate (from something**)** to earn and receive a degree from an educational institution. ☐ *I graduated from a large midwestern university.* ☐ *Bill intends to graduate in the spring.*

graduate (in something**) (with** something**)** to earn a degree in some subject with honors, etc. ☐ *I graduated in math with highest honors.* ☐ *Sharon graduated with honors in medicine.*

graft something **on(to)** something and **graft** something **on**† to splice a living part onto another living part. ☐ *The gardener grafted a red rose onto the stem of another species.* ☐ *The gardener grafted on a red rose.*

a **grain of truth** even the smallest amount of truth. ☐ *The attorney was unable to find a grain of truth in the defendant's testimony.* ☐ *If there were a grain of truth to your statement, I would trust you.*

the **granddaddy of them all** Go to the daddy of them all.

a **grandfather clause** a clause in an agreement that protects certain rights granted in the past even when conditions change in the future. ☐ *The contract contained a grandfather clause that protected my pension payments against claims such as might arise from a future lawsuit.*

grandfather someone or something **in**† to protect someone or a right through the use of a grandfather clause. ☐ *My payments were grandfathered in years ago.*

grant someone **no quarter** and **give** someone **no quarter** *Fig.* not to allow someone any mercy or indulgence. (Originally meant to refuse to imprison and simply to kill one's prisoner.) ☐ *The professor was harsh on lazy students. During class, he granted them no quarter.*

grant something **to** someone to give or award something to someone. ☐ *The foundation granted a large sum of money to Jane for her research.* ☐ *They granted an award to Kelly.*

graph something **out**† to draw a graph of something. ☐ *Please take this data and graph it out.* ☐ *Graph out this data, please.*

grapple (with someone**) (for** something**)** to fight or scuffle with someone to get hold of something. ☐ *The cop grappled with the thief for the gun.* ☐ *He grappled for the gun with Max.*

grapple with something *Fig.* to deal with a problem; to get a "good hold" on a problem. ☐ *I have enough to grapple with now. No more problems, please.* ☐ *I cannot grapple with any additional problems.*

grasp at someone or something to try to seize someone or something. ☐ *He grasped at the bar and held on tight.* ☐ *The beggar grasped at the pedestrian and lost his grip.*

grasp someone or something **by** something to hold onto someone or something by something. ☐ *He grasped his friend by the hand and pulled him to safety.* ☐ *Sharon grasped the dog by its collar and held on tight.*

grasping at straws *Fig.* to depend on something that is useless; to make a futile attempt at something. ☐ *John couldn't answer the teacher's question. He was just grasping at straws.* ☐ *There I was, grasping at straws, with no one to help me.*

The **grass is always greener on the other side (of the fence).** *Prov.* People always think they would be happier in a different set of circumstances. (Usually implies that the other circumstances really are not any better.) ☐ *Jill: My job is so tedious. I wish I had my own business, like Beatrice does. Jane: Beatrice probably wishes she had the security of her old job. The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.*

grass widow a woman abandoned by her husband. (The origin of this is not clear.) ☐ *Jane's husband isn't dead, but she's a widow just the same—a grass widow.* ☐ *Bill ran off and left Mary a grass widow.*

grate on someone to annoy someone; to rub someone the wrong way. ☐ *Your negative attitude really grates on me.* ☐ *Everything you say grates on me.*

grate on someone**('s nerves)** *Fig.* to annoy someone; to bother someone. ☐ *My obnoxious brother is grating on my nerves.* ☐ *Your whining really grates on me.*

grate on something to rub, scrape, or abrade something. ☐ *The tree branch is grating on the side of the house.* ☐ *The bottom of the door is grating on the threshold. Please fix it.*

gratify someone's **desires** *Euph.* to have sex with someone. ☐ *The prostitute promised to gratify her customer's desires.* ☐ *That night, he gratified her desires.*

gravitate to(ward) someone or something *Fig.* to move slowly toward someone or something, as if being pulled by gravity. ☐ *People tend to gravitate toward the kitchen at parties.* ☐ *Unless you correct their manners, the children will gravitate toward rude behavior.*

a **gray area** *Fig.* an area of a subject or question that is difficult to put into a particular category because it is not clearly defined and may have connections or associations with more than one category. ☐ *The responsibility for social studies in the college is a gray area. Several departments are involved.* ☐ *Publicity is a gray area in that firm. It is shared between the marketing and design divisions.*

***gray hair(s) 1.** *Lit.* a lightening of the hair caused by aging or hereditary factors. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I get more gray hair the older I get.* ☐ *I guess my genes give me gray hair.* **2.** *Fig.* a lightening of the hair caused by stress or frustration. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I'm getting gray hairs because I have three teenage boys.* ☐ *I have gray hair from raising four kids.*

gray matter *Fig.* intelligence; brains; power of thought. ☐ *Use your gray matter and think what will happen if the committee resigns.* ☐ *Surely they'll come up with an acceptable solution if they use some gray matter.*

graze against someone or something to brush or scrape against someone or something. ☐ *The car grazed against the side of the truck.* ☐ *I grazed against an old man as I was jogging this morning.*

graze on something **1.** [for animals] to browse or forage in a particular location. ☐ *The cattle are grazing on the neighbor's land.* ☐ *I wish they wouldn't graze on other people's land.* **2.** [for animals] to browse or forage, eating something in particular. ☐ *The deer are grazing on my carrots!* ☐ *The cows were grazing on the meadow grasses for weeks.*

G

grease someone's **palm** and **oil** someone's **palm** *Fig.* to bribe someone. ☐ *If you want to get something done around here, you have to grease someone's palm.* ☐ *I'd never oil a police officer's palm. That's illegal.*

grease the skids *Fig.* to help prepare for or ease the way for the success or failure of someone or something. ☐ *Ray set out to grease the skids for the right things to happen.* ☐ *We need someone to grease the skids for the Wilson contract.*

a **greasy spoon** *Fig.* a cheap diner, where the silverware might not be too clean. ☐ *The corner greasy spoon is always busy at lunchtime.*

Great balls of fire! *Inf.* Good heavens!; Wow! ☐ *Mary got up to play the fiddle, and great balls of fire! That girl can play!* ☐ *Tom: Will you marry me? Jane: Yes, I will. Tom: Great balls of fire! I'm the happiest man on earth.*

the **great beyond** *Euph.* life after death. ☐ *The fortuneteller claimed to get messages from the great beyond.* ☐ *I often think of my loved ones in the great beyond, and long for the day I will see them again.*

Great day (in the morning)! *Rur.* My goodness! (An exclamation of surprise.) ☐ *Great day in the morning! I didn't expect to see you here.* ☐ *Great day! That thunder sure is loud!*

a **great deal** much; a lot. ☐ *You can learn a great deal about nature by watching television.* ☐ *This is a serious problem and it worries me a great deal.*

Great minds think alike. *Prov.* Very intelligent people tend to come up with the same ideas at the same time. (Used playfully, to commend someone for expressing the same thing you were thinking of; implies that you are congratulating that person for being as smart as you are. Also **Great minds run in the same gutters**, a casual and jocular variant.) ☐ *Jill: Let's ride our bikes to the store instead of walking. Jane: I was just thinking we should do that, too. Jill: Great minds think alike.*

Great oaks from little acorns grow. and **Mighty oaks from little acorns grow.** *Prov.* Immense things can come from small sources. ☐ *Don't tell lies, not even small ones. Great oaks from little acorns grow.*

Great Scott! *Inf.* an exclamation of shock or surprise. ☐ *"Great Scott! You bought a truck!" shrieked Mary.* ☐ *Fred:*

The water heater just exploded! Bill: Great Scott! What do we do now? Fred: Looks like cold showers for a while.

the **great unwashed** *Fig.* the general public; the lower middle class. ☐ *The Simpsons had a tall iron fence around their mansion—put there to discourage the great unwashed from wandering up to the door by mistake, I suppose.* ☐ *Maw says the great unwashed don't know enough to come in out of the rain.*

The **greater the truth, the greater the libel.** *Prov.* It is more offensive to say something damaging and true about someone than it is to tell a damaging lie. ☐ *Jill: Fred's really upset. Someone's started a rumor that he's unfaithful to his wife. Jane: But it's true. Jill: Yeah, but the greater the truth, the greater the libel.*

G

the **greatest thing since indoor plumbing** and the **greatest thing since sliced bread** *Rur.* the most wonderful invention or useful item in a long time. ☐ *As far as I'm concerned, this new food processor is the greatest thing since indoor plumbing.* ☐ *Joe thinks Sally is the greatest thing since sliced bread. You can tell just by the way he looks at her.*

the **greatest thing since sliced bread** Go to previous.

Greek to someone incomprehensible to someone; as mysterious as Greek writing. ☐ *I don't understand this. It's all Greek to me.* ☐ *She said it was Greek to her, and that it made no sense at all.*

green around the gills Go to pale around the gills.

***green as grass** very green. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *His face turned as green as grass just before he vomited.*

green stuff *Fig.* money; U.S. paper money. ☐ *I've run out of green stuff. Can you loan me a few bucks?*

***green with envy** *Fig.* appearing jealous; appearing envious. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *My new car made my neighbor green with envy.* ☐ *Bill was green with envy that I won first place.*

greet someone or something **with** something to welcome someone or something with something; to accost someone or something with something upon arrival. ☐ *I greeted her with a large bouquet of roses.* ☐ *The sun greeted the day with bright rays of light.*

Greetings and felicitations! and **Greetings and salutations!** Hello and good wishes. (A bit stilted.) ☐ *"Greetings and felicitations! Welcome to our talent show!" said the master of ceremonies.* ☐ *Bill: Greetings and salutations, Bob! Bob: Come off it, Bill. Can't you just say "Hi" or something?*

grieve for someone or something to mourn for someone or something. ☐ *Don't grieve for me. I'm okay.* ☐ *She grieved for her lost chances.*

grieve over someone or something to lament and pine for someone or something. ☐ *Now, don't grieve over a lost cat.* ☐ *There is no reason to continue grieving over him.*

the **grim reaper** *Fig.* death. ☐ *I think I have a few years to go yet before the grim reaper pays me a call.*

grin and bear it *Fig.* to endure something unpleasant in good humor. ☐ *There is nothing you can do but grin and bear it.* ☐ *I hate having to work for rude people. I guess I have to grin and bear it.*

grin at someone or something **1.** to smile a beaming smile at someone or something. ☐ *The entire class grinned at the camera.* ☐ *I grinned at her and she turned away quickly.* **2.** to smile a beaming smile at the thought of, or mental picture of, someone or something. ☐ *He grinned at the thought of his coming home to his family.* ☐ *He grinned at her as she gazed upon the diamond ring he had given her.*

grin from ear to ear *Fig.* to smile a very wide, beaming smile. ☐ *She was grinning from ear to ear as she accepted the prize.* ☐ *We knew Timmy was happy because he was grinning from ear to ear.*

grind away (at someone**)** *Fig.* to needle, criticize, and nag someone continually. ☐ *Why are you always grinding away at me?* ☐ *Leave me alone. Stop grinding away!*

grind away (at something**)** to crush something into particles continually. ☐ *The machine ground away at the rocks, making tons of gravel.* ☐ *It ground away, making a terrible noise in the process.*

grind on *Fig.* [for something] to drag on endlessly. ☐ *The hours ground on without anything happening. I was so tired of waiting.* ☐ *The lecture ground on, minute after minute.*

grind someone **down**† *Fig.* to wear someone down by constant requests; to wear someone down by constant nagging. ☐ *If you think you can grind me down by bothering me all the time, you are wrong.* ☐ *The constant nagging ground down the employees at last.*

grind something **away**† to remove something by grinding. ☐ *Grind the bumps away and make the wall smooth.* ☐ *Please grind away the bumps.*

grind something **down**† to make something smooth or even by grinding. ☐ *Grind this down to make it smooth.* ☐ *Please grind down this rough spot.*

grind something **into** something **1.** to pulverize something into powder, grit, particles, etc. ☐ *The machine ground the rocks into gravel.* ☐ *The mill ground the grain into flour.* **2.** and **grind something in**† to crush or rub something into something. ☐ *People's feet ground the cigarette ashes into the carpet.* ☐ *Their feet ground in the ashes.*

grind something **out**† **1.** *Lit.* to produce something by grinding. ☐ *Working hard, he ground the powder out, a cup at a time.* ☐ *He ground out the powder, a cup at a time.* **2.** *Fig.* to produce something in a mechanical or perfunctory manner. ☐ *The factory just keeps grinding these toys out, day after day.* ☐ *The machine grinds out the same part by the hundreds all day long.*

grind something **to** something to keep grinding something until it is something. ☐ *I ground the fennel seeds to a powder and threw them in the simmering sauce.* ☐ *The wheels of the cars, trucks, and buses had ground the football to a broken mass.*

grind something **together** to rub things together. ☐ *Stop grinding your teeth together.* ☐ *The stones ground together as we drove over them.*

grind something **up**† to pulverize or crush something by crushing, rubbing, or abrasion. ☐ *Please grind the fennel seeds up.* ☐ *Grind up the fennel seeds and sprinkle them on the top.*

grind to a halt *Fig.* to slow down and stop. ☐ *Every day about noon, traffic in town grinds to a halt.* ☐ *The bus ground to a halt at the corner and someone got off.*

***a grip on** oneself *Fig.* control of one's emotions. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~**.) ☐ *Calm down, man! Get a grip on yourself!* ☐ *I encouraged him to get a grip on himself.*

***a grip on** something **1.** and ***a hold on** something *Lit.* a good grasp on something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Try to get a grip on the ropes and pull yourself up.* ☐ *You should get a hold on the knob and turn it firmly.* **2.** *Fig.* a thorough knowledge of some topic. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I need to have a grip on the basics of accounting.* ☐ *Try to get a hold on all the facts first.*

grip someone's **attention** Go to **grab** someone's **attention.**

gripe at someone to complain to someone. ☐ *Stop griping at me!* ☐ *There is no need to gripe at your little brother.*

gripe one's **soul** *Inf.* to annoy someone. ☐ *That kind of thing really gripes my soul!* ☐ *John, have I ever told you that you gripe my soul?*

gripe (to someone or something**) (about** someone or something**)** to make specific complaints to someone about someone or something. ☐ *Don't gripe to me about what she said to you!* ☐ *There is no need to gripe about the job to everyone.*

grist for the mill and **grist for** someone's **mill; grist to the mill** *Fig.* something useful or needed. ☐ *Bob bases the novels he writes on his own experience, so everything that happens to him is grist for the mill.* ☐ *Ever since I started making patchwork quilts, every scrap of cloth I find is grist for the mill.*

grit one's **teeth** *Fig.* to grind or clench one's teeth together in anger or determination. ☐ *I was so mad, all I could do was stand there and grit my teeth.* ☐ *All through the race, Sally was gritting her teeth. She was really determined.*

groan about someone or something to complain about someone or something. ☐ *What are you groaning about?* ☐ *She is groaning about her work.*

groan something **out**† to say something with a groan. ☐ *He groaned the name out.* ☐ *He groaned out the name of his assailant before he passed out.*

groan under something **1.** *Lit.* to groan while bearing a heavy burden. ☐ *He groaned under the weight of the trunk.* ☐ *The rafters groaned under the heavy weight of the pianos.* **2.** *Fig.* to suffer under a burden. ☐ *For years, the people had groaned under the cruel ruler.* ☐ *England groaned under the rule of Cromwell just as he had groaned under King Charles.*

groan with something to groan because of something, such as pain. ☐ *She groaned with pain, but no one helped her.* ☐ *I think the old man was groaning with boredom more than anything else.*

gronk (out) *Sl.* to **conk out;** to crash, as with a car or a computer. ☐ *My car gronked out on the way to work this morning.* ☐ *The program gronks every time I start to run it.*

groom someone **as** something to prepare someone for a job or position. ☐ *He was grooming his son as his successor.* ☐ *They groomed Charles as the next treasurer.*

groom someone **for** something to prepare someone for something; to prepare someone to be someone. ☐ *The boss is grooming his son for the presidency of the company.* ☐ *They are grooming the vice president for the top position.*

groove on someone or something to show interest in someone or something; to relate to someone or something. ☐ *Fred was beginning to groove on new age music when he met Phil.* ☐ *Sam is really grooving on Mary.*

grope (about) (for someone or something**)** and **grope (around) (for** someone or something**)** to feel around blindly for someone or something. ☐ *In the darkness, he groped about for his glasses.* ☐ *Fran groped for the light switch and found it.*

grope after someone or something to reach for a departing or fleeing person or thing awkwardly or ineffectually. ☐ *The feeble hand groped after the departing form.* ☐ *I groped after the cat as it ran under the bed.*

grope (around) (for someone or something**)** Go to **grope (about) (for** someone or something**).**

grope at someone or something to reach for someone or something blindly. ☐ *She groped feebly at the form she could hardly see.* ☐ *Sharon groped at Frank as he ran out to get the doctor.*

gross someone **out**† to disgust someone. ☐ *Those horrible pictures just gross me out.* ☐ *Jim's story totally grossed out Sally.*

ground someone **in** something *Fig.* to instruct someone in an area of knowledge. ☐ *We grounded all our children in the basics of home cooking.* ☐ *We were all grounded in basic cooking by the time we were six.*

ground something **on** something *Fig.* to build a firm basis for something on something else. ☐ *He grounded his thinking on his detailed research.* ☐ *His thinking was grounded on years of reading.*

grounded in (actual) fact *Fig.* based on facts. ☐ *This movie is grounded in fact.* ☐ *The stories in this book are all grounded in actual fact.*

***grounds for** something the basis or cause for legal action such as a lawsuit. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *Your negligence is grounds for a lawsuit.* ☐ *Is infidelity grounds for divorce in this state?*

group someone or something **around** someone or something to gather people or things around people or things. ☐ *The photographer grouped the wedding party around the bride for the picture.* ☐ *The photographer then grouped them around the cake.*

group someone or something **together** to gather people or things together. ☐ *Try to group all the smokers together at one table.* ☐ *Steve grouped all the dictionaries together.*

group something **under** something to classify something under some category. ☐ *They have now grouped the fungi under their own families.* ☐ *We should group all the older ones under a separate category.*

grouse about someone or something to complain about someone or something. ☐ *What are you grousing about now?* ☐ *I am grousing about your carelessness!*

grouse at someone or an animal *Fig.* to criticize someone or an animal directly to the person or animal. ☐ *Stop grousing at me!* ☐ *Sharon is grousing at the cat again.*

grovel (about) in something to wallow around in the dirt, etc., while prostrating oneself. ☐ *The poor fellow groveled*

G

about in the mud, trying to keep from being beaten. ☐ *Why are you there, groveling in the dust?*

grovel before someone or something to prostrate oneself before someone or something. ☐ *The prisoner groveled before his accusers.* ☐ *The peasant groveled before the lord of the manor.*

grovel to someone to kneel in deference to someone; to kowtow to someone. ☐ *You don't have to grovel to me!* ☐ *I refuse to grovel to anyone.*

grow accustomed to doing something Go to **accustomed to** doing something.

grow accustomed to someone or something Go to **accustomed to** someone or something.

G

grow apart (from someone or something**)** **1.** *Lit.* [for things] to separate as they grow. ☐ *These trees tend to grow apart from each other as they get bigger.* ☐ *They need to grow apart so they won't be too crowded.* **2.** *Fig.* [for people] to separate from one another gradually. ☐ *Over the years, they grew apart from each other.* ☐ *Ted and Sharon grew apart and saw less and less of each other.*

grow away from someone [for someone] to become less intimate with someone; [for someone] to become independent of someone gradually. ☐ *She has grown away from her husband over the years.* ☐ *We expect our children to grow away from us.*

grow away from something [for something] to move away from something as it grows. ☐ *The tree grew away from the house—thank heavens.* ☐ *See if you can train the vine to grow away from the fence.*

grow back [for something that has come off] to grow back again. (Includes parts of plants and some animals, fingernails, toenails, etc.) ☐ *The lizard's tail grew back in a few months.* ☐ *The leaves will grow back in a month or so.*

grow disgusted at someone or something Go to **disgusted at** someone or something.

grow disgusted with someone or something Go to **disgusted with** someone or something.

grow dissatisfied with someone or something Go to **dissatisfied with** someone or something.

grow down (into something**)** [for roots] to penetrate downward as they grow. ☐ *The young roots grew down into the rich soil.* ☐ *The roots grew down and drew up the precious water.*

grow from something to develop and grow from a seed, bulb, corm, etc. ☐ *This huge tree grew from a little seed.* ☐ *What kind of plant grows from this bulb?*

grow in something **1.** [for someone] to increase in some quality, such as wisdom, strength, stature, etc. ☐ *As I got older, I was supposed to grow in wisdom and other good things.* ☐ *Sam grew in strength as he got over the disease.* **2.** [for a plant] to develop or flourish in something or some place. ☐ *These plants grow in rich soil with moderate moisture.* ☐ *They will grow well in this soil.*

grow into something **1.** *Lit.* [for a child] to develop into a particular type of person. ☐ *The child grew into a tall, powerful athlete.* ☐ *I hope I have grown into a person my parents can be proud of.* **2.** *Lit.* [for a plant] to develop into a mature specimen of its species. ☐ *This twig will grow into an oak tree.* ☐ *I hope this seedling grows into a fine mango tree.* **3.** *Lit.* [for a plant, tumor, toenail] to penetrate into something as it grows. ☐ *The roots of the tree grew into our sewer line.* ☐ *Try to keep the tree roots from growing into the foundation.* **4.** *Lit.* to grow enough to fit into something. ☐ *The shirt is a little large, but Timmy will grow into it.* ☐ *My shoes are too big, but I will grow into them.* **5.** *Fig.* [for a situation or a problem] to develop into something more serious. ☐ *I hope this matter doesn't grow into something worse.* ☐ *This business is growing into a real crisis.*

grow knee-high by the 4th of July Go to **knee-high by the 4th of July.**

grow on someone **1.** *Lit.* [for a fungus, tumor, parasite, etc.] to live and grow on someone's skin. ☐ *I've got this stuff growing on me and I want to get rid of it.* ☐ *Is that an ink stain or is something growing on you?* **2.** *Fig.* [for something] to become familiar to and desired by someone; [for something] to become habitual for someone. ☐ *This kind of music grows on you after a while.* ☐ *Kenneth sort of grows on you after a while.*

grow out [for something that has been cut back] to regrow. ☐ *Don't worry, your hair will grow out again.* ☐ *Will the grass grow out again, do you think?*

grow out of (all) proportion Go to **out of (all) proportion.**

grow out of something **1.** *Lit.* to develop and grow outward from something. ☐ *Soft green shoots grew out of the trunk of the tree.* ☐ *A bush grew out of the gutter and hung down the front of the house.* **2.** *Lit.* to **age out of** something; to outgrow something; to abandon something as one matures. ☐ *Finally, Ted grew out of his bedwetting.* ☐ *Haven't you grown out of your fear of the dark yet?* **3.** *Lit.* to grow so much that some article of clothing does not fit. ☐ *Timmy's getting so tall that he's grown out of all his clothes.* ☐ *He grew out of his suit, and he's only worn it three times.* **4.** *Fig.* [for a problem] to develop from something less serious. ☐ *This whole matter grew out of your failure to let the cat out last night.* ☐ *A big argument has grown out of a tiny disagreement!*

grow over something [for vegetation] to cover over something as it grows. ☐ *The vines grew over the shed and almost hid it from view.*

grow poles apart Go to **poles apart.**

grow sick (and tired) of someone or something Go to **sick (and tired) of** someone or something.

grow soft on someone Go to **soft on** someone.

grow something **from** something to propagate a plant from a seed, bulb, corm, etc. ☐ *I grew these tomatoes from seeds.* ☐ *Can you grow a mango tree from a seed?*

grow thick-skinned Go to **thick-skinned.**

grow thin-skinned Go to **thin-skinned.**

grow to do something to gradually begin to do certain things, using verbs such as *feel, know, like, need, respect, sense, suspect, think, want, wonder,* etc. ☐ *I grew to hate Bob over a period of years.* ☐ *As I grew to know Bob, I began to like him.*

grow together [for things] to join together as they grow and develop. ☐ *Two of these trees grew together when they*

were much smaller. ☐ *The broken ends of the bone grew together far more rapidly than Chuck had thought.*

grow up to become mature; to become adult. ☐ *All the children have grown up and the parents are left with a lot of debts.*

grow up into someone or something to mature into a type of person or a person who does a particular job. ☐ *She grew up into a fine young lady.* ☐ *I want to grow up into a strong and healthy person.*

grow worlds apart Go to worlds apart.

A **growing youth has a wolf in his belly.** *Prov.* Young people who are growing fast are hungry all the time. ☐ *If you doubt that a growing youth has a wolf in his belly, you should see how much my fourteen-year-old cousin eats.*

growl at someone or something to snarl at someone or something. ☐ *Don't growl at me like that.* ☐ *The dog growled at the cat.*

growl something **out**† to say something with a sound like growling or snarling. ☐ *Jane growled a few words out.* ☐ *She growled out a few words and the gates opened for us.*

a **growth experience** and a **growth opportunity;** a **learning experience** *Euph.* an unpleasant experience. ☐ *This job has been a growth experience for me. I've learned so much.* ☐ *Jim said that his trip to Mexico turned out to be a real learning experience.*

a **growth opportunity** Go to previous.

grub around (for someone or something**)** to search around for someone or something. ☐ *I went to the attic and grubbed around for my old uniform.* ☐ *The guys went out and grubbed around for another soccer player.*

grub around (in something**)** to wear old or "grubby" clothes around. ☐ *I was grubbing around in my jeans when Alice showed up.* ☐ *I was wearing my jeans and just sort of grubbing around when she came.*

***gruff as a bear** gruff; curt and unsociable. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *I hate to ask Erica questions; she's always gruff as a bear.* ☐ *I'm always as gruff as a bear before I've had my first cup of coffee.*

grumble about someone or something to complain about someone or something. ☐ *What are you grumbling about now?* ☐ *The students were grumbling about the teacher.*

grumble at someone to complain to someone. ☐ *Go grumble at someone else. I'm tired of listening.* ☐ *Stop grumbling at me!*

grunt something **out**† to say something with a snort or grunt. ☐ *Jane grunted a command out to someone.* ☐ *She grunted out a curt command and the gate opened.*

grunt work *Fig.* work that is menial and thankless. ☐ *During the summer, I earned money doing grunt work.* ☐ *I did all of the grunt work on the project, but my boss got all of the credit.*

guarantee against something to certify that something bad will not happen. ☐ *No one can guarantee against that happening.* ☐ *I can't guarantee against something going wrong.*

guarantee something **against** something **(for** something**)** to certify that something will not fail, break, or wear out, usually for a period of time. ☐ *We guarantee this radio against defects for one year.* ☐ *I bought a service contract to guarantee my car against defects.*

guard against someone or something to take care to avoid someone or something. ☐ *Try to guard against getting a cold.* ☐ *You should guard against pickpockets.*

guard someone or something **from** someone or something to protect someone or something from someone or something. ☐ *The assistant manager will guard your valuables from thieves.* ☐ *She guarded the kitten from the angry dog.*

guess at something to estimate something; to give an opinion about what something might be. ☐ *I hate to just guess at it, but if you insist: ten feet long.* ☐ *Go ahead, guess at the number of pennies in this jar.*

Guess what! *Inf.* a way of starting a conversation; a way of forcing someone into a conversation. ☐ *Alice: Guess what! Bob: I don't know. What? Alice: I'm going to Europe this summer. Bob: That's very nice.* ☐ *John: Guess what! Jane: What? John: Mary is going to have a baby. Jane: Oh, that's great!*

guest of honor a guest who gets special attention from everyone; the person for whom a party, celebration, or ceremony is given. ☐ *Bob is the guest of honor, and many people will make speeches about him.* ☐ *The guest of honor sits at the front of the room on the dais.*

guffaw at someone or something to laugh at someone or something very hard and raucously. ☐ *The audience guffawed at the clown's antics.* ☐ *The old man guffawed at the clown.*

guide someone **around** something and **guide** someone **around** to lead or escort someone on a tour of something or some place. ☐ *Please let me guide you around the plant, so you can see how we do things here.* ☐ *I would be happy to guide you around.*

guide someone **away from** someone or something and **guide** someone **away**† to lead or escort someone away from someone, something, or some place. (Usually said of someone who requires help or guidance.) ☐ *A police officer guided the children away from the busy street.* ☐ *Please guide away those people before they bump into your grandmother.*

guide someone or something **across (**something**)** to lead or escort someone or something across something. ☐ *I had to guide him across the desert.* ☐ *The bridge was very narrow and Jill got out to guide the truck across.* ☐ *We had to guide it across.*

guide something **away**† **(from** someone or something**) 1.** to lead something away from someone or something. ☐ *I guided the lawn mower away from the children.* ☐ *Please stand there and guide away the cars.* **2.** to channel or route something away from someone or something. ☐ *The farmer guided the creek water away from the main channel through a narrow ditch.* ☐ *We had to guide away the sheep from the road.*

A **guilty conscience needs no accuser.** *Prov.* If you have done something wrong and feel guilty about it, you will be uncomfortable and want to confess even if no one accuses you of wrongdoing. ☐ *Even though no one noticed him eating most of the cookies, Peter felt so bad about it that he told us what he had done. A guilty conscience needs no accuser.*

G

gulp for air *Fig.* to eagerly or desperately try to get air or a breath. ☐ *Tom gulped for air after trying to hold his breath for three minutes.* ☐ *Mary came up out of the water, gulping for air.*

gulp something **back†** *Fig.* to force or hold back tears, sobs, etc. ☐ *He gulped his sobs back and clutched at his wound.* ☐ *He gulped back his sobs.*

gulp something **down†** to drink all of something, usually quickly. ☐ *He gulped his coffee down and left.* ☐ *He gulped down his coffee.*

gum something **up†** and **gum the works up†** *Fig.* to make something inoperable; to ruin someone's plans. ☐ *Please, Bill, be careful and don't gum up the works.* ☐ *Tom sure gummed up the whole plan.*

G

gun for someone **1.** *Lit.* to seek one out to shoot one. ☐ *They say that Tex is gunning for the sheriff.* **2.** *Fig.* to seek someone out in anger. ☐ *The boss is gunning for you.* ☐ *I think that Walter is gunning for me.*

gun someone or an animal **down†** *Lit.* to shoot someone or an animal. ☐ *Max tried to gun a policeman down.* ☐ *The cop tried to gun down the rabid dog.*

gung ho *Inf.* enthusiastically in favor of something. ☐ *Bobby is really gung ho on his plan to start his own company.*

gush (forth) (from someone or something**)** and **gush (forth) (out of** someone or something**); gush (out) (from** someone or something**)** to spout out of someone or something. (Can be words, water, blood, vomit, etc. The optional elements cannot be transposed.) ☐ *The blood gushed forth from his wound.* ☐ *Curses gushed forth from Sharon.* ☐ *Water gushed forth out of the broken pipe.* ☐ *The words gushed out from her mouth.* ☐ *The curses gushed from her mouth in torrents.*

gush over someone or something **1.** *Lit.* [for liquid] to flood over someone or something. ☐ *The floodwaters gushed over the farmland.* ☐ *The hot soup gushed over the cook as the huge pot tipped over.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to heap praise, flattery, and compliments on someone or something. ☐ *Aunt Mattie always gushed over us children so much that we dreaded her coming.* ☐ *All the guests gushed over my beet salad.*

gush with something [for something] to flow with something. ☐ *The stream gushed with the sudden runoff of the storm.* ☐ *The faucet gushed with brownish water, so I turned it off.*

gussied up *Rur.* dressed up fancy. ☐ *All the girls got gussied up for the dance, but the guys wore their regular clothes.* ☐ *Mary really got gussied up. She even curled her hair.*

gussy someone or something **up†** *Rur.* to dress someone or something up; to make someone or something fancy. ☐ *She gussied the kids up for the wedding.* ☐ *See if you can gussy up this room a little before folks get here.*

gut feeling and **gut reaction; gut response** a personal, intuitive feeling or response. ☐ *I have a gut feeling that something bad is going to happen.* ☐ *My gut reaction is that we should hire Susan for the job.*

gut reaction Go to previous.

gut response Go to **gut feeling**.

guzzle something **down†** to drink something rapidly and eagerly. ☐ *He guzzled the beer down and called for another.* ☐ *He guzzled down the beer and called for another.*

gyp someone **out of** something to deceive someone in order to get something of value. ☐ *The salesclerk gypped me out of a dollar.* ☐ *The taxi driver tried to gyp me out of a fortune by driving all over the place.*

Hh

habituate someone **to** someone or something to accustom someone to someone or something. ☐ *Soon she will habituate the baby to the new feeding schedule.* ☐ *The office staff worked hard to habituate the new employee to the schedule.*

hack around *Inf.* to waste time. ☐ *I'm just hacking around and doing nothing.* ☐ *Stop hacking around and get to work.*

hack (away) at someone or something to chop at someone or something continuously. ☐ *The brutal murderer hacked away at his victim.* ☐ *The woodchopper hacked at the tree and finally got it down.*

hack one's **way through** something *Fig.* to cut one's way through something. ☐ *We had to hack our way through the jungle.* ☐ *The surveyors hacked a pathway through the undergrowth.*

hack someone **(off)** *Inf.* to annoy someone; to embarrass someone. ☐ *It really hacks me when you drum your fingers like that.* ☐ *You really hack me off!*

hack someone or something **apart**† **1.** *Lit.* to chop up someone or something. ☐ *The murderer hacked the victim apart.* ☐ *He hacked apart the victim.* ☐ *The butcher hacked the chicken apart.* **2.** *Fig.* to criticize someone or something severely. ☐ *The review just hacked him apart for his poor showing in the play.* ☐ *The critic hacked apart all the actors in the play.*

hack something *Inf.* to endure something; to deal with something. (The *something* is usually *it.*) ☐ *I don't know if I can hack it.* ☐ *John works very hard, but he can't seem to hack it.*

hack something **down**† to chop something down. ☐ *Who hacked this cherry tree down?* ☐ *Who hacked down this cherry tree?*

hack something **off**† to chop something off. ☐ *I need to get up that tree and hack that big branch off before it bangs on the house.* ☐ *Please hack off that big branch.*

hack something **out of** something and **hack** something **out**† **1.** to cut or chop something out of something. ☐ *Jill hacked the bone out of the roast.* ☐ *She hacked out the big bone.* **2.** to fashion something by carving or chiseling from something. ☐ *He hacked a rabbit out of the chunk of wood.* ☐ *In no time, the carver had hacked out a rabbit.*

hack something **to** something to cut something up into something roughly or crudely, such as pieces, bits, smithereens. ☐ *The editor hacked my story to smithereens.* ☐ *Don't hack the turkey to pieces!*

hack something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to chop something up into pieces. (Refers often to wood.) ☐ *Hack all this old furniture up, and we'll burn it in the fireplace.* ☐ *Hack up this stuff, and we'll burn it.* **2.** *Fig.* to damage or mangle something. ☐ *Who hacked my windowsill up?* ☐ *Who hacked up my table?*

hacked (off) *Inf.* angry; annoyed. ☐ *Wally was really hacked off about the accident.* ☐ *Oh, Wally is always hacked about something.*

(had) best do something ought to do something, had better do something. ☐ *Mary had best learn to mind her manners.* ☐ *You best listen to what I say.*

had (just) as soon do something and **would (just) as soon** do something prefer to do something else; to be content to do something. (The *would* or *had* is usually expressed as the contraction *'d.*) ☐ *They want me to go into town. I'd as soon stay home.* ☐ *If you're cooking stew tonight, we'd as soon eat somewhere else.* ☐ *I would just as soon stay home as pay to go to see a bad movie.*

(had) known it was coming Go to knew it was coming.

had rather do something and **had sooner** do something prefer to do something. (The *had* is usually expressed as the contraction, *'d.*) ☐ *I'd rather go to town than sit here all evening.* ☐ *They'd rather not.*

had sooner do something Go to previous.

hadn't oughta *Inf.* should not have. ☐ *You hadn't oughta teased me like that.* ☐ *I know I hadn't oughta stolen that candy.*

haggle about something to bargain or negotiate about something. ☐ *They are always willing to haggle about the price, so don't take the first price you're given.* ☐ *I wish you wouldn't try to haggle about everything when we shop.*

haggle (with someone**) over** someone or something and **haggle with** someone **(over** someone or something**)** to argue with someone over someone or something. ☐ *I don't want to haggle with you over Tom and whose team he's going to be on.* ☐ *Let's not haggle over the price.* ☐ *There is no point in haggling with her.*

hail a cab and **hail a taxi** to signal to a taxi that you want to be picked up. ☐ *See if you can hail a cab. I don't want to walk home in the rain.*

hail a taxi Go to previous.

hail from some place to come from some place as one's hometown or birthplace; to originate in some place. ☐ *He hails from a small town in the Midwest.* ☐ *Where do you hail from?*

hail someone **as** something to praise someone for being something. ☐ *The active members hailed him as fraternity brother of the year.* ☐ *Sally was hailed as an effective leader.*

hair and hide(, horns and tallow) *Rur.* every last thing; every part. (Refers orginally to using every part of slaughtered cattle for something.) ☐ *They took everything Mary had, hair and hide, horns and tallow.* ☐ *Joe never threw anything away. He found a use for everything, hair and hide.*

the **hair of the dog that bit** one *Fig.* a drink of liquor taken when one has a hangover; a drink of liquor taken

when one is recovering from drinking too much liquor. (Often the same type of liquor as one got drunk on.) □ *Oh, I'm miserable. I need some of the hair of the dog that bit me.* □ *That's some hangover you've got there, Bob. Here, drink this. It's some of the hair of the dog that bit you.*

hale and hearty *Cliché* healthy. □ *The young infant was hale and hearty.* □ *The calf—hale and hearty—ran around the barnyard.*

hale-fellow-well-met *Fig.* friendly to everyone; falsely friendly to everyone. (Usually said of males.) □ *Yes, he's friendly, sort of hale-fellow-well-met.* □ *He's not a very sincere person. Hail-fellow-well-met—you know the type.* □ *What a pain he is. Good old Mr. Hail-fellow-well-met. What a phony!*

half a bubble off plumb *Fig.* giddy; crazy. □ *She is acting about half a bubble off plumb. What is wrong with her?* □ *Tom is just half a bubble off plumb, but he is all heart.*

H

Half a loaf is better than none. *Prov.* Getting only part of what you want is better than not getting anything. □ *Fred: How did your court case go? Alan: Not good. I asked for $500, and the judge only awarded me $200. Fred: Half a loaf is better than none.*

half in the bag intoxicated. □ *Jerry was half in the bag when we found him.* □ *They were all half in the bag by midnight.*

half the battle *Fig.* a significant part of an effort. □ *Getting through traffic to the airport was half the battle. The flight was nothing at all.*

half the time sometimes. □ *I like that TV show, but half the time I forget to watch it when it's on.* □ *She says she's my friend, but she can't remember my name, half the time.*

Half the truth is often a whole lie. *Prov.* If you do not tell the whole truth, you can mislead people just as if you tell them an outright lie. □ *Jill: You lied to me. Jane: I did not. Everything I said was true. Jill: But you didn't tell me the whole story. And half the truth is often a whole lie.*

Half the world knows not how the other half lives. *Prov.* You cannot understand what life is like for people who are different from you.; Often, rich people do not know what it is like to be poor, and poor people do not know what it is like to be rich. □ *Until he spent school vacation at his friend Richard's country home, Jim was never aware that some people do not have to work for a living. He discovered that half the world knows not how the other half lives.* □ *Bill decided to dress in secondhand clothes and spend the weekend among the homeless men in the warehouse district, to see how the other half lives.*

half under 1. *Lit.* semiconscious. □ *I was half under and could hear what the doctor was saying.* □ *I was afraid they would start cutting while I was only half under.* **2.** *Fig. Inf.* to be intoxicated; to be tipsy. □ *He was half under and could barely stand up.* □ *Only four beers and she was half under.*

halfhearted (about someone or something**)** unenthusiastic about someone or something. □ *Ann was halfhearted about the choice of Sally for president.* □ *She didn't look halfhearted to me. She looked angry.*

ham something **up**† *Fig.* to make a performance seem silly by showing off or exaggerating one's part. (A show-off actor is known as a *ham.*) □ *Come on, Bob. Don't ham it up!* □ *The play was going fine until Bob got out there and hammed up his part.*

hammer (away) at someone *Fig.* to interrogate someone; to ask questions endlessly of someone. □ *The cops kept hammering away at the suspect until he told them everything they wanted to know.* □ *They hammered at him for hours.*

hammer (away) at something **1.** *Lit.* to continue to do a task that requires much hammering. □ *The roofers are hammering away at the job, trying to finish before night.* **2.** *Lit.* to pound at or on something, such as a door. □ *Who is hammering away at the door?* □ *The police are hammering at the door.* **3.** *Fig.* to dwell overly long on a point or a question. □ *Stop hammering away at the same thing over and over.* □ *The agents asked question after question. They would not stop hammering at the issue.*

hammer on someone or something to pound on someone or something. □ *The cop hammered on the poor man over and over.* □ *Sharon hammered on the door for a long time.*

hammer something **down**† to pound something down even with the surrounding surface. □ *Hammer all the nails down so that none of them will catch on someone's shoe.* □ *Hammer down all these nails!*

hammer something **home**† *Fig.* to try extremely hard to make someone understand or realize something. □ *The boss hopes to hammer the firm's poor financial position home to the staff.* □ *I tried to hammer home to Anne the fact that she would have to get a job.*

hammer something **into** someone and **pound** something **into** someone; **hammer** someone **in**†**; pound** someone **in**† *Fig.* to teach something to someone intensively, as if one were driving the information in by force. □ *Her parents had hammered good manners into her head since she was a child.* □ *They hammered in good manners every day.* □ *They pounded proper behavior into the children.*

hammer something **into** something and **pound** something **into** something; **hammer** something **in**†**; pound** something **in**† *Lit.* to drive something into something as with a hammer. □ *Todd hammered the spike into the beam.* □ *He hammered in the spike.* □ *He hammered it in with two hard blows.*

hammer something **onto** something and **hammer** something **on**† to pound something onto something. □ *I hammered the lid onto the paint can.* □ *She hammered on the lid very tightly.*

hammer something **out**† **1.** *Lit.* to hammer a dent away; to make a dent even with the surrounding surface. □ *I'm going to have to have someone hammer this dent in my fender out.* □ *It will take a while to hammer out the dent.* **2.** *Lit.* to expand something by hammering it thinner. □ *He hammered the gold out into a very thin sheet.* □ *He hammered out the gold into thin sheets.* **3.** *Fig.* to arrive at an agreement through argument and negotiation. □ *The two parties could not hammer a contract out.* □ *At last, we were able to hammer out an agreement.* **4.** *Fig.* to play something on the piano. □ *She hammered the song out loudly and without feeling.* □ *Listen to John hammer out that song on the piano.*

hand in glove (with someone**)** *Fig.* very close to someone. ☐ *John is really hand in glove with Sally.* ☐ *The teacher and the principal work hand in glove.*

***hand in hand 1.** *Lit.* holding hands. (*Typically: **do** something **~; sit ~; walk ~**.) ☐ *They walked down the street hand in hand.* ☐ *Bob and Mary sat there quietly, hand in hand.* **2.** *Fig.* [of two things] together, one with the other. (*Typically: **go ~**.) ☐ *Cookies and milk seem to go hand in hand.* ☐ *Teenagers and back talk go hand in hand.*

*a **hand in** something and *a **part in** something *Fig.* a part in establishing or running something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I would like to have a hand in the planning process.* ☐ *I will not let Jane have a part in this project.*

Hand it over. Give it to me. (Fixed order.) ☐ *It's mine. Hand it over!* ☐ *Come on. Give me the box of jewels. Hand it over!*

hand over fist *Fig.* [for money and merchandise to be exchanged] very rapidly. ☐ *What a busy day. We took in money hand over fist.* ☐ *They were buying things hand over fist.*

hand over hand *Fig.* [moving] one hand after the other (again and again). ☐ *Sally pulled in the rope hand over hand.* ☐ *The man climbed up the rope hand over hand.*

hand someone or something **over† (to** someone or something**)** to deliver someone or something to someone or a group; to relinquish someone or something to someone or a group. ☐ *The kidnappers handed the child over to the go-between.* ☐ *All right, hand over the hostage!*

hand someone something *Fig.* to tell someone something; to tell someone nonsense. ☐ *Don't hand me that stuff! That's silly!* ☐ *She handed me a line about being a famous author.*

hand something **around†** to pass something around. ☐ *Hand this around and let everyone look at it.* ☐ *Hand around each of these pictures so everyone gets to see them.*

hand something **back† (to** someone**)** to return something to someone by hand. ☐ *Would you please hand this paper back to Scott?* ☐ *Hand back this book to Fred, if you please.*

hand something **down† from** someone **to** someone to pass something down through many generations. ☐ *I hope we can make it a tradition to hand this down from generation to generation.* ☐ *My descendants will hand down this watch from generation to generation.*

hand something **down† (to** someone**) 1.** *Lit.* to pass something to a person on a lower level. ☐ *Hand this wrench down to the man under the sink.* ☐ *Please hand down this wrench.* **2.** *Fig.* to give something to a younger person. (Either at death or during life.) ☐ *John handed his old shirts down to his younger brother.* ☐ *I hope my uncle will hand down his golf clubs to me when he dies.* **3.** *Fig.* to announce or deliver a (legal) verdict or indictment. ☐ *The grand jury handed seven indictments down last week.* ☐ *The jury handed down a guilty verdict.*

hand something **in†** to submit something by hand. ☐ *Did you hand your application form in?* ☐ *I forgot to hand in my test paper.*

hand something **in† (to** someone**)** Go to **pass** something **in† (to** someone**)**.

hand something **off† (to** someone**) 1.** *Lit.* to give a football directly to another player. ☐ *Roger handed the ball off to Jeff.* ☐ *He handed off the ball.* ☐ *Tim handed it off.* **2.** *Fig.* to give something to someone else to do or complete. ☐ *I'm going to hand this assignment off to Jeff.* ☐ *Don't hand off your dirty work to me—do it yourself!*

hand something **on (to** someone or something**) 1.** *Lit.* to pass something on to someone or a group. ☐ *Please hand this on to Walter after you've read it.* ☐ *Please read this and hand it on.* **2.** *Fig.* to bequeath something to someone or a group. ☐ *I want to hand this land on to my children.* ☐ *The family will hand on the business to a foundation.*

hand something **out† (to** someone**) 1.** to give something out to someone. ☐ *The judge was known for handing heavy fines out.* ☐ *She handed out large fines to everyone.* **2.** to pass something, usually papers, out to people. ☐ *The teacher handed the tests out to the students.* ☐ *Please hand out these papers.*

H

hand something **over** to give something (to someone); to relinquish something (to someone); to turn something over (to someone). ☐ *Come on, John! Hand over my wallet.* ☐ *Please hand this over to the guard.*

hand something **to** someone to give something to someone by hand. ☐ *The clerk handed her a message when she stopped at the desk.* ☐ *This message was just handed to me.*

hand something **up† (to** someone**)** to pass something to someone who is on a higher level. ☐ *Please hand this cup of coffee up to Carl.* ☐ *Please hand up this coffee to Carl.*

The **hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.** *Prov.* Mothers are the most powerful people, because they shape their children's personalities. ☐ *When Lena got pregnant, Lena's mother told her to take her responsibility seriously, because the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.*

*a **hand with** something *Fig.* assistance with something, especially using the hands. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Mary would really like to get a hand with that. It's too much for one person.* ☐ *I'd like to have a hand with this.*

*a **handful** *Fig.* someone, often a child, who is difficult to deal with. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *Bobby can be a real handful when he needs a nap.*

*a **handle on** something *Fig.* a means of understanding something; an aid to understanding something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Let me try to get a handle on this.* ☐ *Now that I have a handle on the concept, I can begin to understand it.*

handle someone **with kid gloves** *Fig.* to be very careful with a touchy person. ☐ *Bill has become so sensitive. You really have to handle him with kid gloves.* ☐ *You don't have to handle me with kid gloves. I can take it.*

hands down easily; unquestionably. ☐ *She won the contest hands down.* ☐ *They declared her the winner hands down.*

Hands off! Do not touch someone or something. ☐ *Careful! Don't touch that wire. Hands off!* ☐ *The sign says, "Hands off!" and you had better do what it says.*

Hands up! and **Stick 'em up!; Put 'em up!** Raise your hands in the air; this is a robbery! (Underworld and Old West.) ☐ *Hands up! Don't anybody move a muscle. This is a heist.* ☐ *Stick 'em up! Give me all your valuables.*

Handsome is as handsome does. *Prov.* It is more important to treat people well than to be good-looking.; Just because you are good-looking does not mean you are a good person. ☐ *Jill: I'd like to get to know George better. Jane: Why? Jill: He's so handsome. Jane: Handsome is as handsome does. He's a very unpleasant person.*

hang a few on† to take a few drinks; to have a few beers. ☐ *They went out to hang a few on.* ☐ *Let's hang on a few and then go on to the meeting.*

hang a huey *Sl.* to make a U-turn. ☐ *Hang a huey in the middle of the block.* ☐ *Right here! Hang a huey!*

hang a left *Inf.* to turn left. ☐ *He hung a left at the wrong corner.* ☐ *Hey, here! Hang a left here!*

hang a louie *Sl.* to turn left. ☐ *You have to hang a louie at the stop sign.* ☐ *Go another block and hang a louie.*

H

hang a ralph *Sl.* to turn right. ☐ *He skied down the easy slope and hung a ralph near a fir tree.* ☐ *Don't hang a ralph until you get past the traffic light.*

hang a right *Inf.* to turn right. ☐ *Hang a right about here.* ☐ *I told him to hang a right at the next corner, but he went on.*

hang around (some place**)** to loiter some place; to be in a place or in an area, doing nothing in particular. ☐ *Why are you hanging around my office?* ☐ *It's comfortable here. I think I'll hang around here for a while.*

hang around someone or something Go to **around** someone or something.

hang around (with someone**)** and **go around (with** someone**)** *Fig.* to spend a lot of time with someone; to waste away time with someone. ☐ *John hangs around with Bill a lot.* ☐ *They've been going around with the Smiths.*

hang back (from someone or something**)** to lag back behind someone or something; to stay back from someone or something, perhaps in avoidance. ☐ *Why are you hanging back from the rest of the group?* ☐ *Come on! Don't hang back!*

hang behind (someone or something**)** to stay behind someone or something. ☐ *Don't hang behind us, please. Come on up here and walk with us.* ☐ *Fred is hanging behind and may get lost at the next turn.*

hang by a hair and **hang by a thread 1.** *Lit.* to hang by something very thin, such as a thread or a hair. ☐ *The tiniest part of the mobile hung by a thread, the rest are on plastic cords.* **2.** and **hang on by a hair; hang on by a thread** *Fig.* to depend on something very insubstantial; to **hang in the balance.** ☐ *Your whole argument is hanging by a thread.* ☐ *John isn't failing geometry, but his passing grade is just hanging by a hair.*

hang by a thread Go to previous.

hang by something **1.** to be suspended at the end of something, such as a rope, chain, string, etc. ☐ *The bag is only hanging by a string.* ☐ *The food hung by a rope from a tree to protect it from the bears that wandered into camp now and then.* **2.** to dangle, suspended by some body part, such as thumbs, legs, etc. ☐ *I was hanging by my legs on the exercise bar when the rain started.* ☐ *I can hang by just my middle fingers!*

hang down (from someone or something**)** to be suspended from someone or something. ☐ *Grasping vines hung down from the towering trees.* ☐ *Thousands of vines hung down.*

hang fire to delay or wait; to be delayed. ☐ *I think we should hang fire and wait for other information.* ☐ *Our plans have to hang fire until we get planning permission.*

hang five and **hang ten** *Sl.* to stand toward the front of a surfboard or diving board and hang the toes of one or both feet over the edge. (Surfing.) ☐ *The coach told her to hang ten and not to look down.* ☐ *Get out there and hang five. You can swim. Nothing can go wrong.*

hang from something to be suspended from something. ☐ *Colorful decorations hung from the branches of the tree.* ☐ *What is that hanging from the side of the building?*

hang in the balance Go to **in the balance.**

Hang in there. Be patient, things will work out. ☐ *Bob: Everything is in such a mess. I can't seem to get things done right. Jane: Hang in there, Bob. Things will work out.* ☐ *Mary: Sometimes I just don't think I can go on. Sue: Hang in there, Mary. Things will work out.*

Hang it all! *Inf.* Damn it all! ☐ *Oh, hang it all! I'm late.* ☐ *He's late again! Hang it all!*

hang it up *Sl.* to quit something. (Fixed order. See also **hang** something **up.**) ☐ *I've had it with this job. It's time to hang it up.* ☐ *Just hang it up. Don't bother with it.*

hang loose and **stay loose** to relax and stay calm. ☐ *Just hang loose, man. Everything'll be all right.* ☐ *Stay loose, chum. See ya later.*

***the hang of** something the knowledge or knack of doing something correctly. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; teach** someone **~**.) ☐ *As soon as I get the hang of this computer, I'll be able to work faster.* ☐ *Now that I have the hang of starting the car in cold weather, I won't have to get up so early.*

hang off to wait quietly to one side. ☐ *The boys hung off a little, waiting to see what would happen next.* ☐ *Hang off awhile and don't do anything.*

hang on 1. to wait awhile. ☐ *Hang on a minute. I need to talk to you.* ☐ *Hang on. Let me catch up with you.* **2.** to survive for awhile. ☐ *I think we can hang on without electricity for a little while longer.* **3.** [for an illness] to linger or persist. ☐ *This cold has been hanging on for a month.* ☐ *This is the kind of flu that hangs on for weeks.* **4.** be prepared for fast or rough movement. (Usually a command.) ☐ *Hang on! The train is going very fast.* ☐ *Hang on! We're going to crash!* **5.** to pause in a telephone conversation. ☐ *Please hang on until I get a pen.* ☐ *If you'll hang on, I'll get her.*

hang on by a thread Go to **hang by a hair.**

hang on for dear life *Cliché* to hang on tight. ☐ *As the little plane bounced around over the mountains, we hung on for dear life.*

hang on someone's **coattails** Go to **ride on** someone's **coattails.**

hang on (someone's**) every word** *Cliché* to listen closely or with awe to what someone says. ☐ *I am hanging on your every word. Please go on.* ☐ *The audience hung on her every word throughout the speech.*

hang on (to someone or something**)** and **hold on (to** someone or something**) 1.** *Lit.* to grasp someone or something. ☐ *She hung on to her husband to keep warm.* ☐ *She sat there and hung on, trying to keep warm.* **2.** *Fig.* to detain someone or something. ☐ *Please hang on to Tom if he's still there. I need to talk to him.*

Hang on to your hat! and **Hold on to your hat!** *Fig.* Get ready for what's coming!; Here comes a big shock! ☐ *There is a rough road ahead. Hang on to your hat!* ☐ *Here we go! Hold on to your hat!*

hang one on Go to **tie one on**.

hang one's **hat (up)** somewhere to take up residence somewhere. ☐ *George loves Dallas. He's decided to buy a house and hang his hat up there.* ☐ *Bill moves from place to place and never hangs his hat up anywhere.*

hang out (of something**)** to be visibly coming out of something. ☐ *Your shirttail is hanging out of your pants.* ☐ *My shirttail was hanging out.*

hang out (some place**) 1.** to spend time in a place habitually. ☐ *Is this where you guys hang out all the time?* **2.** to spend time aimlessly; to waste time. ☐ *Bill: What are you doing this afternoon? Tom: Oh, I'll just hang out.* ☐ *Kids hang out too much these days.*

hang out (with someone or something**)** to associate with someone or a group on a regular basis. ☐ *She hangs out with Alice too much.* ☐ *I wish you would stop hanging out with that crowd of boys.*

hang over someone or something **1.** to be suspended over someone or something. ☐ *A fancy crystal chandelier hung over us.* ☐ *An ornate ceiling fan hung over the table.* **2.** [for some pervading quality] to seem to hover over someone or something. ☐ *An aura of gloom hung over Joe.* ☐ *A dismal pall hung over the gathering.*

hang over someone**('s head)** [for something unpleasant] to worry someone. ☐ *I have a horrible exam hanging over my head.* ☐ *I hate to have medical problems hanging over me.*

hang someone **by the neck** to execute someone or kill oneself by tying a noose around the neck and dropping the victim in order to break the neck or strangle the victim. ☐ *The executioner hanged him by the neck until he died.* ☐ *He hanged himself by the neck.*

hang someone **for** something **1.** *Lit.* to execute someone by hanging for doing something. ☐ *The state prosecutor will try to hang you for this crime.* ☐ *The sheriff wanted to hang Jed for murder.* **2.** *Fig.* to extract an overly severe punishment for some deed. ☐ *They are trying to hang me for a parking ticket.* ☐ *You can't hang me just for coming in late!*

hang someone **in effigy** *Fig.* to hang a dummy or some other figure of a hated person. ☐ *They hanged the dictator in effigy.* ☐ *The angry mob hanged the president in effigy.*

hang someone or something **from** something to suspend someone or something from something. ☐ *The captain wanted to hang him from the highest yardarm as punishment.* ☐ *I hung a colorful decoration from the windowsill.*

hang someone or something **with** something to suspend someone or something with something, such as a rope, chain, thread, etc. (The past tense *hanged* is usually used only with the hanging of people.) ☐ *The executioners hanged the criminal with a rope and later with a chain.* ☐ *They hung the picture with a golden cord.*

hang someone **out to dry** *Fig.* to defeat or punish someone. ☐ *The boss was really angry at Billie. He yelled at him and hung him out to dry.*

hang something **on** someone *Sl.* to blame something on someone; to frame someone for something. (See also **hang** something **on** someone or something.) ☐ *Don't try to hang the blame on me!* ☐ *The sheriff tried to hang the bank robbery on Jed.*

hang something **on** someone or something to drape or hook something on someone or something. (See also **hang** something **on** someone.) ☐ *Hang this sign on Walter and see how he looks.* ☐ *Please hang this sign on the front door.*

hang something **out (of** something**)** to suspend something outside of something while it is attached to the inside of something. ☐ *He hung the rope out of the window so he could escape the burning building.* ☐ *She ran to the window and hung the rope out.*

hang something **over** someone or something to suspend something over someone or something. ☐ *Sally hung the colorful mobile over the baby's crib.* ☐ *Please hang these garlands over the party table.*

hang something **up**† to return the telephone receiver to its cradle. (See also **hang it up**.) ☐ *Please hang this up when I pick up the other phone.* ☐ *Please hang up the phone.*

hang ten Go to **hang five**.

hang together 1. *Fig.* [for something or a group of people] to hold together; to remain intact. ☐ *I hope our bridge group hangs together until we are old and gray.* ☐ *I don't think that this car will hang together for another minute.* **2.** *Fig.* [for a story] to flow from element to element and make sense. ☐ *This story simply does not hang together.* ☐ *Your novel hangs together quite nicely.* **3.** *Fig.* [for people] to spend time together. ☐ *We hung together for a few hours and then went our separate ways.* ☐ *The boys hung together throughout the evening.*

hang tough (on something**)** *Sl.* to stick to one's position (on something). ☐ *I decided I'd hang tough on it. I tend to give in too easy.* ☐ *Yes, just hang tough.*

hang up 1. [for a machine or a computer] to grind to a halt; to stop because of some internal complication. ☐ *Our computer hung up right in the middle of printing the report.* ☐ *I was afraid that my computer would hang up permanently.* **2.** to replace the telephone receiver after a call; to terminate a telephone call. ☐ *I said good-bye and hung up.* ☐ *Please hang up and place your call again.*

hang up (in someone's **ear)** Go to next.

hang up (on someone or something**) 1.** and **hang up (in** someone's **ear)** to end a telephone call by returning the receiver to the cradle while the other party is still talking. ☐ *She hung up on me!* ☐ *I had to hang up on all that rude talk.* **2.** to give up on someone or something; to quit dealing with someone or something. ☐ *Finally, I had to hang up on Jeff. I can't depend on him for anything.* ☐ *We hung up on them because we knew we couldn't make a deal.*

hang with someone *Sl.* to spend or waste time with someone. ☐ *Dave spent the afternoon hanging with Don, and neither one got anything done.* ☐ *I'm going down to the corner and hang with the guys.*

H

hanker after someone or something and **hanker for** someone or something *Rur.* to want someone or something; to long for someone or something. ☐ *I hanker after a nice big beefsteak for dinner.*

happen before someone's **time** Go to before someone's time.

happen in the (very) nick of time Go to in the (very) nick of time.

happen to someone or something to befall someone or something; to occur to someone or something. ☐ *What is going to happen to me?* ☐ *Something awful happened to your car.*

happen (up)on someone or something to come upon someone or something, as if by accident. (See also come (up)on someone or something.) ☐ *I just happened upon a strange little man in the street who offered to sell me a watch.* ☐ *Andrew happened on a book that interested him, so he bought it.*

H

***happy as a clam (at high tide)** and ***happy as a clam (in butter sauce); *happy as a lark; *happy as can be** contented; very happy. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *I've been as happy as a clam since I moved to the country.* ☐ *I don't need much. Just somewhere to live, some work to do, and a TV to watch, and I'm happy as a clam at high tide.* ☐ *Matthew was happy as a lark throughout his whole vacation.* ☐ *Bob was happy as can be when he won the lottery.*

happy as a clam (in butter sauce) Go to previous.

happy as a lark Go to happy as a clam (at high tide).

happy as can be Go to happy as a clam (at high tide).

a **happy camper** a happy person. ☐ *The boss came in this morning and found his hard disk trashed. He was not a happy camper.*

happy hour a time to drink a cocktail, starting at about 5:00 P.M. (Often bars have lower prices during "happy hour.") ☐ *I think that Mary has been starting happy hour a little early. Before noon I think.*

Happy is the bride that the sun shines on. *Prov.* It is supposed to be good luck for the sun to shine on a couple on their wedding day. ☐ *Our wedding day was a sunny one, and most of my relatives made sure to remind me, "Happy is the bride that the sun shines on."*

Happy is the country which has no history. *Prov.* Since history tends to record only violent, unfortunate, or tumultuous events, a country with no history would be a country lucky enough to have no such unhappy events to record. ☐ *The history of our country is so full of greed, violence, and dishonesty; happy is the country which has no history.*

a **harbinger of things to come** and a **portent of things to come;** a **sign of things to come** a sample of the events that are to occur in the future. ☐ *The first cuts in our budget are a harbinger of things to come.* ☐ *Today's visit from the auditors is a portent of things to come.*

harbor something **against** someone or something to have and retain a bad feeling of some kind toward someone or something. ☐ *I harbor no ill will against you.* ☐ *Alice does not harbor any bad feeling against the company that let her go.*

a **hard act to follow** Go to a tough act to follow.

***hard as a rock** and ***hard as stone** very hard. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *This cake is as hard as a rock!* ☐ *I can't drive a nail into this wood. It's hard as stone.*

***hard as nails** *Cliché* [of someone] stern and unyielding. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Don't try to bargain with Liz. She's as hard as nails.* ☐ *Bob may seem sweet and easily swayed, but in fact he's hard as nails.*

hard as stone Go to hard as a rock.

hard at something and **hard at** doing something working hard at something. ☐ *Tom's busy. He's hard at work on the lawn.*

***hard feelings** *Fig.* feelings of resentment or anger. (*Typically: **cause ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *The argument caused a lot of hard feelings, but finally we got over it.*

a **hard nut to crack** and a **tough nut to crack** *Fig.* difficult person or problem to deal with. ☐ *This problem is getting me down. It's a hard nut to crack.* ☐ *Tom sure is a hard nut to crack. I can't figure him out.*

hard of hearing [of someone] unable to hear well or partially deaf. ☐ *Please speak loudly. I am hard of hearing.* ☐ *Tom is hard of hearing, but is not totally deaf.*

hard on someone's **heels** Go to on someone's heels.

hard on someone harming someone's feelings; demanding much from someone. ☐ *I wish you wouldn't be so hard on me. So I make mistakes. I never said I was perfect.*

hard put (to do something**)** and **hard pressed (to** do something**)** able to do something only with great difficulty. ☐ *I'm hard put to come up with enough money to pay the rent.* ☐ *I get hard put like that about once a month.*

a **hard row to hoe** Go to a tough row to hoe.

*the **hard sell** high-pressure selling techniques. (*Typically: **get ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *They gave me the hard sell, but I still wouldn't buy the car.* ☐ *The clerk gave the customer the hard sell.*

hard sledding and **tough sledding** *Fig.* a very difficult time. ☐ *They had some hard sledding when they were first married.* ☐ *It was tough sledding for sure when our crops failed that year.*

*a **hard time** and *a **bad time;** *a **rough time** trouble [over something]; unnecessary difficulty. (*Typically: **have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Please don't give me a hard time.* ☐ *The clerk got a hard time from the boss, so he quit.*

hard times Go to bad times.

hard to believe and **hard to swallow** not easily believed; hardly believable. ☐ *Her story was hard to swallow, and it finally was proven to be a lie.*

hard to swallow Go to previous.

hard to take difficult or painful to accept. ☐ *The news was hard to take, but we soon realized that it was all for the best.*

hard up (for something**)** greatly in need of something, especially money. ☐ *Ann was hard up for cash to pay the bills.* ☐ *I was so hard up, I couldn't afford to buy food.*

Hard words break no bones. *Prov.* Verbal abuse does not physically hurt you, and therefore you should not be very upset by it. (Can be used to reply to someone who is verbally abusing you.) ☐ *Jill: I can't believe some of the*

names Fred called me. Jane: Well, hard words break no bones.

harden oneself **to** something *Fig.* to make oneself capable of bearing something unpleasant. □ *You will have to learn to harden yourself to tragedies like this. They happen every day in a hospital.* □ *She had learned to harden herself to the kinds of poverty she had to work in.*

harden something **off†** to accustom a young plant to normal weather so it can be moved from a protected environment to the out-of-doors. □ *We put the plants by the open window to harden them off.* □ *We hardened off the plants.*

harden something **up†** to make something hard or strong. □ *Put the meat in the freezer awhile to harden it up before you try to slice it thin.* □ *Harden up the ice cream a little in the freezer.*

harder than the back of God's head *Rur.* very hard. □ *The soil was harder than the back of God's head. We had a hard time digging it.* □ *The wood was solid and dense and harder than the back of God's head.*

hardly dry behind the ears Go to wet behind the ears.

hardly exchange more than some number of **words with** someone Go to exchange no more than some number of words with someone.

hardly have time to breathe and **scarcely have time to breathe** *Fig.* to be very busy. □ *This was such a busy day. I hardly had time to breathe.* □ *They made him work so hard that he scarcely had time to breathe.*

hardly have time to think so busy that one can hardly think properly; very busy. □ *I've been so busy that I hardly have time to think.* □ *I hardly have time to think in the job that I do. We are just too busy.*

hard-nosed *Fig.* stern and unforgiving. □ *Mr. Howe was known to be very hard-nosed, but he could really be friendly if you got to know him.*

hark(en) back to something **1.** to have originated as something; to have started out as something. (*Harken* is an older word meaning "pay heed to.") □ *The word* ice-box *harks back to refrigerators that were cooled by ice.* □ *Our modern breakfast cereals hark back to the porridge and gruel of our ancestors.* **2.** to remind one of something. □ *Seeing a horse and buggy in the park harks back to the time when horses drew milk wagons.* □ *Sally says it harkens back to the time when everything was delivered by horse-drawn wagons.*

harmonize with someone or something to blend with someone or something musically. □ *Please try to harmonize with the rest of the singers!* □ *Will you harmonize with the piano, please?*

harness an animal **up†** to put a harness on an animal, such as a horse. □ *You had better harness the horses up so we can go.* □ *Please harness up the mare for me.*

harness someone or an animal **to** something to attach someone, something, or an animal to something with a harness. □ *The instructor harnessed me to the hang glider, and I really began to get nervous.* □ *Andrew harnessed the horses to the little wagon.*

harp on someone or something *Fig.* to keep talking or complaining about someone or something; to refer to someone or something again and again. □ *I wish you would quit harping on Jeff all the time. He couldn't be all that bad.* □ *Stop harping on my mistakes and work on your own.*

has come and gone has already arrived and has already departed. □ *No, Joy is not here. She's come and gone.* □ *Sorry, you are too late for your appointment. The doctor has come and gone.*

(Has the) cat got your tongue? Why are you not saying anything? (Often said by adults to children.) □ *Grandpa used to terrify me, both because he was big and fierce-looking and because he usually greeted me by bellowing, "Cat got your tongue?"* □ *Hi, Lisa! How are you? How's your husband? Are you surprised to see me? What's the matter, has the cat got your tongue?*

has the world by the tail (with a downhill drag) *Rur.* has destiny under control. □ *The young businessman had the world by the tail with a downhill drag. He had made a million dollars before he was twenty-five.* □ *She's got the world by the tail now, but her fame won't last forever.*

hash something **over† (with** someone**)** *Fig.* to discuss something with someone. □ *I need to hash this matter over with you.* □ *I've hashed over this business enough.*

hash something **up† 1.** to chop something up. □ *Now, hash the onion and garlic up and put it in the skillet.* □ *Now, hash up the beef and brown it.* **2.** to mess something up. □ *Somebody hashed my manuscript up!* □ *Somebody hashed up my manuscript!*

hassle someone **about** something and **hassle** someone **with** something to harass someone about something. □ *Come on! Don't hassle me about the deadline!* □ *Stop hassling me with all the little details.*

Haste makes waste. *Prov.* You do not save any time by working too fast; hurrying will cause you to make mistakes, and you will have to take extra time to do the job over again. □ *Fred: Hurry up and get my car fixed. Alan: Don't rush me. Haste makes waste.*

hatch an animal **out†** to aid in releasing an animal from an egg. □ *They hatched lots of ducks out at the hatchery.* □ *The farmer hatched out hundreds of chicks each month.*

hatchet man a man who does the cruel or difficult things for someone else; someone who does someone else's dirty work. □ *He served as the president's hatchet man and ended up doing all the dirty work.*

hate someone or something **like sin** *Fig.* to hate someone or something a great deal. □ *She won't eat brussels sprouts. She hates 'em like sin.* □ *I don't want that man anywhere near me. I hate him like sin.*

hate someone's **guts** *Fig.* to hate someone very much. □ *Oh, Bob is terrible. I hate his guts!* □ *You may hate my guts for saying so, but I think you're getting gray hair.*

hats off to someone or something *Fig.* let us salute or honor someone or something. □ *Hat's off to Perry for planning the dinner and finding such a good band.*

haul off and do something **1.** *Inf.* to draw back and do something, such as strike a person. □ *She hauled off and slapped him hard.* □ *Max hauled off and poked Lefty in the nose.* **2.** *Rur.* to do something without a great deal of preparation. □ *The old man hauled off and bought him-*

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self a house. ☐ *Someday, I'm going to haul off and buy me a new car.*

haul someone **in**† *Fig.* to arrest someone; [for a police officer] to take someone to the police station. ☐ *The cop hauled the drunk driver in.* ☐ *They hauled in the suspects.*

haul someone **on the carpet** Go to **call** someone **on the carpet.**

haul someone or something **over to** something to drag someone or something over to something. (Fixed order.) ☐ *She hauled the boy over to the mess he made and forced him to clean it up.* ☐ *Ken hauled the logs over to the fireplace and laid the fire.*

haul someone **over the coals** Go to **rake** someone **over the coals.**

haul someone **(up**†**) before** someone or something *Fig.* to bring someone into the presence of someone or something, usually some officer of the law. ☐ *The officer hauled the suspect up before the judge.* ☐ *She hauled up the suspect before the judge.*

haul something **down**† to pull something down from a higher level. ☐ *Terry hauled the sail down and put it away.* ☐ *Please haul down the mainsail.*

haul something **(from** some place**) to** some place and **haul** something **from** some place **(to** some place**)** to drag something from one place to another. ☐ *I don't want to have to haul this thing from home to office and back again.* ☐ *I hauled my suitcase to the airport from my hotel.*

haul something **up**† **(from** something**)** to drag or pull something up from below. ☐ *Jeff hauled the bucket up from the bottom of the well.* ☐ *He hauled up the bucket.*

haul up (somewhere**)** and **pull up (**somewhere**)** to stop somewhere; to come to rest somewhere. ☐ *The car hauled up in front of the house.* ☐ *My hat blew away just as the bus pulled up to the stop.*

have a bad attitude to have a negative outlook on things; to be uncooperative. ☐ *Perry has a bad attitude and has nothing positive to contribute to the conversation.*

have a bad case of the simples *Rur.* to be stupid. ☐ *That boy has a bad case of the simples. He can't understand anything.* ☐ *She acts smart enough on the playground, but get her in the classroom and she has a bad case of the simples.*

have a bad effect (on someone or something**)** to be bad for someone or something. ☐ *Aspirin has a bad effect on me.* ☐ *Cold weather has a bad effect on roses.*

have a ball to have an exciting time. ☐ *I plan to have a ball while I'm on vacation.* ☐ *Come on, everybody! Let's have a ball!*

have a bear by the tail Go to **have a tiger by the tail.**

have a bellyful *Inf.* to have as much as one can stand. ☐ *I've had a bellyful of your whining. Be quiet!*

have a big mouth to be a gossiper; to be a person who tells secrets. ☐ *Mary has a big mouth. She told Bob what I was getting him for his birthday.* ☐ *You shouldn't say things like that about people all the time. Everyone will say you have a big mouth.*

have a blast *Inf.* to have a great time; to have a lot of fun. ☐ *The food was good and we had a blast. Thanks for inviting us to the party.*

Have a blimp! *Sl.* Have a good year! (A reference to the Goodyear blimp, which is famous for being at notable events.) ☐ *Good-bye. Have a blimp!* ☐ *Have a blimp! See you next summer.*

have a blowout 1. [for one's car tire] to burst. ☐ *I had a blowout on the way here. I nearly lost control of the car.* ☐ *If you have a blowout in one tire, you should check the other tires.* **2.** *Sl.* to have a big, wild party; to enjoy oneself at a big party. ☐ *Mary and Bill had quite a blowout at their house Friday night.* ☐ *Fred and Tom had quite a blowout last night.*

have a bone to pick (with someone**)** to have a disagreement to discuss with someone; to have something to argue about with someone. ☐ *Hey, Bill. I've got a bone to pick with you. Where is the money you owe me?* ☐ *I had a bone to pick with her, but she was so sweet that I forgot about it.*

have a brush with something to have a brief contact with something; to have an experience with something. (Especially with the law. Sometimes a *close* brush.) ☐ *Ann had a close brush with the law. She was nearly arrested for speeding.* ☐ *When I was younger, I had a brush with scarlet fever, but I got over it.*

have a burr under one's **saddle** *Rur.* to be irritated by something. ☐ *Joe has a burr under his saddle because Jane's going out with Bill tonight.* ☐ *Mary must have a burr under her saddle. She's been snapping at me all day.*

have a buzz on *Fig.* to be intoxicated. (Fixed order.) ☐ *Pete has a buzz on and is giggling a lot.* ☐ *Both of them had a buzz on by the end of the celebration.*

have a case (against someone**)** to have much evidence that can be used against someone in court. ☐ *Do the police have a case against John?* ☐ *No, they don't have a case.*

have a change of heart *Fig.* to change one's attitude or decision, usually from a negative to a positive position. ☐ *I had a change of heart at the last minute and gave the beggar some money.* ☐ *Since I talked to you last, I have had a change of heart. I now approve of your marrying Sam.*

have a clear conscience (about someone or something**)** and **have a clean conscience (about** someone or something**)** to be free of guilt about someone or something. ☐ *I'm sorry that John got the blame. I have a clean conscience about the whole affair.* ☐ *I have a clear conscience about John and his problems.* ☐ *I didn't do it. I swear to that with a clean conscience.*

have a close call Go to next.

have a close shave and **have a close call** *Fig.* to have a narrow escape from something dangerous. ☐ *What a close shave I had! I nearly fell off the roof when I was working there.* ☐ *I almost got struck by a speeding car. It was a close shave.*

have a clue (about something**)** *Fig.* to know anything about something; to have even a hint about someone or something. (Usually negative.) ☐ *I don't have a clue about where to start looking for Jim.* ☐ *Why do you think I have a clue about Tom's disappearance?*

have a conniption (fit) *Rur.* to get angry or hysterical. (See also **have a fit**) ☐ *I got so mad I thought I was going to have a conniption.* ☐ *My father had a conniption fit when I got home this morning.*

have a corncob up one's **ass** and **have a poker up** one's **ass 1.** *Inf.* to be very stiff. (Use with caution.) ☐ *How come you're acting so high-and-mighty with me? Do you have a corncob up your ass?* ☐ *He was a terrible actor, stiff and wooden. He looked like he had a poker up his ass.* **2.** *Inf.* to be very touchy or irritable. ☐ *Wow! Old Mr. Webster really has a corncob up his ass this morning. Watch out!* ☐ *Tom has a poker up his ass and he's looking for you. Better make yourself scarce.*

have a death wish *Fig.* to seem to be willing to take all sorts of needless risks. ☐ *Look at the way that guy drives. He must have some sort of a death wish.*

have a familiar ring (to it) *Fig.* [for a story or an explanation] to sound familiar. ☐ *Your excuse has a familiar ring. Have you done this before?* ☐ *This term paper has a familiar ring to it. I think it has been copied.*

have a field day *Fig.* to experience freedom from one's usual work schedule; to have a very enjoyable time. (As with children who are released from classes to take part in sports and athletic contests.) ☐ *The boss was gone and we had a field day today. No one got anything done.* ☐ *The air was fresh and clear and everyone had a field day in the park during the lunch hour.*

have a finger in the pie and **have** one's **finger in the pie** *Fig.* to have a role in something; to be involved in something. (See also **have** one's **finger in too many pies**) ☐ *Tess wants to have a finger in the pie. She doesn't think we can do it by ourselves.* ☐ *Sally always wants to have a finger in the pie.*

have a fit and **throw a fit** to be very angry; to show great anger. (See also **have a conniption (fit)**.) ☐ *The teacher had a fit when the dog ran through the classroom.* ☐ *John threw a fit when he found his car had been damaged.*

have a flair for something to have a talent for doing something; to have a special ability in some area. ☐ *Alice has quite a flair for designing.* ☐ *I have a flair for fixing clocks.*

have a gift for (doing**)** something *Fig.* to have a natural talent for doing something. ☐ *Tony has a gift for writing short stories.* ☐ *Sharon has a gift for dealing with animals.*

have a glass jaw *Fig.* to be susceptible to a knockout when struck on the head. (Said only of boxers who are frequently knocked down by a blow to the head.) ☐ *When the prizefighter was knocked out cold by a right to the chin in the first round, the newspapers said he had a glass jaw.* ☐ *Once a fighter has a glass jaw, he's finished as a boxer.*

have a go at something Go to a **try at** something.

have a good arm *Fig.* to have a strong and conditioned arm for sports, especially pitching in baseball. ☐ *Perry had a good arm, but he often pitched wide of the plate.*

have a good command of something to know something well. ☐ *Bill has a good command of French.* ☐ *Jane has a good command of economic theory.*

have a good head on one's **shoulders** *Fig.* to have common sense; to be sensible and intelligent. ☐ *Mary doesn't do well in school, but she's got a good head on her shoulders.* ☐ *John has a good head on his shoulders and can be depended on to give good advice.*

have a (good) mind to do something *Fig.* have an inclination to do something. ☐ *I have a good mind to tell him just what I think of him.* ☐ *She had a mind to go to college, but her folks talked her out of it.*

Have a good one. Go to **Have a nice day.**

have a good thing going to have something of an ongoing nature arranged for one's own benefit. ☐ *Sally paints pictures and sells them at art fairs. She has a good thing going, and she makes good money.* ☐ *John inherited a fortune and doesn't have to work for a living anymore. He's got a good thing going.*

Have a good time. Enjoy yourself in what you are about to do. (Often said when someone is about to leave for an event.) ☐ *Bill: I'm leaving for the party now. Father: Have a good time.* ☐ *Sue: Tonight is the formal dance at the Palmer House, and I'm going. Mary: Have a good time. I'm watching television right here.*

Have a good trip. and **Have a nice trip.** Have a pleasant journey. (Compare this with **Have a safe trip.** This phrase avoids references to safety.) ☐ *As Sue stepped onto the plane, someone in a uniform said, "Have a nice trip."* ☐ *"Have a good trip," said Bill, waving his good-byes.*

have a (good) working over Go to a **(good) working over.**

have a green thumb *Fig.* to have the ability to grow plants well. ☐ *Just look at Mr. Simpson's garden. He has a green thumb.* ☐ *My mother has a green thumb when it comes to houseplants.*

have a head for something *Fig.* have the mental capacity for something. ☐ *Jane has a good head for directions and never gets lost.* ☐ *Bill doesn't have a head for figures and should never become an accountant.*

have a heart *Fig.* to be compassionate; to be generous and forgiving; to have an especially compassionate heart. ☐ *Oh, have a heart! Give me some help!* ☐ *If Anne had a heart, she'd volunteer to help us on the charity drive.*

have a heart of gold *Cliché* to be generous, sincere, and friendly. ☐ *Mary is such a lovely person. She has a heart of gold.* ☐ *You think Tom stole your watch? Impossible! He has a heart of gold.*

have a heart of stone *Fig.* to be cold and unfriendly. ☐ *Sally has a heart of stone. She never even smiles.* ☐ *The villain in the play had a heart of stone. He was cruel to everyone.*

have a heart-to-heart (talk) *Fig.* to have a sincere and intimate talk. ☐ *I had a heart-to-heart talk with my father before I went off to college.* ☐ *I have a problem, John. Let's sit down and have a heart-to-heart.*

have a hidden talent and **have hidden talents** *Fig.* to have talents or skills that no one knows about. ☐ *Wow, Perry! I didn't know you had so many hidden talents.*

have a hitch in one's **gitalong** *Rur.* to have a permanent or temporary limp. ☐ *Pappy's got quite a hitch in his gitalong since he broke his hip.*

have a hunch (that something is the case**)** and **have a hunch about** something to have an idea about what did, will, or should happen; to have a feeling that something

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will or should happen. ☐ *I had a hunch that you would be here when I arrived.* ☐ *I have a hunch about the way things will happen.*

have a keen interest in something to have a strong interest in something; to be very interested in something. ☐ *Tom had always had a keen interest in music, so he started a band.* ☐ *The children have a keen interest in having a pet, so I bought them a cat.*

have a kick to it *Fig.* to have a strong or spicy flavor; to have a high alcohol content. ☐ *I like that salsa. It has a kick to it.* ☐ *Tom's moonshine sure has a kick to it—don't drink too much of it, now!*

have a load on and **have got a load on** *Sl.* to be intoxicated. ☐ *Fred has a load on and is finished drinking for the evening.* ☐ *You have a load on every time I see you at a party.*

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have a lot going (for one**)** to have many things working to one's benefit. ☐ *Jane is so talented. She has a lot going for her.* ☐ *She has a good job and a nice family. She has a lot going.*

have a lot on one's **mind** *Fig.* to have many things to worry about; to be preoccupied. ☐ *I'm sorry that I'm so grouchy. I have a lot of troubles on my mind.* ☐ *He forgot to go to his appointment because he had a lot on his mind.*

have a low boiling point *Fig.* to anger easily. ☐ *Be nice to John. He's upset and has a low boiling point.* ☐ *Mr. Jones sure has a low boiling point. I hardly said anything, and he got angry.*

have a mind as sharp as a steel trap *Fig.* to be very intelligent. ☐ *She's a smart kid. Has a mind as sharp as a steel trap.* ☐ *They say the professor has a mind as sharp as a steel trap, but then why can't he figure out which bus to take in the morning?*

have a mind of one's **own** *Fig.* to be very independent. ☐ *There is no point in telling her what to do. She has a mind of her own.*

have a mind to to be inclined to do something. ☐ *I have a mind to accept your challenge.* ☐ *Tom had a mind to call up Sally and ask her to dinner.*

have a near miss *Fig.* to nearly crash or collide. ☐ *The airplanes—flying much too close—had a near miss.* ☐ *I had a near miss with a bike while driving over here.*

Have a nice day. and **Have a good day.; Have a nice one.; Have a good one.** *Cliché* an expression said when parting or saying good-bye. (This is now quite hackneyed, and many people are annoyed by it.) ☐ *Clerk: Thank you. Tom: Thank you. Clerk: Have a nice day.* ☐ *Bob: See you, man! John: Bye, Bob. Have a good one!*

Have a nice flight. Please enjoy your flight. (Said when wishing someone well on an airplane trip. Often said by airline personnel to their passengers.) ☐ *Clerk: Here's your ticket, sir. Have a nice flight. Fred: Thanks.* ☐ *As Mary boarded the plane, the flight attendant said, "Have a nice flight."*

have a nose for something *Fig.* to have the ability to sense or find something, such as news, trouble, gossip, etc. ☐ *She really has a nose for news. She's a good reporter.* ☐ *Fred has a nose for gossip.*

have a one-track mind *Fig.* to think entirely or almost entirely about one subject. ☐ *Adolescent boys often have one-track minds. All they're interested in is the opposite sex.* ☐ *Bob has a one-track mind. He can only talk about football.*

have a passion for someone or something *Fig.* to have a strong feeling of need or desire for someone, something, or some activity. ☐ *Mary has a great passion for chocolate.* ☐ *John has a passion for fishing, so he fishes as often as he can.*

have a penchant for doing something to have a taste, desire, or inclination for doing something. ☐ *John has a penchant for eating fattening foods.* ☐ *Ann has a penchant for buying clothes.*

have a place in something to have a role in some plan or some activity. ☐ *Do I have a place in the negotiations?* ☐ *Mary did not have a place in any of this.*

have a rare old time a fine and enjoyable time at a party or something similar. ☐ *We had a rare old time at Tom's the other night.* ☐ *I haven't had a rare old time like that in years.*

have a rough time (of it) and **have a tough time (of it)** to experience a difficult period. ☐ *Since his wife died, Mr. Brown has been having a rough time of it.* ☐ *Be nice to Bob. He's been having a rough time at work.*

have a roving eye *Euph.* to be flirtatious; to be interested in having sexual relations outside of marriage. (Usually used to describe men.) ☐ *Poor Maria. Her husband has a roving eye.* ☐ *When they were first married, he had a roving eye.*

have a run of something *Fig.* to have a continuous series of events. (Especially *bad luck*.) ☐ *I had a run of bad luck at the casino.* ☐ *The city had a run of serious crimes that angered the citizens.* ☐ *The company had a run of huge sales increases over the last few years.*

have a run-in (with someone or something**)** to have trouble with someone or something. ☐ *I had a run-in with Mrs. Wilson. She's a hard case.* ☐ *We've had a run-in before.*

Have a safe journey. Go to next.

Have a safe trip. and **Have a safe journey.** I hope that your journey is safe.; Be careful and assure that your journey is safe. (Said as someone is about to leave for a trip.) ☐ *Bill: Well, we're off for London. Sally: Have a safe trip.* ☐ *Bill: You're driving all the way to San Francisco? Bob: Yes, indeed. Bill: Well, have a safe trip.*

have a score to settle (with someone**)** *Fig.* to have a problem to clear up with someone; to have to get even with someone about something. ☐ *I have a score to settle with John since he insulted me at our party.* ☐ *John and I have a score to settle.*

have a scrape (with someone or something**)** *Fig.* to come into contact with someone or something; to have a small battle with someone or something. ☐ *I had a scrape with the county sheriff.* ☐ *John and Bill had a scrape, but they are friends again now.*

have a screw loose and **have a loose screw; have got a screw loose** *Inf. Fig.* to be silly or eccentric. ☐ *He's sort of strange. I think he's got a loose screw.* ☐ *Yes, he has a screw loose somewhere. He wears a heavy jacket in the middle of summer.*

have a seat to sit down. (Often a polite invitation to sit down.) ☐ *Have a seat. I'll be with you in a minute.*

have a set-to (with someone**)** to have an argument or fight with someone. ☐ *Perry and Emmet had quite a set-to over the choice of music.*

have a soft spot (in one's **heart) for** someone or an animal *Fig.* to have a fondness for someone, something, or an animal. ☐ *I have a soft spot in my heart for Jeff. I'll always be his friend.* ☐ *Elaine has a soft spot for kittens.*

have a (sound) grasp of something Go to a **(solid) grasp of** something.

have a spaz *Sl.* to get angry or hysterical; to **have a conniption (fit)**. (*Spaz* is short for a spastic attack or fit.) ☐ *If my dad hears about this, he'll have a spaz.* ☐ *The teacher had a spaz when I came in so late.*

have a stake in something *Fig.* to have something at risk in something; to have a financial or other interest in something. ☐ *I have a stake in that company. I want it to make a profit.* ☐ *I don't have a stake in it, so I don't care.*

have a stroke to experience sudden unconsciousness or paralysis due to an interruption in the blood supply to the brain. (Also used as an exaggeration. See the last example.) ☐ *The patient who received an artificial heart had a stroke two days after the operation.* ☐ *My great-uncle Bill—who is very old—had a stroke last May.* ☐ *Calm down, Bob. Don't have a stroke over a silly mistake.*

have a sweet tooth *Fig.* to desire to eat many sweet foods—especially candy and pastries. ☐ *I have a sweet tooth, and if I don't watch it, I'll really get fat.* ☐ *John eats candy all the time. He must have a sweet tooth.*

have a thing about someone or something **1.** to have a special fear or dislike of someone or something. ☐ *Kelly has a thing about Tim. She simply hates him.* ☐ *I have a thing about snakes.* **2.** to have a craving for someone or something. ☐ *I have a thing about Maggie. I guess I'm in love.* ☐ *Elaine has a thing about strawberry ice cream. She can't get enough of it.*

have a thing going (with someone**)** and **have something going (with** someone**)** *Fig.* to have a romance or a love affair with someone. ☐ *John and Mary have a thing going.* ☐ *Bill has something going with Ann.*

have a thirst for something **1.** *Lit.* to be thirsty for something to drink. ☐ *I have a thirst for a tall glass of iced tea.* **2.** *Fig.* to have a craving or desire for something. ☐ *The tyrant had an intense thirst for power.* ☐ *The actor's thirst for fame caused him to become unscrupulous.*

have a tiger by the tail and **have got a tiger by the tail; have a bear by the tail** *Fig.* to have become associated with something powerful and potentially dangerous; to have a very difficult problem to solve. ☐ *You have a tiger by the tail. You bit off more than you could chew.* ☐ *You've had a bear by the tail ever since you agreed to finish that big project.*

have (a) use for someone or something **1.** to have need for someone or something. (Often negative. Note the use of *any* and *no* in several examples.) ☐ *I have no use for Josh and his big fancy car.* ☐ *See if you have use for this hammer.* ☐ *Do you have any use for this?* ☐ *I have no use for that.* **2.** to like someone or something. (Often negative. Note the use of *any* and *no*.) ☐ *I don't have any use for sweet potatoes.* ☐ *I have no use for Harry.*

have a way with someone or something to have a special and effective way of dealing with someone or something. ☐ *She has a way with Jeff. She can get him to do anything.* ☐ *Sarah has a way with flowers. She can arrange them beautifully.*

have a way with words to have talent in the effective or stylish use of words. (See also **have the gift of the gab**.) ☐ *Ask Perry to make the announcement. He has a way with words.*

have a weakness for someone or something *Fig.* to be unable to resist someone or something; to be (figuratively) powerless against someone or something. ☐ *I have a weakness for chocolate.* ☐ *John has a weakness for Mary. I think he's in love.*

have a weight problem *Euph.* to be fat; to be overweight. ☐ *He had a weight problem when he was a teenager, but he slimmed down once he started exercising.* ☐ *She has a weight problem, but she's a lovely woman.*

have a whack at something Go to a **try at** something.

have a whale of a time *Fig.* to have an exciting or fun time; to have a big time. (*Whale* is a way of saying *big*.) ☐ *We had a whale of a time at Sally's birthday party.* ☐ *Enjoy your vacation! I hope you have a whale of a time.*

have a yellow belly and **have a yellow streak down** one's **back** *Fig.* to be cowardly. ☐ *Tex has a yellow streak down his back a mile wide. He's afraid to cross the street!*

have a yellow streak down one's **back** Go to previous.

have all one's **marbles** *Fig.* to have all one's mental faculties; to be mentally sound. (Very often with a negative or said to convey doubt.) ☐ *I don't think he has all his marbles.* ☐ *Do you think Bob has all his marbles?*

have an accident 1. to experience something that was not foreseen or intended. ☐ *Traffic is very bad. I almost had an accident.* ☐ *Drive carefully. Try to avoid having an accident.* **2.** *Euph.* to lose control of the bowels or the bladder. (Usually said of a young child.) ☐ *"Oh, Ann," cried Mother. "It looks like you've had an accident!"* ☐ *Mother asked Billy to go to the bathroom before they left so that he wouldn't have an accident in the car.*

have an ace up one's **sleeve** Go to **have** something **up** one's **sleeve**.

have an affair (with someone**)** to have a love affair with someone. ☐ *When I was 20, I had an affair with a rock star, and really made a fool of myself.*

have an alcohol problem and **have a drinking problem** *Euph.* to be a drunkard. ☐ *He has an alcohol problem. It got so bad that he almost lost his job.* ☐ *If you have a drinking problem, our clinic can help.*

have an appetite for something **1.** *Lit.* to have a desire to eat something in particular. ☐ *I have an appetite for a nice big steak.* **2.** *Fig.* to have a desire to have, see, hear, etc., something. ☐ *Bobby has a big appetite for sports and activity.* ☐ *Bob has no appetite for violence on television.*

have an argument (with someone**)** to argue with someone. ☐ *Let's not have an argument with the boss.* ☐ *Tom and John had an argument.*

H

have an ax(e) to grind *Fig.* to have something to complain about. ☐ *Tom, I need to talk to you. I have an ax to grind.* ☐ *Bill and Bob went into the other room to argue. They had an axe to grind.*

have an ear for something *Fig.* to have the ability to learn music or languages. ☐ *Bill doesn't have an ear for music. He can't carry a tune.* ☐ *Mary has a good ear for languages.*

have an easy time of it to have an experience with something that is less difficult or severe than others have experienced. ☐ *We were given a hard assignment, but Fred had an easy time of it.*

have an effect on someone or something to cause a result in someone or something. ☐ *The storm had a bad effect on the baby, who cried all night.* ☐ *Will this have an effect on my taxes?*

have an eye for someone or something *Fig.* to have a taste or an inclination for someone or something. ☐ *Bob has an eye for beauty.* ☐ *He has an eye for color.*

have an impact on someone or something to leave an impression on someone or something. ☐ *The sharp change in interest rates had an impact on the housing market.* ☐ *Your story really had an impact on me.*

have another guess coming Go to next.

have another think coming and **have another guess coming** to have to rethink something because one was wrong the first time. (*Think* is a noun here.) ☐ *She's quite wrong. She has another think coming if she wants to walk in here like that.* ☐ *You have another guess coming if you think you can treat me like that!*

have arrived to have reached a position of power, authority, or prominence. ☐ *Jane saw her picture on the cover of the magazine and felt that she had finally arrived.* ☐ *When I got an office with a window, I knew that I had arrived.*

Have at it. Start doing it.; Start eating your food. ☐ *John: Here's your hamburger. Have at it. Jane: Thanks. Where's the mustard?* ☐ *John: Did you notice? The driveway needs sweeping. Jane: Here's the broom. Have at it.*

have at someone to go at someone; to attack someone. ☐ *The boys had at the gang members and gave them a beating.* ☐ *I just knew John was going to have at Fred.*

have at something Go to **get at** something.

have bats in one's **belfry** *Inf. Fig.* to be crazy. ☐ *You must really have bats in your belfry if you think I'll put up with that kind of stuff.* ☐ *Pay no attention to her. She has bats in her belfry.*

have been around to be experienced in life. (Use with caution since this can also be taken to mean to be promiscuous.) ☐ *Ask Sally about how the government works. She's been around the state capital for years.* ☐ *They all know a lot about life. They've been around.*

have been to hell and back *Fig.* to have survived a great deal of trouble. ☐ *What a terrible day! I feel like I have been to hell and back.* ☐ *After a day of shopping, I feel like I have been to hell and back.*

have bigger fish to fry and **have other fish to fry; have more important fish to fry** *Fig.* to have other things to do; to have more important things to do. ☐ *I can't take time for your problem. I have other fish to fry.* ☐ *I won't waste time on your question. I have bigger fish to fry.*

have broad shoulders 1. *Lit.* to have wide shoulders. ☐ *She has broad shoulders because she exercises and lifts weights.* **2.** *Fig.* to have the ability to cope with unpleasant responsibilities; to have the ability to accept criticism or rebuke. ☐ *No need to apologize to me. I can take it. I have broad shoulders.* ☐ *Karen may have broad shoulders, but she can't endure endless criticism.*

have calluses from patting one's **own back** and **break** one's **arm patting oneself on the back** *Fig.* to be a braggart. ☐ *If you haven't heard about Bill's latest achievement, he'd be glad to tell you. He has calluses from patting his own back.* ☐ *Jane: I did a really wonderful job, if I do say so myself. Tom: If you're not careful, you'll break your arm patting yourself on the back.*

have carnal knowledge of someone *Euph.* to have had sex with someone. (Formal or jocular.) ☐ *She had never before had carnal knowledge of a man.*

have cause to do something to have a justifiable reason to do something. ☐ *Do you have cause to think that Mary took your money?* ☐ *He had no cause to yell at me like that.*

have clean hands *Fig.* to be guiltless. (As if a guilty person would have dirty or bloody hands.) ☐ *Don't look at me. I have clean hands.* ☐ *The police took him in, but let him go after questioning because he had clean hands.*

have come a long way 1. *Lit.* to have traveled a long distance. ☐ *You've come a long way. You must be tired and hungry.* ☐ *I've come a long way. Please let me rest.* **2.** *Fig.* to have accomplished much; to have advanced much. ☐ *My, how famous you are. You've come a long way.* ☐ *Tom has come a long way in his career in a short time.*

have confidence in someone to trust someone; to know that someone will be true. ☐ *I have confidence in you, and I know you will do well.* ☐ *Randy tends not to have confidence in anyone.*

have designs on someone or something *Fig.* to have plans to exploit or somehow take advantage of someone or something. ☐ *Mrs. Brown has designs on my apple tree. I think she's going to cut off the part that hangs over her fence.* ☐ *Mary has designs on Bill. I think she'll try to date him.*

have dibs on something to reserve something for oneself; to claim something for oneself. (Often said by children.) ☐ *I have dibs on the last piece of cake.* ☐ *John has dibs on the last piece again. It isn't fair.*

have doubts about someone or something to have questions or suspicions about someone or something. ☐ *I have doubts about Alice and whether she can do it.* ☐ *We have no doubts about the usefulness of this project.*

have egg on one's **face** *Fig.* to be embarrassed by something one has done. (As if one went out in public with a dirty face.) ☐ *I was completely wrong, and now I have egg on my face.* ☐ *She's really got egg on her face!*

have eyes in the back of one's **head** *Fig.* to seem to be able to sense what is going on behind or outside of one's field of vision. ☐ *My teacher seems to have eyes in the back of her head.* ☐ *My teacher doesn't need to have eyes in the back of his head. He watches us very carefully.*

have faith in someone to believe someone; to trust someone to do or be what is claimed. ☐ *I have faith in you. I*

know you will try your best. ☐ *We have faith in you and know you can do the job well.*

have feelings about someone or something to have preferences or notions about someone or something. (Usually in the negative.) ☐ *I don't have any feelings about Jeff. You can choose him if you want.* ☐ *I have no feelings about this matter. Do what you want.*

have feet of clay *Fig.* [for a strong person] to have a defect of character. ☐ *All human beings have feet of clay. No one is perfect.* ☐ *Sally was popular and successful. She was nearly fifty before she learned that she, too, had feet of clay.*

have fun to experience enjoyment. ☐ *Please forget your problems and have fun.*

have (got) a glow on *Fig.* to be intoxicated; to be tipsy. (Fixed order.) ☐ *Since you already have a glow on, I guess you won't want another drink.* ☐ *Jed had a glow on and was acting silly.*

have growing pains 1. *Fig.* [for a child] to have pains—which are attributed to growth—in the muscles and joints. ☐ *The doctor said that all Mary had were growing pains and that nothing was really wrong.* ☐ *Not everyone has growing pains.* **2.** *Fig.* [for an organization] to have difficulties in its early stages of growth. ☐ *The banker apologized for losing my check and said the bank was having growing pains.* ☐ *The new administration was having terrible growing pains.*

have had enough to have had as much of something as is needed or will be tolerated. ☐ *Stop yelling at me. I've had enough.* ☐ *No more potatoes, please. I've had enough.* ☐ *I'm leaving you, Bill. I've had enough!*

have had it (up to here) to have reached the end of one's endurance or tolerance. (When used with *up to here*, can be accompanied by a gesture, such as the hand held at the neck.) ☐ *Okay, I've had it. You kids go to bed this instant.* ☐ *We've all had it up to here with you, John. Get out!*

have had its day to be no longer useful or successful. ☐ *Streetcars have had their day in most American cities.* ☐ *Some people think that the fountain pen has had its day, but others prefer it to other kinds of pens.*

have half a mind to do something Go to next.

have half a notion to do something and **have half a mind to** do something *Fig.* to have almost decided to do something, especially something unpleasant. ☐ *I have half a mind to go off and leave you here.* ☐ *The cook had half a notion to serve cold chicken.*

have hell to pay Go to have the devil to pay.

have hidden talents Go to have a hidden talent.

have (high) hopes of something *Fig.* to be expecting something. ☐ *I have hopes of getting there early.* ☐ *We have high hopes that John and Mary will have a girl.*

Have I got something for you! *Inf.* I have something really exciting for you! (Said earnestly, before saying or showing something surprising or exciting.) ☐ *Have I got something for you! Wait'll you hear about it!* ☐ *Have I got something for you! You're gonna love it.*

Have I made myself clear? Do you understand exactly what I am telling you? (Indicates anger or dominance.) ☐ *I don't intend to warn you again. Have I made myself clear?* ☐ *I do not want you to hang around with Tim ever again! Have I made myself clear?*

have intimate relations with someone *Euph.* to have sex with someone. ☐ *I understand that Jim once had intimate relations with Sarah.* ☐ *Rumor has it that she has had intimate relations with someone other than her husband.*

have it (all) over someone or something **(in** something**)** to be much better than someone or something. ☐ *This cake has it all over that one.* ☐ *My car has it all over yours.*

have it all together and **have got it all together** to be mentally and physically organized; to be of sound mind. ☐ *I don't have it all together today.* ☐ *Try me again later when I have it all together.*

have it both ways to have both of two incompatible things. ☐ *John wants the security of marriage and the freedom of being single. He wants to have it both ways.* ☐ *John thinks he can have it both ways—the wisdom of old age and the vigor of youth.*

have it in for someone to be mad at someone; to wish to harm someone. ☐ *Jane seems to have it in for Jerry. I don't know why.* ☐ *Max has it in for his old girlfriend since she broke up with him.*

have it in one **to** do something to have the motivation or inspiration to do something. ☐ *She just doesn't have it in her to go back home.* ☐ *I wanted to help out, but I just didn't have it in me.*

have it made and **have got it made** to have succeeded; to be set for life. ☐ *I have a good job and a nice little family. I have it made.* ☐ *He's really got it made since he won the lottery.*

have it made in the shade and **have got it made in the shade** *Sl.* to have succeeded; to be set for life. ☐ *Wow, is he lucky! He has it made in the shade.* ☐ *Sarah's got it made in the shade with her huge inheritance.*

Have it your way. It will be done your way.; You will get your way. (Usually shows irritation on the part of the speaker.) ☐ *Tom: I would like to do this room in blue. Sue: I prefer yellow. I really do. Tom: Okay. Have it your way.* ☐ *Jane: Let's get a pie. Apple would be good. Bob: No, if we are going to buy a whole pie, I want a cherry pie, not apple. Jane: Oh, have it your way!*

have just one oar in the water *Rur.* to not be thinking clearly. ☐ *Tom has some crazy plan for opening his own restaurant. If you ask me, he has just one oar in the water.* ☐ *She has just one oar in the water if she thinks Bill is going to pay any attention to her.*

have kittens to get extremely upset. ☐ *My mother pretty near had kittens when she found out I got fired.* ☐ *Calm down. Don't have kittens.*

have more luck than sense to be lucky but not intelligent. ☐ *Jane went driving out into Death Valley without any water. She survived—she has more luck than sense.* ☐ *Tom: I like to drive ninety miles an hour on the freeway. Nobody's ever caught me. Mary: You have more luck than sense.*

have more than one string to one's **fiddle** *Rur.* to have many talents. ☐ *Joe has more than one string to his fiddle. He's a good painter, and he also cooks and fixes cars.* ☐ *This job involves a lot of different duties. We'll need to hire someone who has more than one string to his fiddle.*

H

have neither rhyme nor reason Go to neither rhyme nor reason.

(have) never had it so good have never had so much good fortune. ☐ *No, I'm not complaining. I've never had it so good.* ☐ *Mary is pleased with her new job. She's never had it so good.*

have no business doing something to be wrong to do something; to be extremely unwise to do something. ☐ *You have no business bursting in on me like that!* ☐ *You have no business spending money like that!*

have no staying power to lack endurance; not to be able to last. ☐ *Sally can swim fast for a short distance, but she has no staying power.* ☐ *That horse can start fairly fast, but it has no staying power.*

have no truck with something *Rur.* to have nothing to do with something. ☐ *After the way Mary treated me, I'll have no truck with her.* ☐ *We only show good, wholesome movies at this theater. We have no truck with most of that Hollywood trash.*

have none of something to tolerate or endure no amount of something. ☐ *I'll have none of your talk about quitting school.* ☐ *We'll have none of your gossip.* ☐ *I wish to have none of the sweet potatoes, please.*

have nothing on someone **1.** to lack the evidence necessary to place a charge against someone. ☐ *The police had nothing on Bob, so they let him loose.* ☐ *You've got nothing on me! Let me go!* **2.** to have an advantage over someone. ☐ *Roger has nothing on me when it comes to basketball.*

have nothing on someone or something to have no information about someone or something. (See also have nothing on someone.) ☐ *The dictionary had nothing on the word I looked up.* ☐ *The librarian said that the library has nothing on the topic of my paper.*

have nothing to do with someone or something and **not have anything to do with** someone or something to prefer not to associate or be associated with someone or something. ☐ *I don't like Mike so I won't have anything to do with the books he writes.* ☐ *Bob will have nothing to do with Mary since she quit her job.*

have one foot in the grave *Fig.* to be almost dead. ☐ *I was so sick, I felt as if I had one foot in the grave.* ☐ *Poor old Uncle Herman has one foot in the grave.*

have one in the oven *Fig.* to be pregnant with a child. ☐ *She's got three kids now and one in the oven.*

have one's **ass in a sling** and **have got** one's **ass in a sling** *Sl.* to be dejected or hurt; to be pouting. (Potentially offensive. Use only with discretion.) ☐ *She's got her ass in a sling because she got stood up.* ☐ *So you didn't get a perfect score. Why do you have your ass in a sling?*

have one's **back to the wall** *Fig.* to be in a defensive position. ☐ *He'll have to give in. He has his back to the wall.* ☐ *How can I bargain when I've got my back to the wall?*

have one's **brain on a leash** *Sl.* to be drunk. ☐ *Max had his brain on a leash before he even got to the party.* ☐ *Some guy who had his brain on a leash ran his car off the road.*

have one's **cake and eat it too** and **eat** one's **cake and have it too** *Cliché* to have in one's possession something and be able to use or exploit it; to have it both ways. (Usually stated in the negative.) ☐ *Tom wants to have his cake and eat it too. It can't be done.* ☐ *Don't buy a car if you want to walk and stay healthy. You can't eat your cake and have it too.*

have one's **druthers** Go to have one's rathers.

have one's **ear to the ground** Go to keep an ear to the ground.

have one's **eye on** someone or something Go to keep an eye on someone or something.

have one's **eye out (for** someone or something**)** Go to keep an eye out (for someone or something).

have one's **feet on the ground** Go to keep one's feet on the ground.

have one's **finger in too many pies** *Fig.* to be involved in too many things; to have too many tasks going to be able to do any of them well. (See also have a finger in the pie.) ☐ *I'm too busy. I have my finger in too many pies.* ☐ *She never gets anything done because she has her finger in too many pies.*

have one's **finger(s) in the till** Go to have one's hand in the till.

have one's **hand in** something *Fig.* to exercise control over something; to play an identifiable role in doing something. (See also have a hand in something.) ☐ *She always has to have her hand in everything.* ☐ *I want to have my hand in the arrangement.*

have one's **hand in the till** and **have** one's **finger(s) in the till** *Fig.* to steal money from one's employer. ☐ *James couldn't afford that car on just his salary. He must have his hand in the till.* ☐ *Sally was outraged when she found that one of her salesclerks had his fingers in the till.*

have one's **hands full (with** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to be busy or totally occupied with someone or something. ☐ *I have my hands full with my three children.* ☐ *You have your hands full with managing the store.*

have one's **hands tied** *Fig.* to be prevented from doing something. (As if one's hands were made immobile.) ☐ *I can't help you. I was told not to, so I have my hands tied.* ☐ *John can't help. He has his hands tied by his boss.*

have one's **head in the clouds** *Fig.* to be unaware of what is going on from fantasies or daydreams. ☐ *"Bob, do you have your head in the clouds?" asked the teacher.* ☐ *She walks around all day with her head in the clouds. She must be in love.*

have one's **head in the sand** Go to bury one's head in the sand.

have one's **heart (dead) set against** something *Fig.* to be totally against something; to be opposed to something. ☐ *Jane has her heart dead set against going to Australia.* ☐ *John has his heart set against going to college.*

have one's **heart go out to** someone *Fig.* to have compassion for someone. ☐ *I can't have my heart go out to everyone.* ☐ *To give generously to charity shows that one's heart goes out to those who are suffering.*

have one's **heart in** one's **mouth** *Fig.* to feel strongly emotional about someone or something. (See also one's heart is in one's mouth.) ☐ *I had my heart in my mouth when I heard the national anthem.*

have one's **heart in the right place** *Fig.* to have good intentions, even if there are bad results. ☐ *I don't always do what is right, but my heart is in the right place.* ☐ *Good old Tom. His gifts are always tacky, but his heart's in the right place.*

have one's **heart on** one's **sleeve** Go to **wear** one's **heart on** one's **sleeve.**

have one's **heart set on** something *Fig.* to be desiring and expecting something. ☐ *Jane has her heart set on going to London.* ☐ *Bob will be disappointed. He had his heart set on going to college this year.*

have one's **heart stand still** *Fig.* an expression said when one's heart (figuratively) stops beating because one is shocked or is feeling strong emotions. ☐ *I had my heart stand still once when I was overcome with joy.* ☐ *Lovers—at least the ones in love songs—usually say their hearts stood still.*

have one's **luck run out** *Fig.* for one's good luck to stop; for one's good fortune to come to an end. ☐ *I had my luck run out when I was in South America. I nearly starved.* ☐ *I hate to have my luck run out just when I need it.*

have one's **mind in the gutter** and **have got** one's **mind in the gutter** *Fig.* tending to think of or say things that are obscene. ☐ *Tiffany has her mind in the gutter. That's why she laughs at all that dirty stuff.* ☐ *Why do you tell so many dirty jokes? Do you always have your mind in the gutter.*

have one's **name inscribed in the book of life** *Euph.* to die. ☐ *He was a beloved father, brother, and friend, and he has his name inscribed in the book of life.* ☐ *By the time she was twenty, her parents, brothers, and sister had all had their names inscribed in the book of life.*

have one's **nose in a book** *Fig.* to be reading a book; to read books all the time. ☐ *Bob has his nose in a book every time I see him.* ☐ *His nose is always in a book. He never gets any exercise.*

have one's **nose in the air** *Fig.* to be conceited or aloof. ☐ *Mary always seems to have her nose in the air.* ☐ *I wonder if she knows that she has her nose in the air.*

have one's **nose out of joint** Go to **get** one's **nose out of joint.**

have one's **rathers** and **have** one's **druthers** (More informal with *druthers*.) to have what one prefers; to have one's way. ☐ *If I had my rathers, we'd go out every Friday night.* ☐ *I suspect that if Joe had his druthers, he'd be taking Mary to the dance instead of Jill.*

have one's **shoulder to the wheel** and **keep** one's **shoulder to the wheel; pit** one's **shoulder to the wheel** *Fig.* to do the hard work that needs to be done; to focus on getting a job done. ☐ *You won't accomplish anything unless you put your shoulder to the wheel.* ☐ *I put my shoulder to the wheel and finished the job quickly.*

have one's **way with** someone *Euph.* to have sexual relations with someone, possibly with that person being reluctant. ☐ *He invited her up to his apartment, hoping to have his way with her.* ☐ *Now that you have had your way with me, do I mean nothing to you?*

have one's **wires crossed** *Fig.* to have one's mental processes in disarray; to be confused. ☐ *You don't know what you are talking about. You've really got your wires crossed!* ☐ *Joan got her wires crossed about who arrived first. It was Bob, not Gary.*

have one's **words stick in** one's **throat** *Fig.* to be so overcome by emotion that one can hardly speak. ☐ *I sometimes have my words stick in my throat.* ☐ *John said that he never had his words stick in his throat.*

have one's **work cut out for** one *Fig.* to have a large and difficult task prepared for one. ☐ *They sure have their work cut out for them, and it's going to be hard.* ☐ *There is a lot for Bob to do. He has his work cut out for him.*

have one too many and **have a few too many** *Euph.* to be drunk. ☐ *He had one too many, and now he's throwing up.* ☐ *You'd better not drive. I think you've had a few too many.*

have oneself something to get, have, or take something. ☐ *I'll have myself some of that coconut cream pie, if you don't mind.* ☐ *You just go and have yourself a nice, long nap.*

H

have pity on someone or an animal to have compassion toward someone or an animal. (See also **take pity on** someone or an animal.) ☐ *Please! Have pity on us. Let us come in!*

have pull with someone to have influence with someone. (Also with *some, much, lots,* etc.) ☐ *Let's ask Ann to help us. She has pull with the mayor.* ☐ *Do you know anyone who has some pull with the bank president? I need a loan.*

have recourse to something to be able to use something for help; to be able to fall back on something. ☐ *You will always have recourse to the money your grandfather left you.* ☐ *You will not have recourse to that money until you are over 21 years of age.*

have relations with someone *Euph.* to have sexual relations with someone. ☐ *While engaged to Mary, he was having relations with at least two other women.* ☐ *She was having relations with one of her employees, which was strictly against policy.*

have rocks in one's **head** *Fig.* to be silly or crazy. ☐ *John is a real nut. He has rocks in his head.* ☐ *I don't have rocks in my head—I'm just different.*

have seen better days *Euph.* to be in bad condition. ☐ *My old car has seen better days, but at least it's still running.* ☐ *She's seen better days, it's true, but she's still lots of fun.*

have so Go to **have too.**

have (some**) bearing on** something to have relevance to something. (Note the use of *no* and *any* in the negative.) ☐ *I know something that has some bearing on the issue you are discussing.* ☐ *This has no bearing on anything that will happen today.* ☐ *This doesn't have any bearing on all that.* ☐ *What bearing does John's decision have on the situation?*

have some food **to go** Go to **to go.**

have (some) time to kill *Fig.* to have extra time; to have a period of time with nothing to do. ☐ *Whenever you have some time to kill, call me up and we'll chat.*

have someone **around (for** something**)** to have someone come for a visit, tea, dinner, etc. ☐ *We really should have the Wilsons around for an evening of bridge.* ☐ *Yes, let's have them around.*

have someone **back** to invite someone for a return visit. ☐ *We would love to have you back sometime.* ☐ *We want to have you back the next time you are in town.*

have someone **behind the eight ball** Go to behind the eight ball.

have someone **by** someone or something Go to **by** someone or something.

have someone **by** something to hold onto someone by something. (See also **have** someone **by** someone or something.) ☐ *She had me by the shoulder and I couldn't get away.* ☐ *Timmy had Billy by the collar and was punching him on the shoulder.*

have someone **dead to rights** *Fig.* to have caught someone red-handed; to have irrefutable evidence about someone's misdeed. ☐ *We have you dead to rights on this one.* ☐ *The cops had him dead to rights with damning testimony of two eyewitnesses.*

have someone **down** to have someone for a visit to a place that is on a lower level or in the south. (Fixed order.) ☐ *Why don't we have Roger down for the weekend?* ☐ *They had us down to their place in Florida.*

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have someone **drawn and quartered** Go to drawn and quartered.

have someone **for breakfast** *Fig.* to defeat someone with ease. ☐ *Careful, she'll have you for breakfast if you're not prepared to debate her.* ☐ *I'm afraid they had our team for breakfast again.*

have someone **in** to call or invite someone into one's home. (Fixed order.) ☐ *I'll have the plumber in to fix that leak.* ☐ *We had friends in for bridge last night.*

have someone **in** one's **corner** *Fig.* to have someone supporting one's position or goals. (Originally from boxing.) ☐ *As long as I have Mr. Howe in my corner, I feel confident about what I have to say.*

have someone **in** one's **pocket** *Fig.* to have complete control over someone. ☐ *Don't worry about the mayor. She'll cooperate. I've got her in my pocket.* ☐ *John will do just what I tell him. I've got him and his brother in my pocket.*

have someone **in** one's **spell** and **have** someone **under** one's **spell** *Fig.* to have enchanted or captivated the attention of someone. ☐ *She has him in her spell with her grace and beauty.* ☐ *Ken has Karen under his spell.*

have someone **on a string** Go to on a string.

have someone **on the string** *Fig.* to have someone waiting for a decision. ☐ *Sally has John on the string. He has asked her to marry him, but she hasn't replied yet.* ☐ *Yes, it sounds like she has him on the string.*

have someone or something **about** and **have** someone or something **around** to have someone or something nearby habitually. ☐ *I really don't want to have all those people about all the time.* ☐ *It's good to have a fire extinguisher around.*

have someone or something **cornered 1.** *Lit.* to have someone or something trapped as in a corner. ☐ *We had the wild cat cornered, but it jumped over the wall and got away.* **2.** *Fig.* to have someone or something located and under control. ☐ *I think I have the part you need cornered in a warehouse in Indiana. We'll order it.*

have someone or something **in mind** *Fig.* to be thinking of someone or something as a candidate for something. ☐ *Did you have anyone in mind for the job?* ☐ *I have something in mind for the living-room carpeting.* ☐ *He probably had himself in mind when he spoke about the need for new blood.*

have someone or something **in** one's **hands 1.** *Lit.* to hold someone or something in one's hands. (*Have* can be replaced with *leave* or *put.*) ☐ *I have the tools you need in my hands, ready to give them to you when you need them.* **2.** *Fig.* to have control of or responsibility for someone or something. (*Have* can be replaced with *leave* or *put.*) ☐ *You have the whole project in your hands.* ☐ *The boss put the whole project in your hands.*

have someone or something **in** one's **sights 1.** *Lit.* to have one's gun aimed at someone or something. ☐ *The sniper had the soldier in his sights.* ☐ *I had the deer in my sights. I fired.* **2.** *Fig.* to consider someone or something one's goal or conquest. ☐ *I have a promotion in my sights and I hope to get it before the end of the year.* ☐ *I've had Sally in my sights for years. I intend to marry her.*

have someone or something **in tow** *Fig.* to lead, pull, or tow someone or something around. ☐ *Mrs. Smith has her son by the hand and in tow.* ☐ *That car has a boat in tow.*

have someone or something **on** one's **hands** to be burdened with someone or something. (*Have* can be replaced with *leave.*) ☐ *I run a record store. I sometimes have a large number of unwanted records on my hands.* ☐ *Please don't leave the children on my hands.*

have someone or something **on** one's **mind** and **have** someone or something **on the brain** (More informal with *brain.*) to think often about someone or something; to be obsessed with someone or something. ☐ *Bill has chocolate on his mind.* ☐ *John has Mary on his mind every minute.* ☐ *Karen has Ken on the brain.*

have someone or something **on the brain** Go to previous.

have someone or something **on track** Go to on track.

have someone or something **under (close) scrutiny** Go to under (close) scrutiny.

have someone or something **under control** Go to under control.

have someone or something **(well) in hand** *Fig.* to have someone or something under control. ☐ *I have the child well in hand now. She won't cause you any more trouble.* ☐ *We have everything in hand. Don't worry.*

have someone **over a barrel** Go to over a barrel.

have someone **over (for** something**)** to invite someone to come to one's home, for a meal, party, visit, cards, the evening, etc. (Fixed order.) ☐ *We will have you over for dinner some day.* ☐ *We will have you over soon.*

have someone **pegged as** something Go to **peg** someone **as** something.

have someone's **best interest(s) at heart** to make decisions based on someone's best interests. ☐ *I know she was only doing what would benefit her, but she said she had my best interests at heart.*

have someone's **blood on** one's **hands 1.** *Lit.* to have the blood of some other person on one's hands. ☐ *He fell and got a terrible cut and now I have his blood on my hands as well as my shirt.* **2.** *Fig.* to be responsible for someone's death; to be guilty of causing someone's death. ☐ *The teenager's blood was on the policeman's hands.* ☐ *The king's blood was on the hands of the murderer who killed him.*

have someone's **eye** *Fig.* [for someone] to establish and hold eye contact with someone; to attract someone's attention. ☐ *When Tom at last had her eye, he smiled at her.* ☐ *Once she had my eye, she began motioning toward the exit.*

have someone's **hide** *Fig.* to punish someone severely. ☐ *The sheriff swore he'd have the outlaw's hide.* ☐ *You lousy no-good so-and-so! I'll have your hide!*

have someone **slated for** something Go to **slated for** something.

have someone **slated to** do something Go to **slated to** do something.

have someone **under a spell** Go to **under a spell**.

have someone **under** one's **spell** Go to **have** someone **in** one's **spell**.

have someone **under** someone's **thumb** Go to **under** someone's **thumb**.

have someone **under** someone's **wing(s)** Go to **under** someone's **wing(s)**.

have someone **up (for** something**)** to invite someone to a place that is on a higher level or in the north, for a meal, party, cards, etc. (Fixed order.) ☐ *We would like to have you up for dinner some evening.* ☐ *We will have you up soon.*

have something **against** someone or something to have a reason to dislike someone or something. (Note the replacement for *something* in the negative in the example.) ☐ *Do you have something against me?* ☐ *I have nothing against chocolate ice cream.*

have something **at** one's **fingertips** and **have** something **at hand** *Fig.* to have something within (one's) easy reach. (*Have* can be replaced with *keep.*) ☐ *I have a dictionary at my fingertips.* ☐ *I try to have everything I need at hand.*

have something **cinched** *Fig. Inf.* to have something settled; to have the results of some act assured. ☐ *Don't worry. I've got it cinched.* ☐ *You just think you've got it cinched.*

have something **coming (to** one**)** to deserve punishment (for something). ☐ *Bill broke a window, so he has a spanking coming to him.* ☐ *That's it, Bill. Now you've got it coming!*

have something **doing** and **have** something **on** to have plans for a particular period of time. (Note the variation with *anything* in the examples. Fixed order.) ☐ *Bob: Are you busy Saturday night? Bill: Yes, I've got something doing.* ☐ *I don't have anything doing Sunday night.* ☐ *I have something on almost every Saturday.*

have something **down to a T** *Fig.* to have something mastered. ☐ *I can do it. I have it down to a T.*

have something **for** (a meal) to serve or eat something at a particular meal, such as breakfast, lunch, dinner, supper, etc. ☐ *We had eggs for breakfast.* ☐ *What did you have for dinner?*

have something **for** someone to have a gift for someone; to have something in reserve for someone. ☐ *I have some cake for you in the kitchen if you want it.* ☐ *We have a present for you. Here. I hope you like it.*

have something **for** something to have a remedy for a problem, disease, etc.; to possess something used for some purpose. ☐ *I have something for tight jar lids. It will open them immediately.* ☐ *I have some medicine for that disease.*

have something **going (for** oneself**)** [for someone] to have a beneficial scheme or operation going. ☐ *John really has something going for himself. He's a travel agent, and he gets to travel everywhere for free.* ☐ *I wish I could have something like that going.*

have something going (with someone**)** Go to **have a thing going (with** someone**)**.

have something **hanging over** one's **head** *Fig.* to have something bothering or worrying one; to have a deadline worrying one. ☐ *I keep worrying about my old car breaking down. I hate to have something like that hanging over my head.* ☐ *I have a history paper that is hanging over my head.*

have something **hung up and salted** *Rur.* to know everything about something. (Often used ironically, as in the second example.) ☐ *The historian sure had Louisiana history hung up and salted.* ☐ *Jim's sixteen years old, and he thinks he has the opposite sex hung up and salted.*

have something **in common (with** someone or something**)** [for groups of people or things] to resemble one another in specific ways. ☐ *Bill and Bob both have red hair. They have that in common with each other.* ☐ *Bob and Mary have a lot in common. I can see why they like each other.*

have something **in hand 1.** Go to **in hand**. **2.** *Fig.* to have something under control. ☐ *I thought I had my destiny in hand, but then fate played a trick on me.* ☐ *Don't worry about me. I have everything in hand.*

have something **in stock** to have merchandise available and ready for sale. ☐ *Do you have extra large sizes in stock?* ☐ *Of course, we have all sizes and colors in stock.*

have something **in store (for** someone**)** *Fig.* to have something planned for one's future. ☐ *Tom has a large inheritance in store for him when his uncle dies.* ☐ *I wish I had something like that in store.*

have something **made** to hire someone to make something. ☐ *Isn't it a lovely coat? I had to have it made because I couldn't find one I liked in a store.* ☐ *We had the cake made at the bakery. Our oven isn't big enough for a cake that size.*

have something **on** Go to **have** something **doing**.

have something **on file** to have a written record of something in storage. ☐ *I'm sure I have your letter on file. I'll check again.* ☐ *We have your application on file somewhere.*

have something **on** one**('s person)** to carry something about with one. ☐ *Do you have any money on your person?* ☐ *I don't have any business cards on me.*

have something **on the ball** to have a particular amount of smartness or cleverness. ☐ *Both John and Mary have a lot on the ball. They should go far.* ☐ *I think I'd do better in school if I had more on the ball. I learn slowly.*

have something **out** to have something, such as a tooth, stone, tumor, removed surgically. (Fixed order.) ☐ *You are going to have to have that tumor out.* ☐ *I don't want to have my tooth out!*

have something **out (with** someone**)** to settle a disagreement or a complaint. (Fixed order.) ☐ *John has been mad at Mary for a week. He finally had it out with her today.* ☐ *I'm glad we are having this out today.*

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have something **stick in** one's **craw** *Fig.* to have something irritate or displease someone. ☐ *I don't like to have someone's words stick in my craw.* ☐ *He meant to have the problem stick in my craw and upset me.*

have something **to burn** *Fig.* to have lots of something, such as money, power, food, space, cars, etc.; to have more of something than one needs. ☐ *Look at the way Tom buys things. You'd think he had money to burn.* ☐ *If I had all that acting talent to burn as he does, I'd have won an Oscar by now.*

have something **to do with** something and **not have anything to do with** something; **have nothing to do with** something to be associated with or related to something. ☐ *Does your dislike for Sally have something to do with the way she insulted you?* ☐ *My illness has something to do with my lungs.*

have something **to spare** *Fig.* to have more than enough of something. ☐ *Ask John for some firewood. He has firewood to spare.* ☐ *Do you have any candy to spare?*

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have something **up** one's **sleeve** and **have an ace up** one's **sleeve** *Fig.* to have a secret or surprise plan or solution (to a problem). (Alludes to cheating at cards by having a card hidden in one's sleeve.) ☐ *I've got something up my sleeve, and it should solve all your problems. I'll tell you what it is after I'm elected.* ☐ *The manager has an ace up her sleeve. She'll surprise us with it later.*

have something **wrapped up** Go to sewed up.

have sticky fingers *Fig.* to have a tendency to steal. ☐ *The clerk—who had sticky fingers—got fired.* ☐ *The little boy had sticky fingers and was always taking his father's small change.*

have the ball in one's **court** **1.** *Lit.* to have a ball belonging to a game played on a court on one's side of the court. ☐ *You have the ball in your court, so hit it back to me!* **2.** *Fig.* to be responsible for the next move in some process; to have to make a response to something that someone else has started. ☐ *You have the ball in your court now. You have to answer the attorney's questions.* ☐ *There was no way that Liz could avoid responding. She had the ball in her court.*

have the best of someone or something to defeat someone or something. ☐ *I'm afraid you have the best of me.* ☐ *We had the best of the opposite team by the end of the first half.*

have the cards stacked against one and **have the deck stacked against** one *Fig.* to have one's chance at future success limited by factors over which one has no control; to have luck against one. ☐ *You can't get very far in life if you have the deck stacked against you.* ☐ *I can't seem to get ahead. I always have the cards stacked against me.*

have the courage of one's **convictions** to have enough courage and determination to carry out one's goals. ☐ *It's fine to have noble goals in life and to believe in great things. If you don't have the courage of your convictions, you'll never reach your goals.* ☐ *Jane was successful because she had the courage of her convictions.*

have the deck stacked against one Go to have the cards stacked against one.

have the devil to pay and **have hell to pay** *Inf.* to have a great deal of trouble. (Use *hell* with caution.) ☐ *If you cheat on your income taxes, you'll have the devil to pay.* ☐ *I came home after three in the morning and had hell to pay.*

have the facts straight Go to get the facts straight.

have the final say Go to the last word.

have the gall to do something *Fig.* to have sufficient arrogance to do something. ☐ *I bet you don't have the gall to argue with the mayor.* ☐ *Only Jane has the gall to ask the boss for a second raise this month.*

have the gift of gab and **have a gift for gab** *Fig.* to have a great facility with language; to be able to use language very effectively. (See also have a way with words.) ☐ *My brother really has the gift of gab. He can convince anyone of anything.* ☐ *I don't talk a lot. I just don't have the gift for gab.*

have the hots for someone *Sl.* to be sexually aroused by someone. ☐ *Perry has the hots for Earline.*

have the makings of something *Fig.* to possess the qualities that are needed for something. ☐ *The young boy had the makings of a fine baseball player.* ☐ *My boss has all the makings of a prison warden.*

have the Midas touch *Fig.* to have the ability to be successful, especially the ability to make money easily. (From the name of a legendary king whose touch turned everything to gold.) ☐ *Bob is a merchant banker and really has the Midas touch.* ☐ *The poverty-stricken boy turned out to have the Midas touch and was a millionaire by the time he was twenty-five.*

have the mullygrubs *Rur.* to feel depressed. ☐ *She had the mullygrubs because her husband was out of town.* ☐ *Joe had the mullygrubs. We tried to cheer him up.*

have the patience of a saint and **have the patience of Job** *Fig.* to have a great deal of patience. ☐ *Steve has the patience of Job given the way his wife nags him.* ☐ *Dear Martha has the patience of a saint; she raised six children by herself.*

have the patience of Job Go to previous.

have the presence of mind to do something *Fig.* to have the calmness and ability to act sensibly in an emergency or difficult situation. ☐ *Jane had the presence of mind to phone the police when the child disappeared.* ☐ *The child had the presence of mind to write down the car's license-plate number.*

have the shoe on the other foot *Fig.* to experience the opposite situation (from a previous situation). (See the proverb The shoe is on the other foot.) ☐ *I used to be a student, and now I'm the teacher. Now I have the shoe on the other foot.*

have the stomach for something **1.** *Fig.* to be able to tolerate certain foods. ☐ *Do you have the stomach for Tex-Mex cooking?* ☐ *We just don't have the stomach for onions anymore.* **2.** *Fig.* to have the courage or resolution to do something. ☐ *I don't have the stomach for watching those horror movies.* ☐ *Ken doesn't have the stomach for fighting.*

have the time of one's **life** to have a very good time; to have the most exciting time in one's life. ☐ *What a great party! I had the time of my life.* ☐ *We went to Florida last winter and had the time of our lives.*

have to do something **so bad** one **can taste it** Go to so bad one can taste it.

have to do with something to be associated with or related to something. ☐ *Sally's unhappiness has to do with the way you insulted her.* ☐ *My illness has to do with my stomach.*

have to get married *Euph.* [for a couple] to get married because the woman is pregnant. ☐ *They didn't have a long engagement. They had to get married, you see.* ☐ *They had to get married, and their first baby was born seven months later.*

have to go some (to do something**)** to need to try very hard to accomplish something. ☐ *That's really great, Jean! I have to go some to do better than that!*

have to hand it to someone to give someone credit [for something]. (Includes an expression of obligation, such as *must, got to, have to,* etc.) ☐ *You've really got to hand it to Jane. She has done a fine job.* ☐ *We have to hand it to Fred. That wine he brought was great.*

have to live with something to have to endure something. ☐ *I have a slight limp in the leg that I broke last year. The doctor says I'll have to live with it.* ☐ *We don't like the carpeting in the living room, but since money is so tight we'll have to live with it.*

have too and **have so** to have done something (despite anything to the contrary). (This is an emphatic way of affirming that something has happened.) ☐ *Mother: You haven't made your bed. Bob: I have too!* ☐ *I have so turned in my paper! If you don't have it, you lost it!*

have too many irons in the fire *Fig.* to be doing too many things at once. ☐ *Tom had too many irons in the fire and missed some important deadlines.* ☐ *It's better if you don't have too many irons in the fire.*

have too much of a good thing *Prov.* To hurt yourself by overindulging in something good. ☐ *I've gained five pounds from all the holiday dinners I've eaten this month. I think I had too much of a good thing.* ☐ *Alan: We're having such a good time at this resort, why don't we stay another week? Jane: I think we'd get bored with it if we stayed that long. You can have too much of a good thing, you know.*

have too much on one's **plate** and **have a lot on** one's **plate** *Fig.* to be too busy. ☐ *I'm sorry, I just have too much on my plate right now.* ☐ *If you have too much on your plate, can I help?*

have (too much) time on one's **hands** *Fig.* to have extra time; to have time to spare. ☐ *Your problem is that you have too much time on your hands.* ☐ *I don't have time on my hands. I am busy all the time.*

have two left feet *Fig.* to be very awkward with one's feet. (Often refers to awkwardness at dancing.) ☐ *I'm sorry, I can't dance better. I have two left feet.*

have what it takes and **have got what it takes** to have the skills, power, intelligence, etc., to do something. ☐ *I know I've got what it takes.* ☐ *I guess I don't have what it takes to be a composer.*

have words *Euph.* to argue. ☐ *From the sound of things, Bill and his father had words last night.* ☐ *We had words on the subject of money.*

have words with someone **(over** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to quarrel with someone over someone or something. ☐ *I had words with John over Mary and her friends.* ☐ *Elaine had words with Tony over his driving habits.*

(Have you) been keeping busy? and **(Have you been) keeping busy?; You been keeping busy?** *Inf.* a vague greeting asking about how someone has been occupied. ☐ *Tom: Been keeping busy? Bill: Yeah. Too busy.* ☐ *Sue: Hi, Fred. Have you been keeping busy? Fred: Not really. Just doing what I have to.*

(Have you) been keeping cool? and **(Have you been) keeping cool?; You been keeping cool?** *Inf.* an inquiry about how someone is surviving very hot weather. ☐ *Tom: What do you think of this hot weather? Been keeping cool? Sue: No, I like this weather just as it is.* ☐ *Mary: Keeping cool? Bill: Yup. Run the air-conditioning all the time.*

(Have you) been keeping out of trouble? and **(Have you been) keeping out of trouble?; You been keeping out of trouble?** *Inf.* a vague greeting asking one what one has been doing. ☐ *Bob: Hi, Mary. Have you been keeping out of trouble? Mary: Yeah. And you? Bob: Oh, I'm getting by.* ☐ *Tom: Hey, man! Been keeping out of trouble? Bob: Hell, no! What are you up to? Tom: Nothing.*

(Have you) been okay? and **You been okay?** *Inf.* a vague greeting asking if one has been well. ☐ *Tom: Hey, man. How you doing? Bob: I'm okay. You been okay? Tom: Sure. See you!* ☐ *Mary: I heard you were sick. Sally: Yes, but I'm better. Have you been okay? Mary: Oh, sure. Healthy as an ox.*

(Have you) changed your mind? and **You changed your mind?** Have you decided to alter your decision? ☐ *Sally: As of last week, they said you are leaving. Changed your mind? Bill: No. I'm leaving for sure.* ☐ *Tom: Well, have you changed your mind? Sally: Absolutely not!*

Have you heard? and **Did you hear?** a question used to introduce a piece of news or gossip. ☐ *Sally: Hi, Mary. Mary: Hi. Have you heard about Tom and Sue? Sally: No, what happened? Mary: I'll let one of them tell you. Sally: Oh, come on! Tell me!* ☐ *Bob: Hi, Tom. What's new? Tom: Did you hear that they're raising taxes again? Bob: That's not new.*

Have you met someone? a question asked when introducing someone to someone else. (The question need not be answered. The *someone* is usually a person's name.) ☐ *Tom: Hello, Mary. Have you met Fred? Mary: Hello, Fred. Glad to meet you. Fred: Glad to meet you, Mary.* ☐ *Tom: Hey, Mary! Good to see you. Have you met Fred? Mary: No, I don't believe I have. Hello, Fred. Glad to meet you. Fred: Hello, Mary.*

Haven't I seen you somewhere before? and **Haven't we met before?** a polite or coy way of trying to introduce yourself to someone. ☐ *Bob: Hi. Haven't I seen you somewhere before? Mary: I hardly think so.* ☐ *Bill (moving toward Jane): Haven't we met before? Jane (moving away from Bill): No way!*

hazard a guess Go to take a guess.

hazard an opinion *Fig.* to give an opinion. ☐ *Anne asked the attorney to hazard an opinion about the strength of her lawsuit.* ☐ *Don't feel like you have to hazard an opinion on something you know nothing about.*

He gives twice who gives quickly. *Prov.* When someone asks you for something, it is more helpful to give something right away than to wait, even if you might be

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able to give more if you waited. ☐ *Morris didn't have all the money his sister asked for, but he sent what he had immediately, knowing that he gives twice who gives quickly.*

He lives long who lives well. *Prov.* If you live virtuously, you will have a long life; a person who does not live virtuously is wasting his life. ☐ *The pastor, exhorting his congregation to live moral lives, said, "He lives long who lives well."*

He puts his pants on one leg at a time. *Prov.* The person referred to is only human.; The person referred to is an ordinary person. ☐ *Sue: That man is my favorite movie star. Don't you think he's just divine? Jane: Oh, I don't know. I imagine he puts his pants on one leg at a time.*

He that cannot obey cannot command. *Prov.* If you want to become a leader, you should first learn how to follow someone else. ☐ *Jones can't seem to do anything I ask him to. He'll never get anywhere; he that cannot obey cannot command.*

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He that hath a full purse never wanted a friend. *Prov.* A rich person always has plenty of friends. ☐ *Jill: Ever since Joe won the lottery, he's been getting congratulations from friends and relatives he hasn't heard from in years. Jane: You know how it is. He that hath a full purse never wanted a friend.*

He that is down need fear no fall. *Prov.* If you have nothing, you cannot lose anything by taking a risk. ☐ *Jim spent his last ten dollars on lottery tickets, figuring that he who is down need fear no fall.*

He that would eat the kernel must crack the nut. *Prov.* You have to work if you want to get anything good. ☐ *If you want to be a good pianist, you have to practice every day. He that would eat the kernel must crack the nut.*

He that would go to sea for pleasure, would go to hell for a pastime. *Prov.* Being a sailor is so unpleasant that anyone who would do it for fun must be crazy. ☐ *Old Sailor: Why did you decide to go to sea? Young Sailor: I thought it would be fun. Old Sailor: He that would go to sea for pleasure, would go to hell for a pastime.*

He that would have eggs must endure the cackling of hens. *Prov.* You must be willing to endure unpleasant, irritating things in order to get what you want. ☐ *Sue: I'm tired of working after school. All the customers at the store are so rude. Mother: But you wanted money to buy a car. He that would have eggs must endure the cackling of hens, dear.*

He that would the daughter win, must with the mother first begin. *Prov.* If you want to marry a woman, you should find a way to impress her mother, so that the mother will favor her marrying you. ☐ *Harry: I think I want to marry Gina. Bill: Don't propose to her until you're sure her mother is on your side. He that would the daughter win, must with the mother first begin.*

He travels fastest who travels alone. *Prov.* It is easier to achieve your goals if you do not have a spouse, children, or other connections to consider. ☐ *Jill: Don't go yet! Wait for me to get ready. Jane: But you always take at least half an hour. No wonder they always say that he travels fastest who travels alone.*

He wears a ten-dollar hat on a five-cent head. *Rur.* He is stupid but rich. ☐ *He got the job because he's the boss's son, not because he's smart. He wears a ten-dollar hat on a five-cent head.*

He who begins many things, finishes but few. *Prov.* If you start a lot of projects, you will not have time and energy to complete them all. (Can be used to warn someone against starting too many projects.) ☐ *Sarah's room is littered with sweaters and mittens she started to knit but never finished, a testament to the fact that she who begins many things, finishes but few.*

He who excuses himself accuses himself. *Prov.* By apologizing for something, you admit that you did it. ☐ *Maybe I should tell my boss I'm sorry for breaking the copy machine. On the other hand, he who excuses himself accuses himself.*

He who fights and runs away, may live to fight another day. *Prov.* It may be cowardly to run away from a fight, but running away gives you a better chance of surviving. ☐ *The school bully told Phillip to meet him in the playground after school, but Phillip didn't keep the appointment. When his friends called him a coward, Phillip shrugged and said, "He who fights and runs away, may live to fight another day."*

He who hesitates is lost. *Prov.* People should act decisively. ☐ *Jill: Should I apply for that job? At first I thought I definitely should, but now I don't know. . . . Jane: She who hesitates is lost.* ☐ *Call that girl and ask her out. Call her right now. He who hesitates is lost.*

He who laughs last, laughs best. Go to next.

He who laughs last, laughs longest. and **He who laughs last, laughs best.** *Prov.* If someone does something nasty to you, that person may feel satisfaction, but you will feel even more satisfaction if you get revenge on that person. ☐ *Joe pulled a dirty trick on me, but I'll get him back. He who laughs last, laughs best.*

He who pays the piper calls the tune. *Prov.* If you are paying for someone's services, you can dictate exactly what you want that person to do. ☐ *When Mrs. Dalton told the artist what she wanted her portrait to look like, the artist cringed to think that anyone could have such bad taste. Still, he who pays the piper calls the tune, and Mrs. Dalton got what she wanted.*

He who rides a tiger is afraid to dismount. *Prov.* Sometimes it is more dangerous to stop doing a dangerous thing than it is to continue doing it. ☐ *Jill: You shouldn't take out another loan. You're already too far in debt. Jane: If I don't take out a loan, I can't make the payments on the loans I already have. You know how it is—she who rides a tiger is afraid to dismount.*

He who sups with the devil should have a long spoon. *Prov.* If you have dealings with dangerous people, you must be careful that they do not harm you. ☐ *If you're going to hang out with that disreputable bunch of people, keep in mind that he who sups with the devil should have a long spoon.*

He who would climb the ladder must begin at the bottom. *Prov.* If you want to gain high status, you must start with low status and slowly work upwards. ☐ *Although Thomas hoped to become a famous journalist, he didn't mind working for a small-town newspaper at first.*

"He who would climb the ladder must begin at the bottom," he said.

He will get his. and **She will get hers.** One will be punished for one's misdeeds. ☐ *Jill: It seems like Fred can do any evil thing he wants. Jane: Don't worry. He'll get his.* ☐ *You may think you will always profit by your life of crime, but you'll get yours.*

a **head** and **per head** [for] a person; [for] an individual. ☐ *How much do you charge per head for dinner?* ☐ *It costs four dollars a head.*

head and shoulders above someone or something *Fig.* clearly superior to someone or something. (Often with *stand,* as in the example.) ☐ *This wine is head and shoulders above that one.* ☐ *John stands head and shoulders above Bob.*

head away from someone or something to turn and move away from someone or something. ☐ *The car headed away from Andrew and he knew he was stranded for at least an hour.* ☐ *We headed away from the store, not knowing that my purse was riding on the roof of the car.*

head back (some place**)** to start moving back to some place. ☐ *I walked to the end of the street and then headed back home.* ☐ *This is far enough. Let's head back.*

head for someone or something to aim for or move toward someone or something. ☐ *She waved good-bye as she headed for the door.* ☐ *Ann came in and headed for her mother.*

head for the hills and **take to the hills; run for the hills 1.** *Lit.* to flee to higher ground. ☐ *The river's rising. Head for the hills!* ☐ *Head for the hills! Here comes the flood!* **2.** *Fig.* to depart quickly. ☐ *Here comes crazy Joe. Run for the hills.* ☐ *Everyone is heading for the hills because that boring Mr. Simpson is coming here again.*

head for the last roundup *Euph.* to reach the end of usefulness or of life. (Originally said of a dying cowboy.) ☐ *This ballpoint pen is headed for the last roundup. I have to get another one.* ☐ *I am so weak. I think I'm headed for the last roundup.*

head for (the) tall timber *Rur.* to run away and hide. ☐ *When we heard Pa's angry bellow, we headed for the tall timber.* ☐ *The bank robbers headed for tall timber with their loot.*

head in(to something**)** to move into something head or front end first. ☐ *Head into that parking space slowly. It is quite narrow.* ☐ *I turned the boat toward shore and headed in.*

head on directly; head to head. ☐ *I think we need to face this threat head on. Let's be proactive not reactive!*

head out after someone, something, or an animal to start pursuing someone, something, or an animal. ☐ *The sheriff and his men headed out after the bank robbers.* ☐ *We headed out after the runaway boat.*

head out (for something**)** to set out for something or some place; to begin a journey to something or some place. ☐ *We headed out for Denver very early in the morning.* ☐ *What time do we head out tomorrow morning?*

head over heels in debt *Fig.* deeply in debt. ☐ *Finally, when she was head over heels in debt, she cut up her credit cards.* ☐ *I couldn't stand being head over heels in debt, so I always pay off my bills immediately.*

head over heels in love (with someone**)** *Fig.* very much in love with someone. ☐ *John is head over heels in love with Mary.* ☐ *They are head over heels in love with each other.*

head someone **off at the pass** *Fig.* to intercept someone. (From Old West movies. Fixed order.) ☐ *I need to talk to John before he gets into the boss's office. I'll head him off at the pass.* ☐ *The sheriff set out in a hurry to head Jed off at the pass.*

head someone or something **at** someone or something to point or aim someone or something toward someone or something. ☐ *He headed the boat at the island and sped off.* ☐ *I headed Rachel at her brother, whom she hadn't seen for thirty years.*

head someone or something **into** someone or something to direct someone or something into someone or something. ☐ *Jill headed the car into the parking place.* ☐ *I headed Rachel into the ice cream store and left her on her own.*

head someone or something **off**† *Fig.* to intercept and divert someone or something. ☐ *I think I can head her off before she reaches the police station.* ☐ *I hope we can head off trouble.* ☐ *We can head it off. Have no fear.*

head something **out**† to aim something outward; to move something on its way, head or front first. ☐ *Head the boat out and pull out the throttle.* ☐ *I headed out the car and we were on our way.*

head something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to get something pointed in the right direction. (Especially a herd of cattle or a group of covered wagons.) ☐ *Head those wagons up—we're moving out.* ☐ *Head up the wagons!* **2.** *Fig.* to be in charge of something; to be the head of some organization. ☐ *I was asked to head the new committee up for the first year.* ☐ *Will you head up the committee for me?*

head South Go to go South.

*a **head start (on** someone**)** an early start [at something], before someone else starts. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Bill always gets there first because he gets a head start on everybody else.* ☐ *I'm doing well in my class because I have a head start; I learned some of this last year.*

*a **head start (on** something**)** an early start on something, [before someone else starts]. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I was able to get a head start on my reading during the holidays.* ☐ *If I hadn't had a head start, I'd be behind in my reading.*

head toward someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to point at and move toward someone, something, or some place. ☐ *Head toward Mary and don't stop to talk to anyone else.* ☐ *Sharon headed toward the parking lot, hoping to get home soon.* **2.** *Fig.* to be developing into something; to be moving toward a specific result. ☐ *The problem will head toward a solution when you stop making the situation worse than it is.* ☐ *I believe that you are heading toward severe health problems if you don't stop smoking.*

headed for something destined for something. ☐ *Harry is headed for real trouble.* ☐ *She is headed for a breakdown.*

heads or tails the face of a coin or the other side of a coin. (Often used in an act of coin tossing, where one circumstance is valid if the front of a coin appears and another

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circumstance is valid if the other side appears.) ☐ *Jim looked at Jane as he flipped the coin into the air. "Heads or tails?" he asked.* ☐ *It doesn't matter whether the result of the toss is heads or tails. I won't like the outcome in any case.*

Heads up! Raise your head and look around you carefully for information or something that you need to see or avoid. ☐ *Heads up! Watch out for that door!* ☐ *Heads up! There is a car coming.*

heads will roll *Fig.* people will get into severe trouble. ☐ *When the company's year-end results are known, heads will roll.* ☐ *Heads will roll when the principal sees the damaged classroom.*

heal over [for the surface of a wound] to heal. ☐ *The wound healed over very quickly, and there was very little scarring.* ☐ *I hope it will heal over without having to be stitched.*

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heal someone **of** something to cure someone's ailments. ☐ *Are you the doctor who healed me of my wounds?* ☐ *Can any doctor heal us of a common cold?*

heal up [for an injury] to heal. ☐ *The cut healed up in no time at all.*

a **heap of** something a great deal of something. ☐ *Tom's got a heap of money, but no one to spend it on.* ☐ *A teacher has to have a heap of patience as well as a lot of smarts.*

a **heap sight** *Rur.* a lot; very much. ☐ *This chair is a heap sight better than that one.* ☐ *You got a heap sight more taters than I did.*

heap something **up**† to make something into a pile. ☐ *He heaped the mashed potatoes up on my plate, because he thought I wanted lots.* ☐ *Heap up the leaves in the corner of the yard.*

heap something **(up)on** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to pile something up on someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Please don't heap so much trouble upon me!* ☐ *Wally heaped leaves on the flower bed.* **2.** *Fig.* to give someone too much of something, such as homework, praise, criticism, etc. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Don't heap too much praise on her. She will get conceited.* ☐ *The manager heaped criticism on the workers.*

heap something **with** something to pile something onto something. ☐ *Karen heaped Jeff's plate with way too much food.* ☐ *We heaped the driveway with leaves and then put them into bags.*

hear a peep out of someone *Fig.* to get some sort of a response from someone; to hear the smallest word from someone. (Usually in the negative.) ☐ *I don't want to hear another peep out of you.* ☐ *I didn't know they were there. I didn't hear a peep out of them.*

hear about someone or something to learn about someone or something. (Not necessarily by hearing.) ☐ *Have you heard about Tom and what happened to him?* ☐ *I heard about the accident.*

hear from someone or something to get a message from someone or a group. ☐ *I want to hear from you every now and then.* ☐ *We hear from the court every year or so about jury duty.*

hear of someone or something to learn of the existence of someone or something. ☐ *Did you ever hear of such a thing?* ☐ *I have heard of Sharon Wallace and I would like to meet her.*

hear someone **out**† **1.** *Lit.* to hear all of what someone has to say. (Fixed order.) ☐ *Please hear me out. I have more to say.* ☐ *Hear out the witness. Don't jump to conclusions.* **2.** *Fig.* to hear someone's side of the story. (Fixed order.) ☐ *Let him talk! Hear him out! Listen to his side!* ☐ *We have to hear everyone out in this matter.*

hear something **through** to listen to all of something. ☐ *I would like you to hear this explanation through before making your decision.* ☐ *I won't have an opinion until I hear this through.*

hear word (from someone or something**)** Go to **word (from** someone or something**)**.

hearing impaired *Euph.* deaf or nearly deaf. ☐ *This program is closed-captioned for our hearing-impaired viewers.* ☐ *His mother happens to be hearing impaired, so he learned to sign at an early age.*

hearken to someone or something *Formal or stilted* to listen to someone or something; to pay attention to someone or something. ☐ *Please hearken to me. I speak the truth.* ☐ *Hearken to the call of the nightingale.*

heart and soul *Fig.* the central core [of someone or something]. ☐ *Now we are getting to the heart and soul of the matter.* ☐ *This feature is the heart and soul of my invention.*

the **heart of the matter** Go to the **crux of the matter**.

a **heartbeat away from being** something *Cliché* set to be the next ruler upon the final heartbeat of the current ruler. (The decisive heartbeat would be the current ruler's last heartbeat.) ☐ *The vice president is just a heartbeat away from being president.* ☐ *The prince was only a heartbeat away from being king.*

heat someone **up**† *Fig.* to make someone angry. (One old [now folksy] past tense is *het*.) ☐ *This kind of nonsense really heats me up.* ☐ *Mean talk heats up the kids.*

heat something **up**† **(to** something**)** to raise the temperature of something to a certain level. ☐ *Please heat this room up to about seventy degrees.* ☐ *Can you heat up the room a little more?*

heat up 1. *Lit.* to get warmer or hot. ☐ *It really heats up in the afternoon around here.* ☐ *How soon will dinner be heated up?* **2.** *Fig.* to grow more animated or combative. ☐ *The debate began to heat up near the end.* ☐ *Their argument was heating up, and I was afraid there would be fighting.*

heave in(to) sight *Fig.* to move into sight in the distance. ☐ *As the fog cleared, a huge ship heaved into sight.* ☐ *After many days of sailing, land finally heaved in sight.*

heave something **at** someone or something to throw something at someone or something. ☐ *Fred heaved a huge snowball at Roger.* ☐ *The thug heaved the rock at the window and broke it to pieces.*

heave something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to lift something up. ☐ *With a lot of effort, they heaved the heavy lid up.* ☐ *The workers heaved up the huge boulder.* **2.** *Fig.* to vomit something up. ☐ *The dog heaved most of the cake up on the kitchen floor.* ☐ *It heaved up the cake it had eaten.*

heave to to stop a sailing ship by facing it directly into the wind. ☐ *The captain gave the order to heave to.* ☐ *The ship hove to and everyone had a swim.*

Heaven forbid! Go to **God forbid!**

Heaven help us! *Fig.* Good grief!; That's awful. ☐ *He fell and broke his hip! Heaven help us! What's next?*

Heaven protects children(, sailors,) and drunken men. *Prov.* Children(, sailors,) and drunk(ard)s often escape being injured in dangerous situations. (Often used to express amazement that a child, sailor, or drunk person has escaped injury.) ☐ *Jill: Did you hear? A little girl fell out of a second-floor window in our apartment building. Jane: Was she killed? Jill: She wasn't even hurt. Jane: Heaven protects children, sailors, and drunken men.* ☐ *Mike was so drunk he shouldn't even have been conscious, but he managed to drive home without hurting himself or anyone else; heaven protects children and drunkards.*

Heavens to Betsy! *Inf.* My goodness! (A mild oath.) ☐ *Heavens to Betsy! What was that noise?* ☐ *Heavens to Betsy! It's good to hear your voice!*

heavy going difficult to do, understand, or make progress with. ☐ *Jim finds math heavy going.* ☐ *Talking to Mary is heavy going. She has nothing interesting to say.*

heavy into someone or something *Inf.* much concerned with someone or something; obsessed with someone or something. ☐ *Freddie was heavy into auto racing and always went to the races.* ☐ *Sam is heavy into Mary. He's been out with her every night this week.*

A **heavy purse makes a light heart.** *Prov.* If you have plenty of money, you will feel happy and secure. ☐ *Everyone in the office is especially cheerful on payday, since a heavy purse makes a light heart.*

hedge against something to do something to lessen the risk of something happening; to bet against something bad happening. ☐ *I want to hedge against something going wrong in the stock market, so I have bonds in my portfolio, too.* ☐ *We will hedge against any risk we can detect.*

A **hedge between keeps friendship green.** *Prov.* Your friendship will flourish if you and your friend respect each other's privacy. ☐ *Lynne and I are the best of friends, but we often like to spend time apart. A hedge between keeps friendship green.*

hedge one's **bets** *Fig.* to reduce one's loss on a bet or on an investment by counterbalancing the loss in some way. ☐ *Bob bet Ann that the plane would be late. He usually hedges his bets. This time he called the airline and asked about the plane before he made the bet.* ☐ *John bought some stock and then bet Mary that the stock would go down in value in one year. He has hedged his bets perfectly. If the stock goes up, he sells it, pays off Mary, and still makes a profit. If it goes down, he reduces his loss by winning the bet he made with Mary.*

hedge someone **in**† *Fig.* to restrict someone. (See also **hedge** someone or something **in**.) ☐ *Our decision hedged in the children so they could not have any flexibility.* ☐ *She hedged herself in by her own behavior.*

hedge someone or something **in**† to enclose someone or something in a hedge. (See also **hedge** someone **in**.) ☐ *Their overgrown yard has almost hedged us in.* ☐ *Their bushes hedged in our yard.*

hedge something **against** something *Fig.* to protect investments against a decline in value by making counterbalancing bets or investments. ☐ *The investor hedged his portfolio against a drop in stock prices by buying some bonds.* ☐ *I have to hedge my bets against losing.*

heist someone or something **(up†)** *Rur.* to lift someone or something. ☐ *See if you can heist that box onto the top shelf.* ☐ *Dad heisted me up so I could see over the fence.* ☐ *John groaned and heisted up the bale of hay.*

***hell** and ***the devil 1.** *Inf.* a severe scolding. (*Typically: **get ~; catch ~; give** someone **~**. Use caution with *hell*.) ☐ *The boss just gave me hell about it.* ☐ *I'm really going to give Tom hell when he gets home.* **2.** *Inf.* trouble; pain. (*Typically: **give** someone **~**. Use caution with *hell*.) ☐ *My arthritis is giving me hell in this weather.* ☐ *This problem is giving us hell at the office.*

hell around *Sl.* to go around making trouble or noise. ☐ *Who are those kids who are out there helling around every night?* ☐ *They hell around because it's fun.*

Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned. *Prov.* There is nothing as unpleasant as a woman who has been offended or whose love has not been returned. ☐ *When Mary Ann discovered that George was not in love with her, George discovered that hell hath no fury like a woman scorned.* ☐ *Bill: I'm getting tired of going out with Mary; I think I'll tell her we're through. Fred: Be careful. Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned, you know.*

a **hell of a mess** *Inf.* a terrible mess. (Use caution with *hell*.) ☐ *This is really a hell of a mess you've gotten us into.* ☐ *I never dreamed I'd come back to such a hell of a mess.*

a **hell of a note** *Inf.* a surprising or amazing piece of news. (Use caution with *hell*.) ☐ *So you're just going to leave me like that? Well, that's a hell of a note!* ☐ *You forgot what I asked you to bring? That's a hell of a note.*

a **hell of a** someone or something and a **helluva** someone or something **1.** *Inf.* a very bad person or thing. (Use caution with *hell*.) ☐ *That's a hell of a way to treat someone.* ☐ *He's a hell of a driver! Watch out!* **2.** *Inf.* a very good person or thing. (Use caution with *hell*.) ☐ *He is one hell of a guy. We really like him.* ☐ *We had a helluva good time.*

hell on a holiday *Rur.* a big commotion. (Use caution with *hell*.) ☐ *It was hell on a holiday outside the stadium when the team won the big game.* ☐ *What's going on down on Main Street? Sounds like hell on a holiday!*

hell on earth *Fig.* a very unpleasant situation, as if one were in hell. ☐ *That man made my life hell on earth!* ☐ *The whole time I was there was just hell on earth.*

hell-bent for leather *Inf.* moving or behaving recklessly; riding a horse fast and recklessly. ☐ *They took off after the horse thief, riding hell-bent for leather.* ☐ *Here comes the boss. She's not just angry; she's hell-bent for leather.*

hell-bent for somewhere or something *Fig.* riding or drive somewhere very fast or recklessly. ☐ *Fred sped along, hell-bent for home, barely missing another car.*

Hellfire and damnation! *Inf.* Damn it! (An oath used to express anger or irritation.) ☐ *Hellfire and damnation! Turn that radio down!* ☐ *Hellfire and damnation! This is the second time our picnic's been rained out.*

Hell's bells (and buckets of blood)! *Inf.* an exclamation of anger or surprise. (Use caution with *hell*.) ☐ *Alice:*

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Your pants are torn in back. John: Oh, hell's bells! What will happen next? ☐ *Bill: Well, Jane, looks like you just flunked calculus. Jane: Hell's bells and buckets of blood! What do I do now?*

a **helluva** someone or something Go to a **hell of a** someone or something.

help oneself **(to** something**)** to take something oneself without asking permission. ☐ *The thief helped himself to the money in the safe.* ☐ *Help yourself to more dessert.*

help out some place to help [with the chores] in a particular place. ☐ *Would you be able to help out in the kitchen?* ☐ *Sally is downtown, helping out at the shop.*

help out (with something**)** to help with a particular chore. ☐ *Would you please help out with the dishes?* ☐ *I have to help out at home on the weekends.*

help someone **along 1.** to help someone move along. ☐ *I helped the old man along.* ☐ *Please help her along. She has a hurt leg.* **2.** to help someone advance. ☐ *I am more than pleased to help you along with your math.* ☐ *She helped herself along by studying hard.*

help someone **back (to** something**)** to help someone return to something or some place. ☐ *The ushers helped him back to his seat.* ☐ *When she returned, I helped her back.*

help someone **down (from** something**)** to help someone climb down from something. ☐ *Sharon helped the boy down from the horse.* ☐ *Elaine helped the children down.*

help someone **get a foothold (**somewhere**)** Go to a **foothold (**somewhere**)**.

help someone **in** something to help someone with some task; to help someone in the doing of something. ☐ *Please help me in my efforts to win the contest.* ☐ *Will you help me in my reelection?*

help someone **in(to** something**)** to help someone get into something. ☐ *I will help my grandfather into the car.* ☐ *We all had to help him in.*

help someone **off (of)** something to help someone get off something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Please help me off this horse!* ☐ *Do help him off of it!*

help someone **off with** something to help someone take off an article of clothing. ☐ *Would you please help me off with my coat?* ☐ *We helped the children off with their boots and put their coats in the hall.*

help someone **on with** something to help someone put on an article of clothing. ☐ *Would you help me on with my coat?* ☐ *Please help her on with her coat.*

help someone or an animal **(get) over** something **1.** *Lit.* to aid someone or an animal climb over something. ☐ *I helped him get over the wall.* ☐ *I helped the puppy over the barrier.* **2.** *Fig.* to aid someone or an animal recover from something. ☐ *Sharon wanted to help Roger get over his illness.* ☐ *We try to help the families get over the loss of their loved ones.*

help someone or an animal **out (of** something**) 1.** to help someone or an animal get out of something or some place. ☐ *Please help your grandmother out of the car.* ☐ *Please help the cat out of the carton.* **2.** to help someone or an animal get out of a garment. ☐ *She helped the dog out of its sweater.* ☐ *I helped her out of her coat when we got inside.* **3.** to help someone or an animal get out of trouble. ☐ *Can you please help me out of this mess that I got myself into?* ☐ *You are in a real mess. We will help you out.*

help someone or something **out† with** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to assist someone or something with a person or a thing. ☐ *Can you help me out with my geometry?* ☐ *Please help out my son with his geometry.* **2.** *Fig.* to help someone or a group by providing someone or something. ☐ *I need some salt. Would you help me out with a little bit of salt?* ☐ *Can you help out our department with a secretary?*

help someone or something **with** someone or something to give aid to someone or something in dealing with someone or something. ☐ *Please help your father with your little sister.* ☐ *I helped the committee with the problem.*

help (someone**) out†** to help someone do something; to help someone with a problem. ☐ *I am trying to raise this window. Can you help me out?* ☐ *I'm always happy to help out a friend.*

help someone **up† (from** something**)** to help someone rise up from something; to help someone get up from something. ☐ *She offered to help him up from the chair.* ☐ *Elaine helped up her grandmother who was stuck in the chair.*

Help yourself. Please take what you want without asking permission. ☐ *Sally: Can I have one of these doughnuts? Bill: Help yourself.* ☐ *Mother led the little troop of my friends to the kitchen table, which was covered with cups of juice and plates of cookies. "Help yourself," she said.*

*a **helping hand** *Fig.* help; physical help, especially with the hands. (*Typically: **get ~; need ~; give** someone **~; offer ~; offer** someone **~**.) ☐ *When you feel like you need a helping hand making dinner, just let me know.*

hem and haw (around) *Inf.* to be uncertain about something; to be evasive; to say "ah" and "eh" when speaking—avoiding saying something meaningful. ☐ *Stop hemming and hawing around. I want an answer.* ☐ *Don't just hem and haw around. Speak up. We want to hear what you think.*

hem someone or something **in†** *Fig.* to trap or enclose someone or something. ☐ *The large city buildings hem me in.* ☐ *Don't hem in the bird. Let it have a way to escape.*

***hepped (up)** *Sl.* to be intoxicated. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Wally is a little too hepped up to drive home.* ☐ *Harry's too hepped to stand up.*

herd someone or something **together** to bunch people or animals together. ☐ *Let's herd all the kids together and take them in the house for ice cream and cake.* ☐ *I herded all the puppies together and put them in a box while I cleaned their play area.*

the **here and now** the present, as opposed to the past or the future. ☐ *I don't care what's happening tomorrow or next week! I care about the here and now.* ☐ *The past is dead. Let's worry about the here and now.*

here and there at this place and that; from place to place. ☐ *We find rare books in used-book stores here and there.* ☐ *She didn't make a systematic search. She just looked here and there.*

Here goes nothing. *Inf.* I am beginning to do something that will fail or be poorly done. ☐ *Sally stood on the diving board and said, "Here goes nothing."* ☐ *As Ann walked onto the stage, she whispered, "Here goes nothing."*

Here (it) goes. Something is going to start.; I will start now.; I will do it now. ☐ *I'm ready to start now. Here goes.* ☐ *Okay, it's my turn to kick the ball. Here it goes!*

Here's looking at you. Go to Bottoms up!

Here's mud in your eye. Go to Bottoms up!

Here's to someone or something**.** an expression used as a toast to someone or something to wish someone or something well. ☐ *Here's to Jim and Mary! May they be very happy!* ☐ *Here's to your new job!*

Here's to you. Go to Bottoms up!

Here's your hat, what's your hurry? *Rur.* It is time for you to go. (Jocular.) ☐ *I hate to rush you out the door, but here's your hat, what's your hurry?* ☐ *Jane: I suppose I'd better be on my way. Charlie: Here's your hat, what's your hurry?*

here, there, and everywhere *Fig.* everywhere; at all points. ☐ *Fred searched here, there, and everywhere, frantically looking for the lost check.* ☐ *She did not rest until she had been here, there, and everywhere, shopping for just the right gift.*

Here today, (and) gone tomorrow. *Prov.* Available now, but soon to be gone. (Used to describe something that does not last—often an opportunity). ☐ *The stores near my house don't stay in business very long—here today, and gone tomorrow.* ☐ *If you want this carpet, buy it now. This sale price is here today, gone tomorrow.*

Here we go again. We are going to experience the same thing again.; We are going to hear about or discuss the same thing again. ☐ *John: Now, I would like to discuss your behavior in class yesterday. Bill (to himself): Here we go again.* ☐ *Fred: We must continue our discussion of the Wilson project. Sue: Here we go again. Fred: What's that? Sue: Nothing.*

Here you go. *Inf.* Here is what you asked for. (See also There you go.) ☐ *"Here you go," said the waiter as he put the plate on the table.* ☐ *Here you go. Here is your hamburger and your drink.*

hesitate over something to pause before acting on something; to suspend action about someone or something. ☐ *We are hesitating over the final decision because we have some doubts about the competitors.* ☐ *Do not hesitate too long over this matter.*

hew something **down†** to fell something wooden, usually a tree. ☐ *We will have to hew most of this forest down.* ☐ *They hewed down the tree.*

hew something **out of** something and **hew** something **out†** to carve the shape of something out of something wooden. ☐ *Dan hewed each of the posts out of a tree trunk.* ☐ *He hewed out a number of posts.*

hew to something to conform to a rule or principle. ☐ *I wish you would hew to the rules a little better.* ☐ *Sarah refuses to hew to the company policies.*

a **hidden agenda** *Fig.* a secret plan; a concealed plan; a plan disguised as a plan with another purpose. ☐ *I am sure that the chairman has a hidden agenda. I never did trust him anyway.*

hide behind someone or something to conceal oneself behind someone or something. ☐ *The child hid behind his father.* ☐ *Rachel hid behind a tree.*

hide from someone or an animal to conceal oneself from someone or an animal. ☐ *Are you hiding from me?* ☐ *The rabbit was trying to hide from the fox.*

hide one's **face in shame** *Fig.* to cover one's face because of shame or embarrassment. ☐ *Mary was so embarrassed. She could only hide her face in shame.* ☐ *When Tom broke Ann's crystal vase, he wanted to hide his face in shame.*

hide one's **head in the sand** Go to bury one's head in the sand.

hide one's **light under a bushel** *Fig.* to conceal one's good ideas or talents. (A biblical theme.) ☐ *Jane has some good ideas, but she doesn't speak very often. She hides her light under a bushel.* ☐ *Don't hide your light under a bushel. Share your thoughts with other people.*

hide out (from someone or something**)** to hide oneself so that one cannot be found by someone or something. ☐ *Max was hiding out from the police in Detroit.* ☐ *Lefty is hiding out too.*

hide someone or something **away† (**some place**)** to conceal someone or something somewhere. ☐ *Please hide Randy away where no one can find him.* ☐ *Rachel hid the cake away, hoping to save it for dessert.* ☐ *Mary hid away the candy so the kids wouldn't eat it all.*

hide someone or something **behind** something to use something to conceal someone or something. ☐ *We hid the guests for the surprise party behind a large Oriental screen.* ☐ *I will hide the cake behind the screen too.*

hide something **in** something to conceal something inside something. ☐ *She hid her money in a book.* ☐ *Let's hide the cake in this closet.*

high and dry *Fig.* safe; unbothered by difficulties; unscathed. (As if someone or something were safe from a flood. See also leave someone high and dry.) ☐ *While the riot was going on down on the streets, I was high and dry in my apartment.* ☐ *Liz came out of the argument high and dry.*

***high as a kite** and ***high as the sky 1.** *Lit.* very high. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *The tree grew as high as a kite.* ☐ *Our pet bird got outside and flew up high as the sky.* **2.** *Fig.* drunk or drugged. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *Bill drank beer until he got as high as a kite.* ☐ *The thieves were high as the sky on drugs.*

high as the sky Go to previous.

high man on the totem pole *Fig.* the person at the top of the hierarchy; the person in charge of an organization. ☐ *I don't want to talk to a vice president. I demand to talk to the high man on the totem pole.* ☐ *Who's in charge around here? Who's high man on the totem pole?*

high on something *Sl.* **1.** excited or enthusiastic about something. ☐ *Tom is really high on the idea of going to Yellowstone this summer.* ☐ *I'm not high on going, but I will.* **2.** intoxicated. ☐ *John is acting as if he is high on something. Has he been doing drugs again?*

a **high roller** *Fig.* a gambler who bets heavily. ☐ *They welcomed me at the casino because I had the same name as one of their high rollers.*

*the **high sign** *Fig.* a prearranged signal for going ahead with something. (Often refers to a hand signal or some other visual signal. *Typically: **get** ~**; give** someone ~.)

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☐ *When I got the high sign, I pulled cautiously out into the roadway.* ☐ *The train's engineer got the high sign and began to move the train out of the station.*

high-and-mighty *Fig.* self-important and arrogant. ☐ *I don't know why William is so high-and-mighty. He's no better than the rest of us.* ☐ *The boss acts high-and-mighty because he can fire us all.*

high-pressure someone **into** something *Fig.* to urge someone forcefully to do something. ☐ *Here comes Jill. Watch out. She will try to high-pressure you into working on her committee.* ☐ *You can't high-pressure me into doing anything! I'm too busy!*

hightail it out of somewhere *Rur.* to run or ride a horse away from somewhere fast; to leave in a hurry. (Typically heard in western movies.) ☐ *Here comes the sheriff. We'd better hightail it out of here.* ☐ *Look at that guy go. He really hightailed it out of town.*

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highway robbery outrageous overpricing; a bill that is much higher than normally acceptable but must be paid. (As if one had been accosted and robbed on the open road or in broad daylight.) ☐ *Four thousand dollars! That's highway robbery for one piece of furniture!* ☐ *I won't pay it! It's highway robbery!*

highways and byways 1. major and minor roads. ☐ *The city council voted to plant new trees along all the highways and byways of the town.* **2.** *Cliché* routes and pathways, both major and minor. ☐ *I hope I meet you again some day on life's highways and byways.*

hike something **up**† to raise something, such as prices, interest rates, a skirt, pants legs, etc. ☐ *The grocery store is always hiking prices up.* ☐ *She hiked up her skirt so she could wade across the creek.*

hind end *Rur.* the rump of someone or an animal. ☐ *If you say that again, I'll swat you right across the hind end.* ☐ *The mule slipped and came down right on her hind end.*

the **hind end of creation** *Rur.* a very remote place. ☐ *I wish I lived in the city. I'm tired of living here in the hind end of creation.* ☐ *Joe moved out to a little shack at the hind end of creation.*

hinder someone **from** something to prevent someone from doing something. ☐ *Please don't hinder me from my appointed tasks.* ☐ *You can't hinder me from doing what I want!*

hindside first *Rur.* backwards. ☐ *You've got your shirt on hindside first.* ☐ *The horse came out of the trailer hindside first.*

hinge (up)on someone or something *Fig.* to depend on someone or something; to depend on what someone or something does. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *The success of the project hinges upon you and how well you do your job.* ☐ *How well the corn crop does all hinges on the weather.*

hint at something to refer to something; to insinuate something. ☐ *What are you hinting at?* ☐ *I am not hinting at anything. I am telling you to do it!*

hint for something to give a hint that something is wanted. ☐ *I could tell she was hinting for an invitation.* ☐ *Are you hinting for a second helping of fried chicken?*

hint something **to** someone to give a hint or clue to someone. ☐ *I thought she was leaving. She hinted that to me.* ☐ *She wasn't hinting anything to you! You made it all up!*

***hip to** someone or something *Inf.* knowing about someone or something; adapting to someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; become ~**.) ☐ *The boss began to get hip to Mary and her deviousness.* ☐ *She finally began to get hip to what was going on.*

hire someone **away**† **(from** someone or something**)** [for one] to get someone to quit working for some other employer and begin working for one. ☐ *We hired Elaine away from her previous employer, and now she wants to go back.* ☐ *The new bank hired away all the tellers from the old bank.*

hire someone or something **out**† to grant someone the use or efforts of someone or something for pay. ☐ *I hired my son out as a lawn-care specialist.* ☐ *I hire out my son to mow lawns.*

hiss at someone or something **1.** [for a reptile] to make a hissing sound as a warning. ☐ *The snake hissed at me. Otherwise I wouldn't have known it was there.* ☐ *The lizard hissed at the snake.* **2.** [for someone] to make a hissing sound at someone to show disapproval. ☐ *The audience hissed at the performer, who was not all that bad.* ☐ *They hissed at all three acts.*

hiss someone **off ((of) the stage)** *Fig.* [for the audience] to hiss and drive a performer off the stage. ☐ *The boys in the front row tried to hiss her off the stage.* ☐ *The audience, angry with the quality of the singers, tried to hiss them all off.*

hiss something **out**† *Fig.* to say something with a hissing voice, usually in anger or disgust. ☐ *The disgusted manager hissed his appraisal out.* ☐ *He hissed out his criticism.*

hissy (fit) *Rur.* a tantrum. (Often with *throw*. Probably refers to an angry, hissing cat.) ☐ *Jane practically has a hissy fit every time she gets a run in her nylons.* ☐ *The boss is really mad today. It's just one hissy fit after another.*

History repeats itself. *Prov.* The same kinds of events seem to happen over and over. ☐ *It seems that history is about to repeat itself for that poor country; it is about to be invaded again.* ☐ *Alan: The country is headed for an economic depression. Jane: How do you know? Alan: History repeats itself. The conditions now are just like the conditions before the last major depression.*

hit a happy medium Go to strike a happy medium.

hit a plateau *Fig.* to reach a higher level of activity, sales, production, output, etc., and then stop and remain unchanged for a time. ☐ *When my sales hit a plateau, my boss gave me a pep talk.* ☐ *When production hit a plateau, the company built a new factory.*

hit a snag *Fig.* to run into an unexpected problem. ☐ *We've hit a snag with the building project.* ☐ *I stopped working on the roof when I hit a snag.*

hit a sour note Go to strike a sour note.

hit against someone or something to strike against someone or something. ☐ *The door hit against me as I went through.* ☐ *The door hit against my foot as I went out.*

hit and miss and **hit or miss** carelessly; aimlessly; without plan or direction. ☐ *There was no planning. It was just*

hit and miss. ☐ *We handed out the free tickets hit or miss. Some people got one. Others got five or six.*

hit at someone or something to strike at someone or something. ☐ *The injured man hit at the nurses who were trying to help him.* ☐ *I hit at the wall to see how solid it was.*

hit back (at someone or something**)** to strike someone or something back. ☐ *Tom hit Fred, and Fred hit back at Tom.* ☐ *I have to hit back when someone hits me.*

hit bottom *Fig.* to reach the lowest or worst point. ☐ *Our profits have hit bottom. This is our worst year ever.* ☐ *When my life hit bottom, I began to feel much better. I knew that if there was going to be any change, it would be for the better.*

hit home and **strike home** *Fig.* to really make sense; [for a comment] to make a very good point. ☐ *Mary's criticism of my clothes hit home, so I changed.* ☐ *The teacher's comment struck home and the student vowed to work harder.*

hit it off (with someone**)** *Fig.* to quickly become good friends with someone. ☐ *Look how John hit it off with Mary.* ☐ *Yes, they really hit it off.*

hit like a ton of bricks Go to like a ton of bricks.

hit on someone *Inf.* to flirt with someone; to make a pass at someone. ☐ *The women were all hitting on George, but he didn't complain.* ☐ *I thought he was going to hit on me—but he didn't.*

hit on something to discover something. ☐ *She hit on a new scheme for removing the impurities from drinking water.* ☐ *I hit on it when I wasn't able to sleep one night.*

hit one's **stride** Go to reach one's stride.

hit one **where** one **lives** and **hit** one **close to home** *Fig.* to affect one personally and intimately. ☐ *Her comments really hit me where I live. Her words seemed to apply directly to me.* ☐ *I listened carefully and didn't think she hit close to home at all.*

hit or miss Go to hit and miss.

hit out (at someone or something**) (in** something**)** to strike at someone or something in some state, such as anger, revenge, etc. ☐ *The frightened child hit out at the teacher in sheer terror.* ☐ *He hit out in terror.* ☐ *Andy hit out at the threat.*

hit out (for something **or** some place**)** *Rur.* to start out for something or some place. ☐ *We hit out for the top of the hill early in the morning, and it was noon before we got there.* ☐ *We'll hit out about noon.*

hit pay dirt 1. *Fig.* to discover something of value. (Alludes to discovering valuable ore.) ☐ *Sally tried a number of different jobs until she hit pay dirt.* ☐ *I tried to borrow money from a lot of different people. They all said no. Then when I went to the bank, I hit pay dirt.* **2.** *Fig.* to get great riches. ☐ *After years of poverty, the writer hit pay dirt with his third novel.* ☐ *Jane's doing well. She really hit pay dirt with her new business.*

hit (rock) bottom Go to (rock) bottom.

hit someone *Fig.* [of a meaning] being understood by someone. ☐ *I didn't understand what she was getting at until it suddenly hit me. She was asking for a ride home.*

hit someone **below the belt 1.** *Lit.* [for a boxer] to strike an opponent below the belt. (An unfair blow.) ☐ *The champ hit the contender below the belt and the crowd began to boo like fury.* ☐ *Fred was hit below the belt and suffered considerably.* **2.** *Fig.* to deal someone an unfair blow. ☐ *That's not fair! You told them I was the one who ordered the wrong-size carpet. That's hitting me below the belt.* ☐ *Todd hit below the belt when he said it was all her fault because she had become ill during the trip.*

hit someone **hard** *Fig.* to affect someone's emotions strongly. ☐ *The death of his friend hit John hard.* ☐ *The investor was hit hard by the falling stock prices.*

hit someone **in** something to strike someone on a particular part of the body. ☐ *She hit him in the face by accident.* ☐ *Watch out or you'll hit yourself in the arm with the hammer.*

hit someone **like a ton of bricks** Go to like a ton of bricks.

hit someone or an animal **on** something to strike someone or an animal in a particular place. ☐ *The stone hit me on the leg.* ☐ *I hit the beaver on its side and it didn't seem to feel it.* ☐ *She hit herself on her left cheek.*

hit someone **(right) between the eyes 1.** *Lit.* to strike someone between the eyes. ☐ *The baseball hit her right between the eyes.* **2.** *Fig.* to become completely apparent; to surprise or impress someone. ☐ *Suddenly, it hit me right between the eyes. John and Mary were in love.* ☐ *Then—as he was talking—the exact nature of the evil plan hit me right between the eyes.* ☐ *The realization of what had happened hit me between the eyes.*

hit someone **up† (for** something**)** to ask someone for a loan of money or for some other favor. ☐ *The tramp hit up each tourist for a dollar.* ☐ *My brother hit up Harry for a couple of hundred bucks.*

hit someone **with** something **1.** *Fig.* to charge someone with an amount of money. ☐ *The government hit us with a big fine.* ☐ *The tax people hit us with a huge tax bill.* **2.** *Fig.* to present someone with shocking or surprising news. ☐ *He was shocked when she hit him with the news that she was leaving.* ☐ *Don't hit me with another piece of bad news!*

hit something **off†** to begin something; to launch an event. ☐ *She hit off the fair with a speech.* ☐ *The mayor hit the fair off by giving a brief address.*

hit speeds of some amount Go to speeds of some amount.

hit the books and **pound the books** *Inf. Fig.* to study hard. ☐ *I spent the weekend pounding the books.* ☐ *I gotta go home and hit the books. I have finals next week.*

hit the booze Go to next.

hit the bottle and **hit the booze** *Fig. Inf.* to go on a drinking bout; to get drunk. ☐ *Jed's hitting the bottle again.* ☐ *He's been hitting the booze for a week now.*

hit the brakes 1. *Lit.* to step on a vehicle's brakes hard and fast. ☐ *I came around the curve too fast and had to hit the brakes immediately.* **2.** *Fig.* to stop [something]. ☐ *The project seemed to be getting nowhere so we hit the brakes before too much more money was spent.*

hit the bricks and **hit the pavement 1.** *Fig. Inf.* to start walking; to go into the streets. ☐ *I have a long way to go. I'd better hit the bricks.* ☐ *Go on! Hit the pavement! Get*

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going! **2.** *Inf. Fig.* to go out on strike. □ *The workers hit the pavement on Friday and haven't been back on the job since.* □ *Agree to our demands, or we hit the bricks.*

hit the (broad) side of a barn *Fig.* to hit an easy target. (Usually negative.) □ *He can't park that car! He can't hit the broad side of a barn, let alone that parking place.* □ *He's a lousy shot. He can't hit the side of a barn.*

hit the bull's-eye 1. *Lit.* to hit the very center of a circular target. □ *The archer hit the bull's-eye three times in a row.* □ *I didn't hit the bull's-eye even once.* **2.** *Fig.* to achieve the goal perfectly. □ *Your idea really hit the bull's-eye. Thank you!* □ *Jill has a lot of insight. She knows how to hit the bull's-eye.*

hit the ceiling and **hit the roof** *Fig.* to get very angry. □ *She really hit the ceiling when she found out what happened.* □ *My dad'll hit the roof when he finds out that I wrecked his car.*

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hit the deck 1. *Fig.* to fall down; to drop down to the floor or ground. □ *Hit the deck. Don't let them see you.* □ *I hit the deck the minute I heard the shots.* **2.** *Fig.* to get out of bed. □ *Come on, hit the deck! It's morning.* □ *Hit the deck! Time to rise and shine!*

hit the fan *Inf. Fig.* to become publicly known; to become a scandal. (From the phrase *when the shit hit the fan.*) □ *I wasn't even in the country when it hit the fan.* □ *It hit the fan, and within ten minutes the press had spread it all over the world.*

hit the ground running *Fig.* to start the day very energetically. □ *A decade ago I had a lot more energy. I would wake up, hit the ground running, and never stop until I went to bed again.*

hit the hay and **hit the sack** *Fig.* to go to bed. □ *I have to go home and hit the hay pretty soon.* □ *Let's hit the sack. We have to get an early start in the morning.*

hit the high spots *Fig.* to do only the important, obvious, or good things. □ *I won't discuss the entire report. I'll just hit the high spots.* □ *First, let me hit the high spots; then I'll tell you the details.*

hit the jackpot 1. *Lit.* to win a large amount of money gambling or in a lottery. □ *I hit the jackpot in the big contest.* □ *Sally hit the jackpot in the lottery.* **2.** *Fig.* to be exactly right; to find exactly what was sought. □ *I hit the jackpot when I found this little cafe on Fourth Street.* □ *I wanted a small house with a fireplace, and I really hit the jackpot with this one.*

hit the nail (right) on the head 1. *Lit.* to strike a nail precisely on the head with a hammer. □ *If you expect to drive a nail straight, you have to hit the nail on the head.* **2.** *Fig.* to do exactly the right thing; to do something in the most effective and efficient way. □ *You've spotted the flaw, Sally. You hit the nail on the head.* □ *Bob doesn't say much, but every now and then he hits the nail right on the head.*

hit the panic button and **press the panic button; push the panic button** *Fig.* to panic suddenly. □ *She hit the panic button and just went to pieces.* □ *Don't press the panic button. Relax and keep your eyes open.*

hit the pavement Go to **hit the bricks.**

hit the road *Fig.* to depart; to begin one's journey, especially on a road trip; to leave for home. □ *It's time to hit the road. I'll see you.* □ *We have to hit the road very early in the morning.*

hit the roof Go to **hit the ceiling.**

hit the sack Go to **hit the hay.**

hit the skids *Fig.* to decline; to decrease in value or status. □ *Jed hit the skids when he started drinking.* □ *The firm hit the skids when the dollar collapsed.*

hit the spot *Inf.* to be exactly right; to be refreshing. □ *This cool drink really hits the spot.* □ *That was a delicious meal, dear. It hit the spot.*

hit the trail *Inf.* to leave. (As if one were hiking or riding a horse.) □ *I have to hit the trail before sunset.* □ *Let's hit the trail. It's late.*

hit town *Fig.* to arrive in town. □ *The minute he hit town, he checked into a hotel and took a long nap.*

hit (up)on someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to strike or pound on someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on.*) □ *Jeff hit upon the mugger over and over.* □ *I hit on the radio until it started working again.* **2.** *Fig.* to discover someone or something. □ *I think I have hit upon something. There is a lever you have to press in order to open this cabinet.* □ *I hit on Tom in an amateur play production. I offered him a job in my nightclub immediately.* **3.** Go to **hit on** someone; **hit on** something.

hitch a ride Go to **thumb a ride.**

hitch someone or something **(up†) (to** something**)** to attach someone or something to something. □ *Please hitch the horse up to the wagon, and let's get going.* □ *Please hitch up the horse.*

Hitch your wagon to a star. *Prov.* Always aspire to do great things.; Do not set pessimistic goals. (From Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay, "Civilization.") □ *The speaker who delivered the high school commencement address challenged the graduating students to hitch their wagons to a star.* □ *Bob: What do you want to be when you grow up? Child: I used to want to be a great actor, but my dad told me hardly anybody gets to be an actor, so now I have to pick something else. Bob: Nonsense. If you want to be an actor, then do your best to be an actor. Hitch your wagon to a star!*

hither, thither, and yon and **hither and thither** everywhere; here, there, and everywhere. (Formal and archaic.) □ *The prince looked hither, thither, and yon for the beautiful woman who had lost the glass slipper.* □ *The terrible wizard had sown the seeds of his evil vine hither, thither, and yon. Soon the evil, twisted plants began to sprout in all the land.*

hitting on all cylinders Go to **firing on all cylinders.**

a **hive of activity** *Fig.* a location where things are very busy. □ *The hotel lobby was a hive of activity each morning.* □ *During the holidays, the shopping center is a hive of activity.*

hoard something **up†** to accumulate a large store of something against bad times. □ *Scott was hoarding canned goods up for the hard times ahead.* □ *He hoarded up many pounds of canned tuna.*

***hoarse as a crow** very hoarse. (*Also: **as ~**.) □ *After shouting at the team all afternoon, the coach was as hoarse as a crow.* □ *Jill: Has Bob got a cold? Jane: No, he's always hoarse as a crow.*

hobnob with someone or something to associate with someone or a group, especially with those more wealthy, famous, etc. ☐ *I'm not used to hobnobbing with such luminaries.* ☐ *Walter is spending a lot of time hobnobbing with the very rich.*

Hobson's choice the choice between taking what is offered and getting nothing at all. (From the name of a stable owner in the seventeenth century who always hired out the horse nearest the door.) ☐ *We didn't really want that particular hotel, but it was a case of Hobson's choice. We booked very late and there was nothing else left.* ☐ *If you want a yellow car, it's Hobson's choice. The garage has only one.*

hoe one's **own row** *Rur.* to mind one's own business. ☐ *Tom: You're cutting up those carrots awful small. Jane: Hoe your own row!* ☐ *He didn't get involved in other people's fights. He just hoed his own row.*

hog wild wild; out of control. ☐ *I went hog wild at the sale and bought six new pairs of shoes.* ☐ *There were a dozen different desserts at the picnic. A person who liked sweets could go hog wild.*

hoist with one's **own petard** *Fig.* to be harmed or disadvantaged by an action of one's own which was meant to harm someone else. (From a line in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.) ☐ *She intended to murder her brother but was hoist with her own petard when she ate the poisoned food intended for him.* ☐ *The vandals were hoist with their own petard when they tried to make an emergency call from the pay phone they had broken.*

Hoist your sail when the wind is fair. *Prov.* Begin a project when circumstances are the most favorable. ☐ *Don't ask your mother for permission now; she's in a bad mood. Hoist your sail when the wind is fair.* ☐ *Wait until the economy has stabilized before trying to start your own business. Hoist your sail when the wind is fair.*

hold a grudge (against someone**)** Go to bear a grudge (against someone).

hold a meeting to meet; to have a meeting (of an organization). ☐ *We'll have to hold a meeting to make a decision.* ☐ *Our club held a meeting to talk about future projects.*

hold all the aces and **hold all the cards** to be in a favorable position; to be in a controlling position. (Alludes to having possession of all four aces or all the high cards in a card game.) ☐ *How can I advance in my career when my competitor holds all the aces?* ☐ *If I held all the aces, I'd be able to do great things.* ☐ *I tried to get my points across, but Joan held all the cards and the board voted for her plan.*

hold all the cards Go to previous.

hold back (on something**)** to withhold something; to give or take only a limited amount. ☐ *Hold back on the gravy. I'm on a diet.* ☐ *That's enough. Hold back. Save some for the others.*

hold by something to stick by a promise. ☐ *I hope that you will hold by our agreement.* ☐ *I will hold by everything I said.*

Hold everything! *Inf.* Stop everything!; Everyone, stop! ☐ *"Hold everything!" cried Mary. "There's a squirrel loose in the kitchen!"* ☐ *Bill: Hold everything! Let's try this part again. Bob: But we've already rehearsed it four times.*

hold forth (on someone or something**)** to speak at great length about someone or something. ☐ *Sadie held forth on the virtues of home cooking.* ☐ *Sharon is holding forth, and everyone is paying close attention.*

hold good for someone or something [for an offer] to remain open to someone or a group. ☐ *Does your offer of help still hold good for us?* ☐ *Does it hold good for the entire membership?*

Hold it! *Inf.* Stop right there. ☐ *Tom: Hold it! Mary: What's wrong? Tom: You almost stepped on my contact lens.* ☐ *Bill: Hold it! Bob: What is it? Bill: Sorry. For a minute, that stick looked like a snake.*

hold no brief for someone or something not to tolerate someone or something; to be opposed to someone or something. ☐ *I hold no brief for Wally and his friends.* ☐ *Rachel holds no brief for that kind of thing.*

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hold off (from) doing something to avoid doing something; to postpone doing something. ☐ *Can you hold off from buying a new car for another few months?* ☐ *I will hold off firing him until next week.*

hold off (on someone or something**)** to delay doing something concerning someone or something. ☐ *Please hold off on Tom until we interview the other candidates.* ☐ *I will hold off on this job for a while.*

hold on to be patient. ☐ *Just hold on. Everything will work out in good time.* ☐ *If you will just hold on, everything will probably be all right.*

Hold on (a minute)! and **Hold on for a minute!** Stop right there!; Wait a minute! (*Minute* can be replaced by *moment, second*, or other time periods.) ☐ *Bob: Hold on, Tom. Tom: What? Bob: I want to talk to you.* ☐ *"Hold on!" hollered Tom. "You're running off with my shopping cart!"*

***a hold on** someone a strong and secure influence on someone. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *The strange religion seemed to have a strong hold on its followers.* ☐ *The drug has a hold on the minds of those who use it.*

a **hold on** something Go to a grip on something.

hold (on) tight to grasp (someone or something) tightly. ☐ *Here we go on the merry-go-round! Hold on tight!* ☐ *The children were told to hold tight on the swings.*

hold on (to someone or something**)** Go to hang on (to someone or something).

Hold on to your hat! Go to Hang on to your hat!

hold one's **breath 1.** *Lit.* to stop breathing for a short period, on purpose. ☐ *Do you hold your breath when you dive into the water?* ☐ *I can't hold my breath for very long.* **2.** *Fig.* to wait or delay until something special happens. (Usually in the negative. See also Don't hold your breath.) ☐ *I expect the mail to be delivered soon, but I'm not holding my breath. It's often late.*

hold one's **end of the bargain up†** and **keep** one's **end of the bargain up†** *Fig.* to do one's part as agreed; to attend to one's responsibilities as agreed. ☐ *If you don't hold your end up, the whole project will fail.* ☐ *Tom has to learn to cooperate. He must keep up his end of the bargain.*

hold one's **end up†** to carry one's share of the burden; to do one's share of the work. ☐ *You're not holding your end*

up. We're having to do your share of the work. ☐ *Get busy. You have to hold up your end.*

hold one's **fire 1.** *Lit.* to refrain from shooting (a gun, etc.). ☐ *The sergeant told the soldiers to hold their fire.* ☐ *Please hold your fire until I get out of the way.* **2.** *Fig.* to postpone one's criticism or commentary. ☐ *Now, now, hold your fire until I've had a chance to explain.* ☐ *Hold your fire, Bill. You're too quick to complain.*

hold one's **ground** Go to **stand** one's **ground.**

hold one's **head up†** *Fig.* to be confident of the respect of other people; to hold up one's head with pride rather than bowing one's head. (A bowed head would indicate a lack of confidence.) ☐ *I am so embarrassed. I will never be able to hold my head up again.* ☐ *Now I can hold up my head with pride.*

hold one's **liquor** *Fig.* to be able to drink alcohol in quantity without ill effects. ☐ *Old Jed can sure hold his liquor—and a lot of it, too.* ☐ *I asked him to leave because he can't hold his liquor.*

hold one's **mouth the right way** *Fig.* do something very carefully under optimal conditions. ☐ *It was a tedious task. If I didn't hold my mouth just the right way, I wouldn't be able to do it.*

hold one's **nose 1.** *Lit.* to use one's fingers to keep one's nose closed to avoid a bad smell or to keep water out. ☐ *The kid held his nose and jumped off the dock into the lake.* **2.** *Fig.* to attempt to ignore something unpleasant, illegal, or "rotten." ☐ *He hated doing it, but he held his nose and made the announcement everyone dreaded.*

hold one's **own** to do as well as anyone else. ☐ *I can hold my own in a footrace any day.* ☐ *She was unable to hold her own, and she had to quit.*

hold one's **peace** to remain silent. ☐ *Bill was unable to hold his peace any longer. "Don't do it!" he cried.* ☐ *Quiet, John. Hold your peace for a little while longer.*

hold one's **temper** Go to **keep** one's **temper.**

hold one's **tongue** *Fig.* to refrain from speaking; to refrain from saying something unpleasant. ☐ *I felt like scolding her, but I held my tongue.* ☐ *Hold your tongue, John. You can't talk to me that way!*

hold oneself **together** *Fig.* to maintain one's calmness or sanity. ☐ *I don't know if I can hold myself together through another horrible day like this one.* ☐ *I don't know how she held herself together through all her troubles.*

hold out (against someone or something**)** to continue one's defense against someone or something. ☐ *We can hold out against them only a little while longer.* ☐ *Dave can hold out forever.*

hold out (for someone or something**)** to strive to wait for someone or something. ☐ *I will hold out for someone who can do the job better than the last person we interviewed.* ☐ *I want to hold out for a better offer.*

hold out the olive branch *Fig.* to offer to end a dispute and be friendly; to offer reconciliation. (The olive branch is a symbol of peace and reconciliation. A biblical reference.) ☐ *Jill was the first to hold out the olive branch after our argument.* ☐ *I always try to hold out the olive branch to someone I have offended. Life is too short for a person to bear grudges for very long.*

Hold, please. Go to **Hold the phone.**

hold someone **accountable (for** something**)** and **hold** someone **responsible (for** something**)** to consider someone responsible for something; to blame something on someone. ☐ *I hold you accountable for John's well-being.* ☐ *I must hold you responsible for the missing money.*

hold someone **back** Go to **keep** someone **back.**

hold someone **for ransom** to demand money for the return of a person who has been kidnapped. ☐ *The kidnappers held me for ransom, but no one would pay.* ☐ *We will hold Timmy for ransom and hope that the police don't find us.*

hold someone **hostage** to keep someone as a hostage. ☐ *The terrorists planned to hold everyone hostage in the airplane.* ☐ *My neighbor was held hostage in his own home by a robber.*

hold someone or an animal **down† 1.** *Lit.* to keep someone, something, or an animal down. ☐ *The heavy beam held him down, and he could not rise.* ☐ *The owner held down his pet while the vet treated the injured paw.* **2.** *Fig.* to prevent someone or something from advancing. ☐ *I had a disability that held me down in life.* ☐ *Too much debt held down the company while others profited.*

hold someone or something **at bay** *Fig.* to make someone, a group, or an animal stay at a safe distance. (Originally referred only to animals.) ☐ *I held the attacker at bay while Mary got away and called the police.* ☐ *The dogs held the bear at bay while I got my gun loaded.*

hold someone or something **at** something to keep someone or something at some distance, such as an arm's length, respectful distance, comfortable distance, etc. ☐ *I held the child at an arm's length until he could be calmed.* ☐ *The police held the crowd at a distance from the injured man.*

hold someone or something **by** something to grasp someone or something by a particular part. ☐ *I held him by the shoulder while I talked to him.* ☐ *Donna held the dog by the collar.*

hold someone or something **in check** Go to **keep** someone or something **in check.**

hold someone or something **in high regard** *Fig.* to think well of someone or something. ☐ *All of us hold the vice president in high regard.* ☐ *We hold these policies in high regard.*

hold someone or something **in low regard** *Fig.* to think poorly of someone or something. ☐ *I'm afraid that Hazel holds you in low regard.* ☐ *I'm afraid we hold this establishment in low regard.*

hold someone or something **in reserve** and **keep** someone or something **in reserve** *Fig.* to hold back someone or something for future needs. ☐ *I am holding the frozen desserts in reserve, in case we run out of cake.* ☐ *We are holding Sharon in reserve.* ☐ *Keep a few good players in reserve.*

hold someone or something **off† 1.** and **keep** someone or something **off†** *Lit.* to do something physical to keep someone or something away; to stave someone or something off. ☐ *Tom was trying to rob us, but we managed to hold him off.* ☐ *We held off the attackers.* ☐ *I couldn't keep off the reporters any longer.* **2.** *Fig.* to make someone or something wait. ☐ *I know a lot of people are waiting to see me.*

Hold them off for a while longer. ☐ *See what you can do to hold off the reporters.*

hold someone or something **out (of** something**)** and **hold** someone or something **out†** to set someone or something aside from the rest; to prevent someone or a group from participating. ☐ *Her parents held her out of sports because of her health.* ☐ *They held out every player who had an injury.*

hold someone or something **over†** to retain someone or something (for a period of time). ☐ *The storm held John over for another day.* ☐ *The manager held over the hit movie for another week.*

hold someone or something **still** Go to **keep** someone or something **still.**

hold someone or something **together** to keep a group of people or things together. ☐ *She worked at two jobs in order to hold her family together.* ☐ *Our club was failing despite our efforts to hold it together.*

hold someone or something **up† 1.** *Lit.* to keep someone or something upright. ☐ *Johnny is falling asleep. Please hold him up until I prepare the bed for him.* ☐ *Hold up the window sash while I prop it open.* **2.** *Fig.* to rob someone or a group. ☐ *Some punk tried to hold me up.* ☐ *The mild-looking man held up the bank and shot a teller.* **3.** *Fig.* to delay someone or something. ☐ *Driving the kids to school held me up.* ☐ *An accident on Main Street held up traffic for thirty minutes.*

hold someone or something **up† as an example** *Fig.* to single out someone or something as a person or thing worthy of imitation. ☐ *No one has ever held me up as an example.* ☐ *Jane held up Doris as an example.* ☐ *I hate to hold myself up as an example, but if you would do what I do, at least I wouldn't criticize you.*

hold someone or something **up† to ridicule** *Fig.* to ridicule someone or something. ☐ *They must stop holding Matt up to ridicule! Who do they think they are?* ☐ *She held up Donald to ridicule.*

hold someone or something **up to scorn†** *Fig.* to single out someone or something for repudiation. ☐ *The entire crowd held Randy up to scorn for his part in the riot.* ☐ *The disappointed fans held up the losing team to scorn.*

hold someone **responsible (for** something**)** Go to **hold** someone **accountable (for** something**).**

hold someone's **attention** *Fig.* to keep someone's attention; to keep someone interested. ☐ *The boring teacher could not hold the students' attention.* ☐ *The mystery novel held my attention and I couldn't put it down.*

hold someone's **hand 1.** *Lit.* to hold the hand of someone who is frightened, especially a child. ☐ *Please hold Jimmy's hand when you cross the street.* **2.** *Fig.* to comfort someone who is anxious or frightened. ☐ *You'll be all right, won't you? You don't need anyone to hold your hand, do you?*

hold someone, something, or an animal **back† (from** someone or something**)** to restrain someone, something, or an animal from getting at or getting to someone or something. ☐ *The parents held the children back from the cake and ice cream until the hostess said she was ready.* ☐ *Please hold back your dog.*

hold someone **to** something *Fig.* to make someone adhere to an agreement. ☐ *You promised me that you would buy six of them, and I'm going to hold you to your promise.* ☐ *It was difficult, but he held himself to the terms of the contract.*

hold someone **under** someone's **thumb** Go to **under** someone's **thumb.**

hold someone **up† to** something to lift someone up to the level of something. ☐ *I held up little Mary to the window so she could see out.* ☐ *She was held up to the window so she could see better.*

hold something **against** someone *Fig.* to blame something on someone; to bear a grudge against someone; to resent someone. ☐ *Your brother is mean to me, but I can't hold it against you.* ☐ *You're holding something against me. What is it?*

hold something **against** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to press something against someone, a group, or something. ☐ *Max held the gun against the bank guard's head and threatened to pull the trigger.* ☐ *Fred held the drill against the wall and turned it on.* **2.** *Fig.* to think badly of someone, a group, or something because of something. ☐ *I am the one who dented your fender. I'm sorry. I hope you don't hold it against me.* ☐ *I hold all this mess against the government.*

hold something **back for a rainy day** Go to **save (**something**) for a rainy day.**

hold something **for** someone **1.** to keep something safe for someone. ☐ *I will hold your money for you.* ☐ *Do you want me to hold your wallet for you while you swim?* **2.** [for a merchant] to set something aside for a purchaser who will pay for it and take delivery at a later date. ☐ *I will hold it for you until you can pay for it.* ☐ *We can hold it for you right here and give it to you when you have the money.*

hold something **in†** and **keep** something **in† 1.** and **hold** something **inside ((of)** one(self)**)**; **keep** something **inside ((of)** one(self)**)** *Fig.* to keep one's emotions inside oneself. ☐ *You really shouldn't hold those feelings inside of you.* ☐ *I have kept all this inside myself too long.* ☐ *You shouldn't hold in all that anger.* **2.** *Lit.* to hold in one's stomach, gut, belly, etc. ☐ *Hold your belly in so you don't look like a blimp.* ☐ *Hold in your stomach.*

hold something **in abeyance** to stall or postpone something. ☐ *This is a good plan but not at this time. Let's just hold it in abeyance until things get better.* ☐ *We will hold the matter in abeyance until we hear from you.*

hold something **in store (for** someone**)** Go to **in store (for** someone**).**

hold something **inside ((of)** one(self)**)** Go to **hold** something **in†.**

hold (something**) out on** someone or something to keep news or something of value from someone or a group. ☐ *What's going on? Are you holding something out on me?* ☐ *Don't hold out on the city council. They have ways of finding out everything.*

hold something **out† (to** someone**)** to offer something to someone. ☐ *I held a bouquet of roses out to her.* ☐ *I held out an offer of immunity from prosecution to her, but she would not cooperate.*

hold something **over** someone**('s head)** *Fig.* to have knowledge of something about a person and to use that knowledge to control the person. ☐ *So I made a mistake when I*

was young. Are you going to hold that over my head all my life? ☐ *Please don't hold that over me anymore.*

hold something **together** to keep the parts of an object together. ☐ *Hold this broken vase together until I get back with the glue.* ☐ *What can I use to hold this together?*

hold still Go to keep still.

hold still (for someone or something**)** and **keep still (for** someone or something**); stand still (for** someone or something**)** to remain motionless for someone or something. ☐ *Hold still for the doctor and the shot won't hurt.* ☐ *Please keep still for the doctor.*

hold still for something and **stand still for** something *Fig.* to tolerate or endure something. (Often in the negative.) ☐ *I won't stand still for that kind of behavior!* ☐ *She won't hold still for that kind of talk.*

hold terror for someone [for something] to be frightening to a person. ☐ *The thought of flying to Rio by myself held great terror for me.* ☐ *Nothing holds terror for me. I am a daredevil.*

hold the fort *Fig.* to take care of a place while someone who is usually there is gone, such as a store or one's home. (From western movies.) ☐ *I'm going next door to visit Mrs. Jones. You stay here and hold the fort.* ☐ *You should open the store at eight o'clock and hold the fort until I get there at ten.*

hold the line (at someone or something**)** *Fig.* not to exceed a certain limit regarding someone or something. ☐ *Having your wife on the payroll is one thing, but no one else from the family—I will hold the line at her.* ☐ *We have to hold the line at this kind of expenditure.* ☐ *Okay, we'll hold the line.*

Hold the phone. 1. and **Hold the wire(, please).; Hold, please.; Hold the line(, please).; Hold the phone(, please).; Please hold.** *Fig.* Please wait on the telephone and do not hang up. (A phrase in use before telephone "hold" circuitry was in wide use.) ☐ *Bill: Hold the wire, please. (Turning to Tom) Tom, the phone's for you. Tom: Be right there.* ☐ *Rachel: Do you wish to speak to Mr. Jones or Mr. Franklin? Henry: Jones. Rachel: Thank you. Hold the line, please.* ☐ *Sue: Good afternoon, Acme Motors, hold please. Bill (hanging up): That makes me so mad!* **2.** *Fig.* Wait just a minute.; Don't rush into something. ☐ *Hold the phone! Let's think about it a little longer.* ☐ *Hold the phone. I just had another idea.*

hold the purse strings Go to control the purse strings.

Hold the wire(, please). Go to Hold the phone.

hold together [for something] to keep from falling apart. ☐ *Don't run the engine too fast because it won't hold together.* ☐ *Do you think that this book will hold together much longer?*

hold true [for something] to be true; [for something] to remain true. ☐ *Does this rule hold true all the time?* ☐ *Yes, it holds true no matter what.*

hold under wraps Go to under wraps.

hold up 1. *Lit.* to endure; to last a long time. ☐ *How long will this cloth hold up?* ☐ *I want my money back for this chair. It isn't holding up well.* **2.** and **hold up (for** someone or something**)** to wait; to stop and wait for someone or something. ☐ *Hold up for Wallace. He's running hard to catch up to us.* ☐ *Hold up a minute.*

hold up (for someone or something**)** Go to hold up; wait up (for someone or something).

hold up (on someone or something**)** to delay or postpone further action on someone or something. ☐ *I know you are getting ready to choose someone, but hold up on Tom. There may be someone better.* ☐ *Hold up on the project, would you?* ☐ *We need to hold up for a while longer.*

Hold your horses! and **Hold your tater!** *Fig. Inf.* Wait! ☐ *Tom: Let's go! Let's go! Mary: Hold your horses.* ☐ *Hold your tater, now. Where did you say you are going?*

Hold your tater! Go to previous.

Hold your tongue! *Inf.* You have said enough!; You have said enough rude things. (See also hold one's tongue.) ☐ *Bill: You're seeing Tom a lot, aren't you? You must be in love. Jane: Hold your tongue, Bill Franklin!* ☐ *After listening to the tirade against him for nearly four minutes, Tom cried out, "Hold your tongue!"*

hole in one 1. *Lit.* an instance of hitting a golf ball from the tee to the hole in only one try. (From the game of golf.) ☐ *John made a hole in one yesterday.* ☐ *I've never gotten a hole in one.* **2.** *Fig.* an instance of succeeding the first time. ☐ *It worked the first time I tried it—a hole in one.* ☐ *Bob got a hole in one on that sale. A lady walked in the door, and he sold her a car in five minutes.*

a **hole in the wall** *Fig.* a tiny shop, room, etc., not much wider than its doorway. ☐ *I went into this little hole in the wall where they had the nicest little gifts.* ☐ *His office is just a hole in the wall.*

hole up (somewhere**) 1.** to take shelter somewhere. ☐ *During the blizzard, we holed up in a lean-to made of branches.* ☐ *Looks like bad weather coming. We'd better find a place to hole up.* **2.** to hide somewhere. ☐ *The police are looking for me. I need somewhere to hole up.* ☐ *The outlaw holed up in a cave.*

holler something **out**† to yell something out. ☐ *The guard hollered a warning out.* ☐ *They hollered out a warning.*

holler uncle and **cry uncle; say uncle** *Fig.* to admit defeat. ☐ *Joe kept pounding on Jim, trying to get him to holler uncle.* ☐ *He twisted my arm until I cried uncle.*

hollow something **out**† to make the inside of something hollow. ☐ *Martha hollowed the book out and put her money inside.* ☐ *She hollowed out a book.*

Holy cow! *Inf.* Wow! ☐ *Holy cow! I never expected such a nice gift!* ☐ *Give me a chance! Holy cow, don't rush me!*

holy Joe 1. a chaplain; a cleric; a clergyman. ☐ *I went to see the holy Joe, and he was a lot of help.* ☐ *Old holy Joe wants to see all of us at services.* **2.** a very pious person. ☐ *Martin looks stuffy, but he's no holy Joe.* ☐ *Don't let that holy Joe hear about what you've done.*

Holy mackerel! *Inf.* Wow! ☐ *Holy mackerel! What a beautiful day!* ☐ *Holy mackerel! What's this? A new car?*

Holy moley! *Inf.* Wow! ☐ *Holy moley! A whole quarter!* ☐ *Look, here's another one! Holy moley!*

(home) folks *Rur.* one's family, especially one's parents. ☐ *It sure is good to see the home folks again.* ☐ *Sally went to visit her folks.*

***home free** safe and without problems. (Not necessarily about home or about money. *Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Everyone else had a lot of trouble with the bureaucrats, but we got home free.*

home in (on someone or something**)** *Fig.* to aim directly at someone or something. ☐ *She came into the room and homed in on the chocolate cake.* ☐ *She saw the cake and homed in.*

Home is where the heart is. *Prov.* People long to be at home.; Your home is whatever place you long to be. ☐ *I've had a lovely time visiting you, but home is where the heart is, and I think it's time I went back.* ☐ *If home is where the heart is, then my home is my parents' old house. I've never loved my own apartment the way I love their place.*

home on(to something**)** *Fig.* to aim directly at something; to fix some type of receiver on a signal source. ☐ *The navigator homed onto the radio beam from the airport.* ☐ *The navigator located the beam and homed on.*

homely enough to stop a clock *Rur.* ugly. ☐ *She's a sweet girl, but homely enough to stop a clock.* ☐ *No one asks Mary out, and no wonder. She's homely enough to stop a clock.*

hone for someone or something *Rur.* to long for someone or something. ☐ *Tom: What's wrong with Jane? Mary: She's honing for her sweetheart.* ☐ *Jimmy was honing for the red bicycle in the toy store window.*

honest and aboveboard and **open and aboveboard** *Fig.* in the open; visible to the public; honest. ☐ *Don't keep it a secret. Let's make sure that everything is honest and aboveboard.* ☐ *You can do whatever you wish, as long as you keep it honest and aboveboard.* ☐ *The inspector had to make sure that everything was open and aboveboard.*

Honest to God. Go to next.

Honest to goodness. and **Honest to God.; Honest to Pete.** I speak the truth. (Some people may object to the use of *God* in this phrase.) ☐ *Did he really say that? Honest to goodness?* ☐ *Honest to Pete, I've been to the South Pole.*

Honest to Pete. Go to previous.

Honesty is the best policy. *Prov.* You should always tell the truth, even when it seems as if it would be useful to tell a lie. ☐ *Jill: I borrowed Jane's white blouse without asking her, and then I spilled tomato sauce on it. Should I tell her what happened, or should I just put the blouse back in her closet and hope she won't notice? Jane: Honesty is the best policy.*

The **honeymoon is over.** The early pleasant beginning (as at the start of a marriage) has ended. ☐ *Okay, the honeymoon is over. It's time to settle down and do some hard work.* ☐ *I knew the honeymoon was over at my new job when they started yelling at me to work faster.*

honk at someone or something to sound a horn at someone or something. ☐ *Is someone honking at me?* ☐ *The motorists honked at the sheep that were clogging the roadway.*

honor someone **as** something to praise someone as something; to praise someone for being something. ☐ *Aren't you going to honor Kevin as a hero?* ☐ *We will honor Henry as the most promising scholar of the year.*

honor someone **for** something to praise someone for doing something. ☐ *The committee agreed to honor Laurel for her role in the benefit dance.* ☐ *I want to honor you for your efforts on behalf of our cause.*

honor someone's **check** to accept someone's personal check in payment of an obligation. ☐ *The clerk at the store wouldn't honor my check. I had to pay cash.* ☐ *The bank didn't honor your check when I tried to deposit it. Please give me cash.*

honor someone **with** something to show one's respect for someone with something, such as a gift, party, ceremony, a response, etc. ☐ *We would like to honor you with a little reception.* ☐ *We chose to honor you with a little gift.*

hooched (up) *Sl.* intoxicated. ☐ *Sally is too hooched to drive.* ☐ *She got herself hooched up and couldn't give her talk.*

hoodwink someone **into** something *Fig.* to deceive someone into doing something. ☐ *She will try to hoodwink you into driving her to the airport. Watch out.* ☐ *You can't hoodwink me into doing that!*

hoodwink someone **out of** something *Fig.* to get something away from someone by deception. ☐ *Are you trying to hoodwink me out of my money?* ☐ *Max tried to hoodwink the old lady out of all her money.*

hoof it *Inf.* to walk. ☐ *If nobody gives us a ride, we'll have to hoof it.* ☐ *She hoofed it home from the dance in her high-heeled shoes.*

hook in(to something**)** to connect into something. ☐ *We will hook into the water main tomorrow morning.* ☐ *We dug the pipes up and hooked in.*

hook, line, and sinker *Fig.* totally. ☐ *She fell for our story hook, line, and sinker.* ☐ *They believed every word hook, line, and sinker.*

hook oneself **on** someone or something *Fig.* to become enamored of someone or something. ☐ *I'm afraid I've hooked myself on Alice.* ☐ *He hooked himself on Bach organ music.*

hook someone **on** something *Fig.* to addict someone to a drug or alcohol. ☐ *Careful, or you'll hook yourself on those tranquilizers.* ☐ *Some friend at school hooked Roger on dope.* ☐ *Sharon has hooked herself on cocaine.*

hook someone or something **up† (to** someone or something**)** and **hook** someone or something **up† (with** someone or something**)** **1.** *Lit.* to attach someone or something to someone or something. ☐ *The nurse hooked the patient up to the oxygen tubes.* ☐ *They hooked up the patient with the tubes.*

hook someone **up (with** someone**)** *Fig.* to arrange for someone to go out with someone. ☐ *I hooked Alice up with Tom last year, and now they're getting married.*

hook something **down† 1.** *Lit.* to attach something and hold it down with a hook. ☐ *Please hook the lid down so it doesn't fall off.* ☐ *Please hook down the lid.* **2.** *Sl.* to toss something down to someone. ☐ *Hook another can of beer down to me, will you?* ☐ *Hook down another can of beer.* **3.** *Sl.* to eat something quickly; to gobble something up. ☐ *Wally hooked the first hamburger down and ordered another.* ☐ *He hooked down two more burgers in a few minutes.*

hook something **into** something to connect something to something. ☐ *I want to hook another communication line into the system.* ☐ *Is it possible to hook my computer into your network?*

hook something **on(to** someone or something**)** and **hook** something **on**† to attach something to someone or something by a hook. ☐ *Hook this sign on her and let her walk around advertising our play.* ☐ *Hook on the sign and hope that it stays.* ☐ *Hook it onto the tree carefully.*

hook something **up**† to set something up and get it working. (The object is to be connected to a power supply, electronic network, telephone lines, etc.) ☐ *Will it take long to hook the telephone up?* ☐ *As soon as they hook up the computer to the network, I can e-mail my friends.*

hook up with someone **1.** *Fig. Inf.* to meet with someone. ☐ *Fancy hooking up with you here, Bill. How have you been?* ☐ *Well, hello, Tom. I didn't think I'd hook up with you again so soon.* **2.** *Fig.* to join forces with someone. ☐ *If we hook up with each other it'll be easier to defeat the others.* ☐ *These two competitors have hooked up together and we now have a real problem.*

hooked on something **1.** *Fig.* addicted to a drug or something similar. ☐ *Jenny is hooked on cocaine.* ☐ *She was not hooked on anything before that.* **2.** *Fig.* enthusiastic about something; supportive of something. ☐ *Mary is hooked on football. She never misses a game.* ☐ *Jane is so happy! She's hooked on life.*

hoot and holler to shout in disapproval; to call and shout one's displeasure. ☐ *After the umpire rendered his decision, the spectators hooted and hollered their thoughts on the matter.* ☐ *It's hard to play a good game of basketball when the fans are hooting and hollering at everything you do.*

hoot at someone or something Go to **howl at** someone or something.

hoot someone **down**† Go to **howl** someone **down**†.

hoot someone **off the stage** [for an audience] to boo and hiss until a performer leaves the stage. ☐ *The rude audience hooted Carl off the stage.* ☐ *Carl was hooted off the stage.*

hop in(to something**)** to jump into something; to get into something. ☐ *Hop into your car and drive over to my house.* ☐ *I hopped in and drove off.*

hop off ((of) something**)** to jump off something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *She hopped off her bike and came into the house.* ☐ *The bird on the branch hopped off.*

hop on the bandwagon Go to **on the bandwagon**.

hop on(to something**)** to jump or get onto something that is moving. ☐ *Sometimes you have to hop onto the cable car after it has started to move.* ☐ *I ran to the cable car and hopped on.*

a **hop, skip, and a jump** *Fig.* a short distance. ☐ *Bill lives just a hop, skip, and a jump from here. We can be there in two minutes.* ☐ *My car is parked just a hop, skip, and a jump away.*

hop something **up**† *Sl.* to make a machine, especially a car, run extra fast or give it extra power. ☐ *He will take that junk heap home and hop it up.* ☐ *He spent nearly every evening hopping up his old car.*

Hop to it! *Inf.* Get started right now! ☐ *Bill: I have to get these things stacked up before I go home. Bob: Then hop to it! You won't get it done standing around here talking.* ☐ *"Hurry up! Hop to it!" urged Bill. "We've got to get this done!"*

hop up (to someone or something**)** [for an animal] to come close to someone or something by hopping. ☐ *The bunny hopped up to me and just sat there.* ☐ *It hopped up and stared.*

hope against (all) hope to have hope even when the situation appears to be hopeless. ☐ *We hope against all hope that she'll see the right thing to do and do it.* ☐ *There is little point in hoping against hope, except that it makes you feel better.*

Hope deferred makes the heart sick. and **Hope deferred maketh the heart sick.** *Prov.* If you have to wait a long time for something you want, you will become despairing. (Biblical.) ☐ *Charlie waited so long for the woman he loved that he decided he didn't want to love anybody. Hope deferred makes the heart sick.*

Hope deferred maketh the heart sick. Go to previous.

hope for something to be optimistic that one's wish for something will come true. ☐ *I still hope for her return.* ☐ *We hope for good weather on Friday.*

hope for the best to desire the best to happen. ☐ *Good luck. You know we all hope for the best.* ☐ *Mary is worried, but she hopes for the best.*

Hope for the best and prepare for the worst. and **Hope for the best but expect the worst.** *Prov.* You should have a positive attitude, but make sure you are ready for disaster. ☐ *While my father was in the hospital after his heart attack, we hoped for the best and prepared for the worst.* ☐ *When you study for a major exam, hope for the best but expect the worst. Don't make yourself anxious worrying that it will be too difficult, but review as if you expect the exam to be extremely hard.*

Hope for the best but expect the worst. Go to previous.

Hope is a good breakfast but a bad supper. *Prov.* It is good to start the day feeling hopeful, but if none of the things you hope for come to pass by the end of the day, you will feel disappointed. (Can be used to warn someone against hoping for something that is unlikely to happen.) ☐ *Lisa began the day hoping that she would find work, and by the end of the day she had learned that hope is a good breakfast but a bad supper.*

Hope springs eternal (in the human breast). *Prov.* People will continue to hope even though they have evidence that things cannot possibly turn out the way they want. (From Alexander Pope's poem, "Essay on Man." Sometimes used to remark that you believe someone's situation is hopeless, as in the first example.) ☐ *Jill: The boss may have turned me down the first twelve times I asked for a raise, but this time I really think she'll give it to me. Jane: Hope springs eternal in the human breast.* ☐ *Alan: You're not still trying to teach the dog to shake hands! Jane: Hope springs eternal.*

hopeless at doing something incapable of doing something. ☐ *Tom is hopeless at cooking.* ☐ *Sally is hopeless at keeping her room clean, and it shows.*

hopped up 1. *Sl.* intoxicated with drugs or alcohol; stimulated by drugs or alcohol. ☐ *The old man was hopped up again. He was addicted to opium.* ☐ *John usually gets hopped up on the weekends.* **2.** *Inf.* excited; enthusiastic. ☐ *What are you hopped up about now? You're certainly cheery.* ☐ *I always get hopped up when I think of mountain climbing.*

hopping mad *Fig.* very angry. ☐ *Joe got hopping mad when the salesclerk was rude to him.* ☐ *The student's practical jokes made the teacher hopping mad.*

horn in (on someone**)** *Fig.* to attempt to displace someone; to interfere with someone, especially with someone's romantic interests. ☐ *I'm going to ask Sally to the party. Don't you dare try to horn in on me!* ☐ *I wouldn't think of horning in.*

horn in (on something**)** *Fig.* to attempt to participate in something without invitation or consent. ☐ *Are you trying to horn in on my conversation with Sally?* ☐ *I hope you are not trying to horn in on our party.*

horse and buggy and **horse and carriage; buggy whip** *Fig.* a carriage pulled by a horse, as opposed to a modern automobile; the horse was urged on with a whip. (A symbol of old-fashionedness or out-of-dateness. Particularly with *go out with*, as in the examples.) ☐ *That kind of clothing went out with the horse and buggy.* ☐ *I thought suspenders went out with the horse and carriage, but I see them everywhere now.*

horse and carriage Go to previous.

horse around (with someone or something**) 1.** *Fig.* to play around roughly with someone or something, possibly abusing someone or something. ☐ *Stop horsing around with your little brother. Leave him alone.* ☐ *Will you kids stop horsing around?* **2.** *Fig.* to join someone in boisterous play; to participate in rough play with someone. ☐ *He's horsing around with his little brother. They are really having a good time.* ☐ *We spent the entire afternoon just horsing around.*

a **horse of a different color** Go to next.

a **horse of another color** and a **horse of a different color** *Fig.* another matter altogether. ☐ *I was talking about trees, not bushes. Bushes are a horse of another color.* ☐ *Gambling is not the same as investing in the stock market. It's a horse of a different color.*

horse sense *Fig.* common sense; practical thinking. ☐ *Bob is no scholar but he has a lot of horse sense.* ☐ *Horse sense tells me I should not be involved in that project.*

hose someone **down**† *Sl.* to kill someone. (Underworld. From the image of spraying someone with bullets.) ☐ *Mr. Big told Sam to hose Wilbur down.* ☐ *The thugs tried to hose down the witness.*

hose someone or something **down**† to wash something down with water from a hose. ☐ *Hose her down to cool her off and maybe she will do the same for you.* ☐ *Please hose down the driveway.* ☐ *Hose it down.*

hot and bothered 1. *Fig.* excited; anxious. ☐ *Now don't get hot and bothered. Take it easy.* ☐ *John is hot and bothered about the tax increase.* **2.** *Fig.* amorous; interested in romance or sex. ☐ *John gets hot and bothered whenever Mary comes into the room.* ☐ *The dog seems hot and bothered. I think it's that time of the year again.*

hot and heavy *Fig.* referring to serious passion or emotions. ☐ *Things were getting a little hot and heavy so Ellen asked to be taken home.* ☐ *The movie had one hot and heavy scene after another. Pretty soon it got to be a joke.*

***hot as fire** and ***hot as hell** very hot; burning hot. (*Also: **as ~**. Use *hell* with caution.) ☐ *I'm afraid Betsy has a high fever. Her forehead is hot as fire.* ☐ *It's as hot as hell outside. It must be near 100 degrees.*

hot as hell Go to previous.

Hot damn! *Inf.* Wow!; Hooray! (An exclamation of surprise and delight.) ☐ *Hot damn! I just won a vacation trip to Florida!*

Hot diggety (dog)! and **Hot dog!; Hot ziggety!** *Inf.* an expression of excitement and delight. (These expressions have no meaning and no relationship to dogs or to wieners.) ☐ *Rachel: I got an A! Hot diggety dog! Henry: Good for you!* ☐ *Tom: You won first place! Mary: Hot ziggety!*

H

hot enough to burn a polar bear's butt *Rur.* very hot. (Used to describe weather.) ☐ *Every day in August was hot enough to burn a polar bear's butt.* ☐ *Even in October, it was hot enough to burn a polar bear's butt.*

hot off the press *Fig.* freshly printed; just released by a publisher. ☐ *Here is a copy of the new Perry Hodder novel. It's hot off the press.*

hot on someone's **heels** Go to **on** someone's **heels.**

hot on something *Fig.* enthusiastic about something; very much interested in something; knowledgeable about something. ☐ *Meg's hot on animal rights.* ☐ *Jean is hot on modern ballet just now.*

hot on the trail (of someone, some creature, or something**)** *Fig.* very close to finding or catching up with someone, some creature, or something. ☐ *I am hot on the trail of the book that I have been seeking for months.*

a **hot ticket** *Fig.* something that is really popular and attractive at the moment. ☐ *Singers who can dance are a hot ticket right now. Who knows what folks will like next month?*

hot under the collar *Fig.* very angry. ☐ *The boss was really hot under the collar when you told him you lost the contract.* ☐ *I get hot under the collar every time I think about it.*

Hot ziggety! Go to **Hot diggety (dog)!**

a **hotbed of** something *Fig.* a nest of something; a gathering place of something. ☐ *This office is a hotbed of lazy people.* ☐ *My class is a hotbed of nerds.*

hotfoot it (off to) somewhere to go somewhere as fast as possible. ☐ *I've got to hotfoot it off to school.* ☐ *When they heard the police sirens, the thieves hotfooted home.*

hotfoot it out of somewhere to run away from a place. ☐ *Did you see Tom hotfoot it out of the office when the boss came in?* ☐ *Things are looking bad. I think we had better hotfoot it out of here.*

hound someone **from** some place and **hound** someone **out (of** something or some place**)** to chase someone out of some

place; to force someone out of something or some place. ☐ *They hounded Joel and his friends from the town.* ☐ *The sheriff hounded Tex out of town.*

hound someone or an animal **down†** to pursue and capture someone or an animal. ☐ *I will hound the killer down if it takes me the rest of my life.* ☐ *I will hound down that killer if it takes years.*

hound someone **out (of** something or some place**)** Go to **hound** someone **from** some place.

hound something **out of** someone *Fig.* to force someone to give information. ☐ *We are going to have to hound the information out of her.* ☐ *We hounded the combination to the safe out of them.*

A **house divided against itself cannot stand.** *Prov.* If the members of a group fight each other, the group will disintegrate. (Often the group under discussion is a family.) ☐ *The leader of the newly formed union tried hard to reconcile the different factions within his organization, because he knew that a house divided against itself cannot stand.*

H

house moss Go to curly dirt.

house of correction *Euph.* a prison. ☐ *He was sentenced to five years in the county's house of correction.* ☐ *The Jones House of Correction was built in the 1950s, when violent crime was much less common here.*

a **house of ill fame** Go to next.

a **house of ill repute** and a **house of ill fame** *Euph.* a house of prostitution. ☐ *The sign says "Health Club," but everyone knows it's a house of ill repute.* ☐ *He made a lot of money by running a house of ill fame.*

*****a **household name** and *****a **household word** *Fig.* well known by everyone; commonly and widely known. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~; make** something **~**.) ☐ *I want my invention to become a household word.* ☐ *Some kid named Perry Hodder has become a household name!*

a **household word** Go to previous.

hover around (someone or something**)** to hang or wait around someone or something. ☐ *The mugger hovered around the side door to the theater, waiting for a victim.* ☐ *The birds hovered around the bird feeder.*

hover between something **and** something else **1.** *Lit.* to float or hang between things. ☐ *The helicopter hovered between the buildings and lowered a rescue chair.* ☐ *The hummingbird hovered between the blossoms, sipping from one and then the other.* **2.** *Fig.* to waver between choosing one thing and another. ☐ *I hovered between chocolate and vanilla.* ☐ *Uncle Jed hovered between life and death for days.*

hover over someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to remain suspended over someone or something. ☐ *The rescue helicopter hovered over the floating sailor.* ☐ *A huge blimp hovered over the football stadium.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to stay close to someone or something, waiting, ready to advise or interfere. ☐ *Please don't hover over me, watching what I am doing.* ☐ *I have to hover over this project or someone will mess it up.*

How about a lift? Go to Could I have a lift?

How about that! Isn't that surprising! ☐ *A: My husband and I just celebrated our sixtieth anniversary. B: How about that!*

How about you? What do you think?; What is your choice?; What about you? ☐ *Bob: How are you, Bill? Bill: I'm okay. How about you? Bob: Fine, fine. Let's do lunch sometime.* ☐ *Waiter: Can I take your order? Bill: I'll have the chef's salad and ice tea. Waiter (turning to Sue): How about you? Sue: I'll have the same.*

[how are] See also the entries beginning with *How're*.

How (are) you doing? a standard greeting inquiry. (The entry without *are* is informal and usually pronounced "How ya doin'?") ☐ *Jane: How are you doing? Mary: I'm okay. What about you? Jane: Likewise.* ☐ *Sally: Sue, this is my little brother, Bill. Sue: How are you, Bill? Bill: Okay. How you doing?*

How (are) you feeling? an inquiry into the state of someone's health. ☐ *Sally: How are you feeling? Bill: Oh, better, thanks. Sally: That's good.* ☐ *Bill: Hey, Jane! You been sick? Jane: Yeah. Bill: How you feeling? Jane: Not very well.*

How are you getting on? How are you managing?; How are you doing? ☐ *Jane: Well, Mary, how are you getting on? Mary: Things couldn't be better.* ☐ *Sue: Hey, John! How are you getting on? What's it like with all the kids out of the house? John: Things are great, Sue!*

How bout them apples? and **How do you like them apples?** *Rur.* What do you think of that? (Often used to express admiration, as in the first example; *bout* is short for *about*.) ☐ *Tom: I got first prize! Mary: Well! How bout them apples?* ☐ *Joe got a job as a newspaper reporter. How do you like them apples?*

How can I serve you? Go to How may I help you?

How come? How did that come about?; Why? ☐ *Sally: I have to go to the doctor. Mary: How come? Sally: I'm sick, silly.* ☐ *John: I have to leave now. Bill: How come? John: I just have to, that's all.* ☐ *Henry: How come you always put your right shoe on first? Rachel: Do I have to have a reason for something like that?*

How could you (do something**)?** How could you bring yourself to do a thing like that? (No answer is expected.) ☐ *Looking first at the broken lamp and then at the cat, Mary shouted, "How could you do that?"* ☐ *Tom: Then I punched him in the nose. Rachel: Oh, how could you?*

How do you do. a standard inquiry and response on greeting or meeting someone. (This expression never has rising question intonation, but the first instance of its use calls for a response. Sometimes the response does, in fact, explain how one is.) ☐ *Sally: Hello. How do you do. Bob: How do you do.* ☐ *Mary: How do you do. So glad to meet you, Tom. Tom: Thank you. How are you? Mary: Just fine. Your brother tells me you like camping. Tom: Yes. Are you a camper? Mary: Sort of.*

How do you know? 1. How did you get that information? (A straightforward question. The stress in on *know*.) ☐ *Bill: The train is about to pull into the station. Sue: How do you know? Bill: I hear it.* ☐ *Fred: I have to apologize for the coffee. It probably isn't very good. Jane: How do you know? Fred: Well, I made it.* **2.** *Inf.* What makes you think you are correct?; Why do you think you have enough

information to make this judgment? (Contentious. The heaviest stress is on *you*.) ☐ *Bill: This is the best recording made all year. Bob: How do you know? Bill: Well, I guess it's just my opinion.* ☐ *Tom: Having a baby can be quite an ordeal. Mary: How do you know? Tom: I read a lot.*

How do you like school? a phrase used to start a conversation with a school-age person. ☐ *Bob: Well, Billy, how do you like school? Billy: I hate it. Bob: Too bad.* ☐ *Mary: How do you like school? Bob: It's okay. Almost everything else is better, though.*

How do you like that? 1. *Lit.* Do you like that?; Is that to your liking? ☐ *Tom: There's a bigger one over there. How do you like that? Bill: It's better, but not quite what I want.* ☐ *Clerk: Here's one without pleats. How do you like that? Fred: That's perfect!* **2.** *Fig.* an expression said when administering punishment. ☐ *"How do you like that?" growled Tom as he punched John in the stomach.* ☐ *Bill (being spanked): Ouch! Ow! No! Mother (spanking): How do you like that? Bill: Not much. Mother: It hurts me more than it hurts you.* **3.** *Fig.* an expression said to show surprise at someone's bad or strange behavior or at some surprising event. ☐ *Tom (shouting at Sue): Can it! Go away! Sue (looking at Mary, aghast): Well, how do you like that! Mary: Let's get out of here!* ☐ *Fred: How do you like that? Sue: What's the matter? Fred: My wallet's gone.*

How do you like them apples? Go to How bout them apples?

How do you like this weather? something said when greeting someone. (A direct answer is expected.) ☐ *Henry: Hi, Bill. How do you like this weather? Bill: Lovely weather for ducks. Not too good for me, though.* ☐ *Alice: Gee, it's hot! How do you like this weather? Rachel: You can have it!*

How does that grab you? *Inf.* What do you think of that? (Pronounced more like *HowZAT grab ya?*.) ☐ *Looks good, okay? How does that grab you?* ☐ *How does that grab you? Enough salt?*

How dumb do you think I am? *Inf.* Your question is insulting. I am not stupid. (Shows agitation. An answer is not expected or desired.) ☐ *Mary: Are you really going to sell your new car? Sally: Come on! How dumb do you think I am?* ☐ *Tom: Do you think you could sneak into that theater without paying? Bob: Good grief! How dumb do you think I am?*

How goes it? *Inf.* How are you?; How are things going? ☐ *Nice to see you. How goes it?* ☐ *How goes it? Everything okay?*

How goes it (with you)? and **How's it going?** *Inf.* Hello, how are you? ☐ *Hi, Mary. How goes it with you?*

How (have) you been? a standard greeting inquiry. (See also How you is?) ☐ *Bob: Hi, Fred! How have you been? Fred: Great! What about you? Bob: Fine.* ☐ *Bob: How you been? Sue: Okay, I guess. You okay? Bob: Yup.*

[how is] See the entries beginning with *how's*.

How is someone **fixed for** something**?** Is there enough of something? ☐ *How are you fixed for ketchup? Do you have enough for the picnic?*

How is someone **getting along?** How is someone feeling or progressing? ☐ *How is your father getting along? Is he any better?*

How is someone **making out?** How is someone doing?; How is someone surviving or getting along? ☐ *How are you making out since your retirement?*

How many times do I have to tell you? *Inf.* a phrase admonishing someone who has forgotten instructions. ☐ *Mother: How many times do I have to tell you? Do your homework! Bill: Mom! I hate school!* ☐ *Mary: Clean this place up! How many times do I have to tell you? Bill: I'll do it! I'll do it!*

How may I help you? and **How can I help you?; How can I serve you?; May I help you?; What can I do for you?** In what way can I serve you? (Usually said by store clerks and food service personnel. The first question is the most polite, and the last is the least polite.) ☐ *Waiter: How can I help you? Sue: I'm not ready to order yet.* ☐ *Clerk: May I help you? Jane: I'm looking for a gift for my aunt.*

H

How's business? *Inf.* a question asked in a conversation about the state of someone's business or job. ☐ *Tom: Hello, Sally. How's business? Sally: Okay, I suppose.* ☐ *Bob: Good to see you, Fred. Fred: Hello, Bob. How's business? Bob: Just okay.*

How's by you? *Inf.* a greeting inquiry. ☐ *Fred: Hey, man! How's by you? John: Just fine, Fred.* ☐ *Bob: Hello. What's cooking? Bill: Nothing. How's by you?*

How's every little thing? *Inf.* How are you?; How are things with you? ☐ *Bill: Hello, Tom. Tom: Hi, Bill. How's every little thing? Bill: Couldn't be better.* ☐ *Bill: Hi, Mary. How's every little thing? Mary: Things are fine. How are you? Bill: Fine, thanks.*

How's it going? Go to How goes it (with you)?

How's (it) with you? *Inf.* a greeting inquiry. ☐ *Tom: Hey, man. How's with you? Bob: Great! And you? Tom: Okay.* ☐ *Bill: How's with you, old buddy? John: Can't complain. And you? Bill: Couldn't be better.*

How's my boy? and **How's the boy?** *Inf.* How are you? (Male to male and familiar. The speaker may outrank the person addressed.) ☐ *Bob: How's my boy? Bill: Hi, Tom. How are you?* ☐ *Fred: Hello, old buddy. How's the boy? Bob: Hi, there! What's cooking? Fred: Nothing much.*

How's that again? *Inf.* Please say that again.; I did not hear it all. ☐ *Sue: Would you like some coffee? Mary: How's that again? Sue: I said, would you like some coffee?* ☐ *Tom: The car door is frozen closed. Bob: How's that again? Tom: The car door is frozen closed.*

How's the boy? Go to How's my boy?

How's the family? and **How's your family?** an expression used on greeting to ask about the state of the person's immediate family. ☐ *Bob: Hello, Fred. How are you? Fred: Fine, thanks. Bob: How's the family? Fred: Great! How's yours? Bob: Couldn't be better.* ☐ *"How's the family?" asked Bill, greeting his boss.*

How's the wife? *Inf.* a phrase used by a man when inquiring about a male friend's wife. ☐ *Tom: Hi, Fred, how are you? Fred: Good. And you? Tom: Great! How's the wife? Fred: Okay, and yours? Tom: Couldn't be better.* ☐ *Bill: Hi, Bob. How's the wife? Bob: Doing fine. How's every little thing? Bill: Great!*

How's the world (been) treating you? *Inf.* How are you? ☐ *Hi, Jane. How's the world treating you?* ☐ *How's the world been treating you, Bill?*

How's tricks? *Inf.* a greeting inquiry. ☐ *Bob: Fred! How's tricks? Fred: How are you doing, Bob? Bob: Doing great!* ☐ *Bill: What's up? How's tricks? Bob: I can't complain. How are things going for you? Bill: Can't complain.*

How's your family? Go to How's the family?

How should I know? and **Don't ask me.** *Inf.* I do not know.; Why should I be expected to know? (Shows impatience or rudeness.) ☐ *Bill: Why is the orca called the killer whale? Mary: How should I know?* ☐ *Sally: Where did I leave my glasses? Tom: Don't ask me.*

How so? Please explain your remark. ☐ *A: You have to bring all the lawn furniture in. B: How so?*

H

How the mighty have fallen. *Prov.* a jovial or mocking way of remarking that someone is doing something that he or she used to consider very demeaning. ☐ *Jill: Ever since Fred's wife left him, he has had to cook his own meals. Jane: Well! How the mighty have fallen!* ☐ *When Dan lost his money, he had to sell his expensive sports car. Now he drives an ugly old sedan. How the mighty have fallen.*

how the other half lives *Fig.* how poorer people live; how richer people live. ☐ *Now that I am bankrupt I am beginning to understand how the other half lives.* ☐ *Most people don't care how the other half lives.*

How will I know you? Go to next.

How will I recognize you? and **How will I know you?** a question asked by one of two people who have agreed to meet for the first time in a large busy place. ☐ *Tom: Okay, I'll meet you at the west door of the station. Mary: Fine. How will I recognize you? Tom: I'll be wearing dark glasses.* ☐ *Bill: I'll meet you at six. How will I recognize you? Mary: I'll be carrying a brown umbrella.*

a **howdy and a half** *Rur.* a short distance. ☐ *Tom: Is it far to the dime store? Jane: Just a howdy and a half.* ☐ *Her house was a howdy and a half from the place where I grew up.*

howl at someone or something **1.** *Lit.* [for a canine] to bay at someone or something. ☐ *The dog howls at me when I play the trumpet.* ☐ *The wolves howled at the moon and created a terrible uproar.* **2.** and **hoot at** someone or something *Fig.* to yell out at someone or something. ☐ *The audience howled at the actors and upset them greatly.* ☐ *We hooted at the singer until he stopped.* **3.** *Fig.* to laugh very hard at someone or something. ☐ *Everyone just howled at Tom's joke.* ☐ *I howled at the story Alice told.*

howl someone **down**† and **hoot** someone **down**† *Fig.* to yell at or boo someone's performance; to force someone to stop talking by yelling or booing. ☐ *The audience howled the inept magician down.* ☐ *They howled down the musician.*

howl with something to yell or holler because of something, such as pain. ☐ *Roger howled with pain as the needle went into his arm.* ☐ *Mary howled with grief when she saw what had happened to her roses.*

How're things going? *Inf.* a standard greeting inquiry. ☐ *Bob: Hi, Fred! How're things going? Fred: Could be better. How's by you?* ☐ *Bill: How are things going? Mary: Fine, but I need to talk to you.*

How're things (with you)? *Inf.* a greeting inquiry. ☐ *Sally: How are you? Bill: Fine. How are things?* ☐ *Bill: How are things going? Mary: Fine. How are things with you?*

huddle around someone or something to gather or bunch around someone or something. ☐ *The girls huddled around Mary to hear what she had to say.* ☐ *The kids huddled around the cake and consumed it almost instantaneously.*

huddle someone **together** to bunch people together. ☐ *The scoutmaster huddled the boys together to give them a pep talk.* ☐ *Let's huddle everyone together to keep warm.*

huddle (up) (together) to bunch up together. ☐ *The children huddled up together to keep warm.* ☐ *They huddled up to keep warm.* ☐ *The newborn rabbits huddled together and squirmed hungrily.*

a **hue and cry** *Fig.* a loud public protest or opposition. (See also raise a hue and cry.) ☐ *There was a hue and cry when the city government tried to build houses on the playing field.* ☐ *The decision to close the local school started a real hue and cry.*

huff and puff *Fig.* to breathe very hard; to pant as one exerts effort. ☐ *John came up the stairs huffing and puffing.* ☐ *He huffed and puffed and finally got up the steep hill.*

hum with activity *Fig.* [for a place] to be busy with activity. ☐ *The kitchen hummed with activity as usual.* ☐ *Our main office was humming with activity during the busy season.*

hunch over [for someone] to bend over. ☐ *The wounded man hunched over and staggered to the window.* ☐ *He was hunched over with pain.*

hunch something **up**† to raise up or lift up some body part, usually the shoulders. ☐ *He hunched his shoulders up in his effort to get warm.* ☐ *He hunched up his shoulders to keep warm.*

hunch up to squeeze or pull the parts of one's body together. ☐ *He hunched up in a corner to keep warm.* ☐ *Why is that child hunched up in the corner?*

hung up (on someone or something**)** obsessed with someone or something; devoted to someone or something. ☐ *John is really hung up on Mary.* ☐ *She's hung up, too. See how she smiles at him.*

hunger after something *Fig.* to crave for something, not necessarily food. ☐ *I hunger after some old-fashioned gospel music.* ☐ *Mary hungered after something fattening, such as ice cream or even a baked potato with sour cream.*

hunger for someone or something to desire someone or something; to yearn for someone or something. ☐ *I hunger for you. I want you madly.* ☐ *He looked at the cake and you could see he was hungering for it.* ☐ *The prisoner was consumed with a hunger for freedom.*

Hunger is the best sauce. *Prov.* Everything tastes especially good when you are hungry, because you are so eager to eat it. ☐ *After our twenty-mile hike, we stopped at a little roadside restaurant. It may have been that they made the most delicious food in the world there, or it may have been that hunger was the best sauce.*

***hungry as a bear** and ***hungry as a hunter** *Cliché* very hungry. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *I'm as hungry as a bear. I could eat anything!* ☐ *We'd better have a big meal ready by*

the time Tommy gets home; he's always hungry as a hunter after soccer practice.

hungry as a hunter Go to previous.

hungry for something *Fig.* desiring something, often something other than food. ☐ *The orphan was hungry for the warmth of a family.* ☐ *Bill has become hungry for knowledge and is always studying.*

hunker down (on something**)** *Fig.* to squat down on one's heels, a stool, a stone, etc. ☐ *Jeff hunkered down on the pavement and watched the world go by.* ☐ *He hunkered down to take a rest.*

hunker down to something *Fig.* to apply oneself to something, to get started working at something. ☐ *I hunkered down to my chores, hoping to get them done before noon.* ☐ *If you want to get a good grade on that report, you'd better hunker down to it.*

hunt after someone or something to seek or pursue someone or something. ☐ *I'm hunting after a tall man with straight black hair.* ☐ *Elaine is hunting after a place to store her bicycle.*

hunt for someone or something **1.** to chase someone or something for sport. ☐ *The hunter hunted for grouse on the game preserve.* ☐ *Frank likes to hunt for deer.* **2.** to look for someone or something. ☐ *I am hunting for someone to help me with the piano.* ☐ *I am hunting for a new piano.*

hunt high and low (for someone or something**)** and **look high and low (for** someone or something**); search high and low (for** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to look carefully in every possible place for someone or something. ☐ *We looked high and low for the right teacher.* ☐ *The Smiths are searching high and low for the home of their dreams.*

hunt someone or something **down† 1.** to chase and catch someone or something. ☐ *I don't know where Amy is, but I'll hunt her down. I'll find her.* ☐ *I will hunt down the villain.* **2.** to locate someone or something. ☐ *I don't have a big enough gasket. I'll have to hunt one down.* ☐ *I have to hunt down a good dentist.*

hunt someone or something **out†** to find someone or something even if concealed. ☐ *We will hunt them all out and find every last one of those guys.* ☐ *We will hunt out all of them.* ☐ *They hunted out the murderer.*

hunt someone or something **up†** Go to **look** someone or something **up†.**

hunt through something to search through the contents of something; to search among things. ☐ *Joel hunted through his wallet for a dollar bill.* ☐ *I will have to hunt through my drawers for a pair of socks that match.*

hurl insults (at someone**)** and **throw insults (at** someone**)** *Fig.* to direct insults at someone; to say something insulting directly to someone. ☐ *Anne hurled an insult at Bob that made him very angry.* ☐ *If you two would stop throwing insults, we could have a serious discussion.*

hurl someone or something **at** someone or something to throw someone or something at someone or something. ☐ *The huge man actually hurled me at the tree.* ☐ *Larry hurled his shoe at me.*

hurl someone or something **down†** to throw or push someone or something downward to the ground. ☐ *Roger hurled the football down and it bounced away wildly.* ☐ *He hurled down the football in anger.* ☐ *The angry player hurled the ball down.*

hurl someone or something **into** something to throw someone or something into something. ☐ *She hurled the little boys into the storm cellar and went back to the house for the dog.* ☐ *Sharon hurled her belongings into the suitcase and jammed it closed.*

hurl someone or something **out (of** some place**)** and **hurl** someone or something **out†** to throw someone or something out of some place. ☐ *The manager hurled them out of the tavern.* ☐ *The manager hurled out the annoying people.*

hurl something **around†** to throw something, such as words, around carelessly. ☐ *Don't just go hurling foul words around like they didn't mean anything.* ☐ *You are just hurling around words!*

hurl something **away† (from** someone or something**)** to throw or push something away from someone or something. ☐ *She hurled the bricks away from the partially buried child.* ☐ *Hurl away the bricks as fast as you can.*

H

hurry away and **hurry off** to leave in a hurry. ☐ *I have to hurry away. Excuse me, please. It's an emergency.* ☐ *Don't hurry off. I need to talk to you.*

hurry back (to someone or something**)** to return to someone or something immediately or as fast as possible. ☐ *Oh, please hurry back to me as soon as you can.* ☐ *Hurry back!*

hurry down (to somewhere**)** to descend rapidly. ☐ *We need you down here in the basement. Hurry down.* ☐ *Please hurry down to the kitchen and help us.*

hurry off Go to **hurry away.**

hurry on Go to **hurry up.**

hurry one **on** one's **way** to help someone to hasten on. ☐ *Mary hurried Joel on his way so he could catch his train.* ☐ *There is no need to hurry me on my way. I am leaving.*

hurry someone or something **along** to make someone or something go faster. ☐ *Go hurry your mother along. We're almost late.* ☐ *Why don't you hurry the meeting along?*

hurry someone or something **in(to** something**)** to make someone or something go into something fast. ☐ *She hurried the chickens into the coop and closed the door on them for the night.* ☐ *It was beginning to rain, so Jerry hurried the children in.*

hurry someone or something **up** to make someone or something go or work faster. ☐ *Please hurry them all up. We are expecting to have dinner very soon.* ☐ *See if you can hurry this project up a little.*

hurry up and **hurry on** to move faster. ☐ *Hurry up! You're going to be late.* ☐ *Please hurry on. We have a lot to do today.*

hurry up and wait *Fig.* to do some things in a series fast and then have to wait a long time to do the next things in the series. (Originally military.) ☐ *That's all we ever do. Rush to stand in line somewhere. We just hurry up and wait all day long.* ☐ *Hurry up and wait! That's the army for you.*

hurt for someone or something Go to **ache for** someone or something.

hurt someone's **feelings** to cause someone emotional pain. ☐ *It hurts my feelings when you talk that way.* ☐ *I'm sorry. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings.*

hurtin' for something *Rur.* in need of something. ☐ *I went to fetch a bottle of cough syrup. My sick child was hurtin' for it.* ☐ *Jim was hurting for a new set of tools.*

hurtle through something to travel through something at great speed or with great force, possibly causing breakage. ☐ *A brick hurtled through the window and fell on the floor.* ☐ *The rocket hurtled through space toward Mars.*

a **hush fell over** someone or something *Fig.* a sudden silence enveloped something or a group. ☐ *As the conductor raised his arms, a hush fell over the audience.* ☐ *The coach shouted and a hush fell over the locker room.*

hush money *Fig.* money paid as a bribe to persuade someone to remain silent and not reveal certain information. ☐ *Bob gave his younger sister hush money so that she wouldn't tell Jane that he had gone to the movies with Sue.* ☐ *The crooks paid Fred hush money to keep their whereabouts secret.*

hush someone **up**† **1.** to make someone quiet. ☐ *Please hush the children up. I have a telephone call.* ☐ *Hush up those kids!* **2.** *Sl.* to kill someone. ☐ *The gang was afraid the witness would testify and wanted to hush him up.* ☐ *Mr. Big told Sam to hush up Richard.*

hush something **up**† *Fig.* to keep something a secret; to try to stop a rumor from spreading. ☐ *We just couldn't hush it up.* ☐ *We wanted to hush up the story, but there was no way to do it.*

hush up to be quiet; to get quiet; to stop talking. ☐ *You talk too much. Hush up!* ☐ *I want you to hush up and sit down!*

Hush your mouth! *Inf.* Please be quiet. (Not very polite.) ☐ *I've heard enough of that talk. Hush your mouth!* ☐ *Now, hush your mouth! You shouldn't talk like that!*

hustle and bustle *Fig.* confusion and business. ☐ *I can't stand the hustle and bustle of big cities.* ☐ *There is a lot of hustle and bustle in this office at the end of the fiscal year.*

hustle up to hurry up. ☐ *Hustle up, you guys. We have to get moving.* ☐ *Hustle up. We are almost late.*

hygienically challenged *Euph.* [of a person] dirty. (Jocular.) ☐ *Bill always smells terrible. He must be hygienically challenged.* ☐ *A couple of the kids in my class are, let us say, hygienically challenged.*

hype someone or something **(up)** to promote, advertise, or boost someone or something, often excessively. ☐ *No matter how much they hyped it up, it was still a very dull movie.* ☐ *Her agent hyped her up as a great actress.*

hypothesize about something to speculate about something; to make guesses about something. ☐ *Don't waste time hypothesizing about what happened.* ☐ *There is no point in hypothesizing about what happened when we don't know the actual truth.*

hypothesize on something to conjecture on the origin or nature of something. ☐ *We sat around hypothesizing on the origin of life.*

Ii

[I am] See the entries beginning with *I'm*.

I am not my brother's keeper. and **Am I my brother's keeper?** *Prov.* You are not responsible for another person's doings or whereabouts. (Biblical.) □ *Fred: Where's Robert? Jane: Am I my brother's keeper?* □ *Jill: How could you let Jane run off like that? Alan: I'm not my brother's keeper.*

I am so sure! *Inf.* I am right! □ *You are way rad! I am so sure!* □ *This is too much. I am so sure!*

(I) beg your pardon, but... and **Begging your pardon, but...** Please excuse me, but. (A very polite and formal way of interrupting, bringing something to someone's attention, or asking a question of a stranger.) □ *Rachel: Beg your pardon, but I think your right front tire is a little low. Henry: Well, I guess it is. Thank you.* □ *John: Begging your pardon, ma'am, but weren't we on the same cruise ship in Alaska last July? Rachel: Couldn't have been me.*

I believe so. Go to I guess (so).

I believe we've met. a phrase suggesting that one has already met a person to whom one is being introduced. □ *John: Alice, have you met Fred? Alice: Oh, yes, I believe we've met. How are you, Fred? Fred: Hello, Alice. Good to see you again.* □ *Alice: Tom, this is my cousin, Mary. Tom: I believe we've met. Nice to see you again, Mary. Mary: Hello, Tom. Good to see you again.*

I can accept that. *Inf.* I accept your evaluation as valid. □ *Bob: Now, you'll probably like doing the other job much better. It doesn't call for you to do the things you don't do well. Tom: I can accept that.* □ *Sue: On your evaluation this time, I noted that you need to work on telephone manners a little bit. Bill: I can accept that.*

I can live with that. *Inf.* That is something I can get used to.; That is all right as far as I'm concerned. □ *Sue: I want to do this room in green. Bill: I can live with that.* □ *Clerk: This one will cost twelve dollars more. Bob: I can live with that. I'll take it.*

(I) can too. You are wrong, I can.; Don't say I can't, because I can! (The response to *(You) cannot!*) □ *Sue: I'm going to the party. Mother: You can't. Sue: I can too. Mother: Cannot! Sue: Can too!* □ *"Can too!" protested Fred. "I can, if you can!"*

I can't accept that. *Inf.* I do not believe what you said.; I reject what you said. □ *Sue: The mechanic says we need a whole new engine. John: What? I can't accept that!* □ *Tom: You're now going to work on the night shift. You don't seem to be able to get along with some of the people on the day shift. Bob: I can't accept that. It's them, not me.*

(I) can't argue with that. *Inf.* I agree with what you said.; It sounds like a good idea. □ *Tom: This sure is good cake. Bob: Can't argue with that.* □ *Sue: What do you say we go for a swim? Fred: I can't argue with that.*

(I) can't beat that. and **(I) can't top that.** *Inf.* I cannot do better than that.; I cannot exceed that. □ *Henry: That was really great. I can't beat that. Rachel: Yes, that was really good.* □ *"What a great joke! I can't top that," said Kate, still laughing.*

I can't believe (that)! That is unbelievable! □ *Tom: What a terrible earthquake! All the houses collapsed, one by one. Jane: I can't believe that!* □ *Bill: This lake is nearly two hundred feet deep. Sue: I can't believe that! Bill: Take my word for it.*

(I) can't complain. and **(I have) nothing to complain about.** *Inf.* a response to a greeting inquiry asking how one is or how things are going for one. □ *Sue: How are things going? Mary: I can't complain.* □ *Mary: Hi, Fred! How are you doing? Fred: Nothing to complain about.*

I can't get over something! *Fig.* I am just so amazed! (The *something* can be a fact or a pronoun, such as *that* or *it*. Also with *just*, as in the examples.) □ *"I just can't get over the way everybody pitched in and helped," said Alice.* □ *Bob: The very idea, Sue and Tom doing something like that! Bill: I can't get over it!*

(I) can't help it. There is nothing I can do to help the situation.; That is the way it is.; There is nothing I can do. (Often in answer to a criticism.) □ *Mary: Your hair is a mess. Sue: It's windy. I can't help it.* □ *Fred: I wish you'd quit coughing all the time. Sally: I can't help it. I wish I could too.*

(I) can't rightly say. *Rur.* I do not know with any certainty. □ *Fred: When do you think we'll get there? Bill: Can't rightly say.* □ *Bob: Okay, how does this look to you? Bill: I can't rightly say. I've never seen anything like it before.*

(I) can't say (as) I do. Go to (I) can't say that I do.

(I) can't say (as) I have. Go to (I) can't say that I have.

(I) can't say for sure. *Inf.* I do not know with any certainty. □ *Tom: When will the next train come through? Jane: I can't say for sure.* □ *Bob: How can the driver hit so many potholes? Bill: Can't say for sure. I know he doesn't see too well, though.*

(I) can't say's I do. Go to (I) can't say that I do.

(I) can't say's I have. Go to (I) can't say that I have.

(I) can't say that I do. and **(I) can't say's I do.; (I) can't say (as) I do.** *Fig.* a vague response to a question about whether one remembers, knows about, likes, etc., something or someone. (The *say as* and *say's* are not standard English.) □ *Jane: You remember Fred, don't you? John: Can't say as I do.* □ *Bob: This is a fine looking car. Do you like it? Bill: I can't say I do.*

(I) can't say that I have. and **(I) can't say's I have.; (I) can't say (as) I have.** *Fig.* a vague response to a question about whether one has ever done something or been somewhere. (A polite way of saying no.) □ *Bill: Have you ever been to a real opera? Bob: I can't say as I have.* □

Mary: Well, have you thought about going with me to Fairbanks? Fred: I can't say I have, actually.

(I) can't thank you enough. *Fig.* a polite expression of gratitude. ☐ *Bill: Here's the book I promised you. Sue: Oh, good. I can't thank you enough.* ☐ *Tom: Well, here we are. Bill: Well, Tom. I can't thank you enough. I really appreciate the ride.*

(I) can't top that. Go to (I) can't beat that.

(I) changed my mind. I have reversed my previous decision or statement. ☐ *Tom: I thought you were going to Atlanta today. Bill: I changed my mind. I'm leaving tomorrow.* ☐ *Mary: I thought that this room was going to be done in red. Sue: I changed my mind.*

(I) could be better. Go to (Things) could be better.

(I) could be worse. Go to (Things) could be worse.

I could eat a horse! *Fig.* I am very hungry! ☐ *Where's dinner? I could eat a horse!*

(I) couldn't ask for more. *Inf.* Everything is fine, and there is no more that I could want. ☐ *Bill: Are you happy? Sue: Oh, Bill. I couldn't ask for more.* ☐ *Waiter: Is everything all right? Bill: Oh, yes, indeed. Couldn't ask for more.*

I couldn't ask you to do that. That is a very kind offer, but I would not ask you to do it. (This is not a refusal of the offer.) ☐ *Sally: Look, if you want, I'll drive you to the airport. Mary: Oh, Sally. I couldn't ask you to do that.* ☐ *Bill: I'll lend you enough money to get you through the week. Sally: I couldn't ask you to do that.*

(I) couldn't be better. *Inf.* I am fine. ☐ *John: How are you? Jane: Couldn't be better.* ☐ *Bill: I hope you're completely well now. Mary: I couldn't be better.*

(I) could(n't) care less. *Inf.* It doesn't matter to me. (The *less* bears the heaviest stress in both versions. Despite the apparent contradiction, either reading of this—both the affirmative and negative—usually have the same meaning. The exception would be in a sentence where the *could* bears the heaviest stress: I COULD *care less, [but I don't.].*) ☐ *Tom: The rain is coming! The carpet will get wet! Mary: I couldn't care less.* ☐ *Bill: I'm going to go in there and tell off the boss? John: I could care less.*

(I) couldn't help it. There was no way I could prevent it.; I was unable to prevent something from happening.; I was unable to control myself. ☐ *Sally: You let the paint dry with brush marks in it. Mary: I couldn't help it. The telephone rang.* ☐ *Fred: You got fingerprints all over the window. Mary: Sorry. Couldn't help it.*

I declare (to goodness)! *Rur.* What a surprise! ☐ *I declare to goodness! You certainly have grown since I saw you.* ☐ *Tom: Jim and Sally are going to get married. Mary: Well, I declare!*

I didn't catch the name. and **I didn't catch your name.** I don't remember your name.; I didn't hear your name when we were introduced. ☐ *Bill: How do you like this weather? Bob: It's not too good. By the way, I didn't catch your name. I'm Bob Wilson. Bill: I'm Bill Franklin. Bob: Nice to meet you, Bill.* ☐ *Bob: Sorry, I didn't catch the name. Bill: It's Bill, Bill Franklin. And you? Bob: I'm Bob Wilson.*

I didn't hear you. Go to next.

I didn't (quite) catch that (last) remark. and **I didn't get that.; I didn't hear you.** I didn't hear what you said, so would you please repeat it. ☐ *John: What did you say? I didn't quite catch that last remark. Jane: I said it's really a hot day.* ☐ *Bill: Have a nice time, if you can. Sally: I didn't get that. Bill: Have a nice time! Enjoy!*

I do believe. a way of affirming or reaffirming one's opinion. ☐ *Jim's in love with that gal, I do believe.* ☐ *Jane's store will do well, I do believe.*

I (do) declare! *Inf.* I am surprised to hear that! (Old-fashioned.) ☐ *Mary: I'm the new president of my sorority! Grandmother: I declare! That's very nice.* ☐ *A plane had landed right in the middle of the cornfield. The old farmer shook his head in disbelief. "I do declare!" he said over and over as he walked toward the plane.*

I don't believe it! an expression of amazement and disbelief. ☐ *Bob: Tom was just elected president of the trade association! Mary: I don't believe it!* ☐ *Bob: They're going to build a Disney World in Moscow. Sally: I don't believe it!*

(I) don't believe I've had the pleasure. *Fig.* an expression meaning *I haven't met you yet.* ☐ *Tom: I'm Tom Thomas. I don't believe I've had the pleasure. Bill: Hello. I'm Bill Franklin. Tom: Nice to meet you, Bill. Bill: Likewise.* ☐ *Bob: Looks like rain. Fred: Sure does. Oh, I don't believe I've had the pleasure. Bob: I'm Bob, Bob Jones. Fred: My name is Fred Wilson. Glad to meet you.*

I don't believe this! *Inf.* What is happening right now is unbelievable! ☐ *It's snowing in July! I don't believe this!* ☐ *I don't believe this! It can't be happening.*

I don't care. It doesn't matter to me. ☐ *Mary: Can I take these papers away? Tom: I don't care. Do what you want.* ☐ *Bill: Should this room be white or yellow? Sally: I don't care.*

(I) don't care if I do. *Rur.* Thank you.; I will. (See also (I) don't mind if I do.) ☐ *Tom: Have some more grits? Jane: Don't care if I do.* ☐ *Charlie: Come on in and set a spell. Mary: Don't care if I do.*

I don't have time to breathe. Go to next.

I don't have time to catch my breath. and **I don't have time to breathe.** *Fig.* I am very busy.; I have been very busy. ☐ *Henry: I'm so busy these days. I don't have time to catch my breath. Rachel: Oh, I know what you mean.* ☐ *Sue: Would you mind finishing this for me? Bill: Sorry, Sue. I'm busy. I don't have time to breathe.*

I don't know. a common expression of ignorance or of lacking an answer. ☐ *Father: Why can't you do better in school? Bill: I don't know.* ☐ *Bill: Well, what are we going to do now? Sue: I don't know.*

I don't mean maybe! *Inf.* I am very serious about my demand or order. ☐ *Bob: Do I have to do this? Sue: Do it now, and I don't mean maybe!* ☐ *Father: Get this place cleaned up! And I don't mean maybe! John: All right! I'll do it!*

(I) don't mind if I do. Yes, I would like to. ☐ *Sally: Have some more coffee? Bob: Don't mind if I do.* ☐ *Jane: Here are some lovely roses. Would you like to take a few blossoms with you? John: I don't mind if I do.*

I don't mind telling you (something). I want you to know something. ☐ *Tom: You have a beautiful garden. Mary: Thank you. But I don't mind telling you, it's an awful lot of work.* ☐ *I don't mind telling you, I was as pleased as Punch when my daughter won the race.*

I don't rightly know. *Rur.* I do not know. ☐ *Tom: When will Joe be getting back? Charlie: I don't rightly know.* ☐ *Jane: What's the difference between a first cousin and a first cousin once removed? Mary: I don't rightly know.*

(I) don't think so. Go to I guess not.

I don't understand (it). and **I can't understand (it).** I am confused and bewildered (by what has happened). ☐ *Bill: Everyone is leaving the party. Mary: I don't understand. It's still so early.* ☐ *Bob: The very idea, Sue and Tom doing something like that! Alice: It's very strange. I can't understand it.*

I don't want to alarm you, but and **I don't want to upset you, but** an expression used to introduce bad or shocking news or gossip. ☐ *Bill: I don't want to alarm you, but I see someone prowling around your car. Mary: Oh, goodness! I'll call the police!* ☐ *Bob: I don't want to upset you, but I have some bad news. Tom: Let me have it.*

I don't want to sound like a busybody, but *Fig.* an expression used to introduce an opinion or suggestion. ☐ *Bob: I don't want to sound like a busybody, but didn't you intend to have your house painted? Bill: Well, I guess I did.* ☐ *Bob: I don't want to sound like a busybody, but some of your neighbors wonder if you could stop parking your car on your lawn. Sally: I'll thank you to mind your own business!*

I don't want to upset you, but Go to I don't want to alarm you, but.

I don't want to wear out my welcome. *Fig.* a phrase said by a guest who doesn't want to be a burden to the host or hostess or to visit too often. ☐ *Mary: Good night, Tom. You must come back again soon. Tom: Thank you. I'd love to. I don't want to wear out my welcome, though.* ☐ *Bob: We had a fine time. Glad you could come to our little gathering. Hope you can come again next week. Fred: I don't want to wear out my welcome, but I'd like to come again. Bob: Good. See you next week. Bye. Fred: Bye.*

I don't wonder. Go to I'm not surprised.

I doubt it. I do not think so. ☐ *Tom: Think it will rain today? Sue: I doubt it.* ☐ *Sally: Think you'll go to New York? Mary: I doubt it.*

I doubt that. I do not believe that something is so. ☐ *Bob: I'll be there exactly on time. Sue: I doubt that.* ☐ *John: Fred says he can't come to work because he's sick. Jane: I doubt that.*

I expect Go to I guess.

I expect not. Go to I guess not.

I expect (so). Go to I guess (so).

I felt like a penny waiting for change. *Rur.* I felt worthless or helpless. ☐ *When I lost the race, I felt like a penny waiting for change.* ☐ *My best girl went off with someone else. I felt like a penny waiting for change.*

I guess and **I expect; I suppose; I suspect 1.** a phrase that introduces a supposition. (Frequently, in speech, *suppose* is reduced to *'spose*, and *expect* and *suspect* are reduced to *'spect*. The apostrophe is not always shown.) ☐ *Bob: I guess it's going to rain. Bill: Oh, I don't know. Maybe so, maybe not.* ☐ *Alice: I expect you'll be wanting to leave pretty soon. John: Why? It's early yet.* **2.** a vague way of answering 'yes'. ☐ *John: You want some more coffee? Jane: I 'spose.* ☐ *Alice: Ready to go? John: I spect.*

I guess not. and **(I) don't think so.; I expect not.; I suppose not.; I suspect not.; I think not.** a vague statement of negation. (More polite or gentle than simply saying *no*. Frequently, in speech, *suppose* is reduced to *'spose*, and *expect* and *suspect* are reduced to *'spect*. The apostrophe is not always shown.) ☐ *Bill: It's almost too late to go to the movie. Shall we try anyway? Mary: I guess not.* ☐ *Tom: Will it rain? Mary: I 'spect not.*

I guess (so). and **I believe so.; I expect (so).; I suppose (so).; I suspect (so).; I think so.** a vague expression of assent. (Frequently, in speech, *suppose* is reduced to *'spose*, and *expect* and *suspect* are reduced to *'spect*. The apostrophe is not always shown.) ☐ *Tom: Will it rain today? Bob: I suppose so.* ☐ *Sue: Happy? Bill: I 'spect. Sue: You don't sound happy. Bill: I guess not.*

(I) had a good time. Go to (I) had a nice time.

I had a lovely time. and **We had a lovely time.** a polite expression of thanks to the host or hostess. ☐ *Fred: Good-bye. I had a lovely time. Bill: Nice to have you. Do come again.* ☐ *Jane: We had a lovely time. Mary: Thank you and thanks for coming.*

(I) had a nice time. and **(I) had a good time.** the standard *good-bye and thank you* said to a host or hostess by a departing guest. ☐ *John: Thank you. I had a nice time. Sally: Don't stay away so long next time. Bye.* ☐ *Mary: Had a nice time. Bye. Got to run. Sue: Bye. Drive safely.*

(I) hate to eat and run. *Cliché* an apology made by someone who must leave a social event soon after eating. ☐ *Bill: Well, I hate to eat and run, but it's getting late. Sue: Oh, you don't have to leave, do you? Bill: I think I really must.* ☐ *Mary: Oh, my goodness! I hate to eat and run, but I have to catch an early plane tomorrow. Bob: Do you have to go? Mary: Afraid so.*

[I have] See also the entries beginning with *I've*.

(I have) no problem with that. That is okay with me. (See also No problem.) ☐ *Bob: Is it okay if I sign us up to play mixed doubles? Sally: I have no problem with that.* ☐ *Bill: It looks as though we will have to come back later. They're not open yet. Is that all right? Jane: No problem with that. When do they open?*

(I have) nothing to complain about. Go to (I) can't complain.

(I) have to be moving along. and **(I) have to move along.** It is time for me to leave. ☐ *Bill: Bye, now. Have to be moving along. Sally: See you later.* ☐ *Rachel: I have to be moving along. See you later. Andrew: Bye, now.* ☐ *Sally: It's late. I have to move along. Mary: If you must. Good-bye. See you tomorrow.*

(I) have to go now. an expression announcing the need to leave. ☐ *Fred: Bye, have to go now. Mary: See you later. Take it easy.* ☐ *Sue: Would you help me with this box? John: Sorry. I have to go now.*

(I) have to move along. Go to (I) have to be moving along.

(I) have to push off. Go to (I) have to shove off.

(I) have to run along. an expression announcing the need to leave. ☐ *Jane: It's late. I have to run along. Tom:*

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Okay, Jane. Bye. Take care. ☐ *John: Leaving so soon? Sally: Yes, I have to run along.*

(I) have to shove off. and **(I've) got to be shoving off.; (I've) got to shove off.; (I) have to push off.; (It's) time to shove off.** a phrase announcing one's need to depart. ☐ *John: Look at the time! I have to shove off! Jane: Bye, John.* ☐ *Jane: Time to shove off. I have to feed the cats. John: Bye, Jane.* ☐ *Fred: I have to push off. Bye. Jane: See you around. Bye.*

I have to wash a few things out†. 1. *Lit.* I have to wash things by hand, such as socks and underwear. ☐ *I have to wash a few things out before I go to bed.* ☐ *She has to wash out a few things.* **2.** *Fig.* I have to do something (that keeps me from spending time with you). ☐ *Jane: Time to shove off. I have to wash a few things out. John: Bye, Jane.* ☐ *Bill: I have to wash out a few things. Bob: Why don't you use a machine? Bill: Oh, I'll see you later.*

(I) haven't got all day. *Fig.* Please hurry.; I'm in a hurry. ☐ *Rachel: Make it snappy! I haven't got all day. Alice: Just take it easy. There's no rush.* ☐ *Henry: I haven't got all day. When are you going to finish with my car? Bob: As soon as I can.*

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(I) haven't seen you in a long time. *Fig.* an expression of greeting, often said as part of a series. ☐ *Mary: Hi, Fred! Haven't seen you in a long time. Fred: Yeah. Long time no see.* ☐ *Tom: Well, John. Is that you? I haven't seen you in a long time. John: Good to see you, Tom!*

(I) haven't seen you in a month of Sundays. *Rur.* I haven't seen you in a long time. ☐ *Tom: Hi, Bill. Haven't seen you in a month of Sundays! Bill: Hi, Tom. Long time no see.* ☐ *Bob: Well, Fred! Come right in! Haven't seen you in a month of Sundays! Fred: Good to see you, Uncle Bob.*

I hear what you're saying. and **I hear you. 1.** I know exactly what you mean! ☐ *John: The prices in this place are a bit steep. Jane: Man, I hear you!* ☐ *Bill: I think it's about time for the whole management team to resign! Andrew: I hear what you're saying.* **2.** an expression indicating that the speaker has been heard, but implying that there is no agreement. ☐ *Tom: Time has come to do something about that ailing dog of yours. Mary: I hear what you're saying.* ☐ *Jane: It would be a good idea to have the house painted. John: I hear what you're saying.*

I hear you. Go to previous.

I hope all goes well. I hope there is success. ☐ *Good luck on your operation tomorrow. I hope all goes well.*

(I) hope not. a phrase expressing the desire and wish that something is not so. ☐ *John: It looks like it's going to rain. Jane: Hope not.* ☐ *John: The Wilsons said they might come over this evening. Jane: I hope not. I've got things to do.*

(I) hope so. a phrase expressing the desire and wish that something is so. ☐ *Bill: Is this the right house? Bob: Hope so.* ☐ *John: Will you be coming to dinner Friday? Sue: Yes, I hope so.*

(I) hope to see you again (sometime). an expression said when taking leave of a person one has just met. ☐ *Bill: Nice to meet you, Tom. Tom: Bye, Bill. Nice to meet you. Hope to see you again sometime.* ☐ *Bill: Good talking to you. See you around. Bob: Yes, I hope to see you again. Good-bye.*

I just have this feeling. I have a premonition about this; I have a feeling about this. ☐ *I really don't know that something is wrong. I just have this feeling.* ☐ *I just have this feeling that she is not telling us the truth.*

(I) just want(ed) to mention something**.** Go to next.

(I) just want(ed) to say something**.** and **(I) just want(ed) to mention** something**.; (I) just want(ed) to tell you** something**.** a sentence opener that eases into a statement or question. (Can be followed by words like *say, ask, tell you, be,* and *come.*) ☐ *Rachel: I just wanted to say that we all loved your letter. Thank you so much. Andrew: Thanks. Glad you liked it.* ☐ *Rachel: I just wanted to tell you how sorry I am about your sister. Alice: Thanks. I appreciate it.* ☐ *Andrew: Just wanted to come by for a minute and say hello. Tom: Well, hello. Glad you dropped by.*

I kid you not. *Inf.* I am not kidding you.; I am not trying to fool you. ☐ *Bill: Whose car is this? Sally: It's mine. It really is. I kid you not.* ☐ *"I kid you not," said Tom, glowing. "I outran the whole lot of them."*

I know (just) what you mean. I know exactly what you are talking about, and I feel the same way about it. ☐ *John: These final exams are just terrible. Bob: I know just what you mean. John: Why do we have to go through this?* ☐ *Mary: What a pain! I hate annual inventories. John: I know what you mean. It's really boring.*

(I) love it! *Inf.* It is just wonderful. ☐ *Mary: What do you think of this car? Bill: Love it! It's really cool!* ☐ *Bob: What a joke, Tom! Jane: Yes, love it! Tom: Gee, thanks.*

I must be off. an expression announcing the speaker's intention of leaving. ☐ *Bill: It's late. I must be off. Bob: Me, too. I'm out of here.* ☐ *Sue: I must be off. John: The game's not over yet. Sue: I've seen enough.*

I must say good night. an expression announcing the speaker's intention of leaving for the night. ☐ *Jane: It's late. I must say good night. Bob: Can I see you again? Jane: Call me. Good night, Bob. Bob: Good night, Jane.* ☐ *Sue: I must say good night. Mary: Good night, then. See you tomorrow.*

I need it yesterday. *Inf.* an answer to the question "When do you need this?" (Indicates that the need is urgent.) ☐ *Bob: When do you need that urgent survey? Bill: I need it yesterday.* ☐ *Mary: Where's the Wilson contract? Sue: Do you need it now? Mary: I need it yesterday! Where is it?*

(I) never heard of such a thing! an expression of amazement and disbelief. (Compare this with **Well, I never!**) ☐ *Bill: The company sent out a representative the same day I called to examine the new sofa and see what the problem was with the wobbly leg. Jane: I've never heard of such a thing! That's very unusual.* ☐ *Bill: The tax office is now open on Sunday! Sue: Never heard of such a thing!*

(I) never thought I'd see you here! I am surprised to see you here. ☐ *Tom: Hi, Sue! I never thought I'd see you here! Sue: Hi, Tom. I was thinking the same thing about you.* ☐ *Bill: Well, Tom Thomas. I never thought I'd see you here! Tom: Likewise. I didn't know you liked opera.*

I owe you one. *Inf.* Thank you, now I owe you a favor.; I owe you something similar in return. ☐ *Bob: I put the extra copy of the book on your desk. Sue: Thanks, I owe you*

one. ☐ *Bill: Let me pay for your drink. Bob: Thanks a lot, I owe you one.*

I promise you! *Inf.* I am telling you the truth! (Compare this with Trust me!) ☐ *John: Things will work out, I promise you! Jane: Okay, but when?* ☐ *Sue: I'll be there exactly when I said. Bob: Are you sure? Sue: I promise you, I'm telling the truth!*

(I) read you loud and clear. 1. *Lit.* a response used by someone communicating by radio stating that the hearer understands the transmission clearly. (See also Do you read me?) ☐ *Controller: This is Aurora Center, do you read me? Pilot: Yes, I read you loud and clear.* ☐ *Controller: Left two degrees. Do you read me? Pilot: Roger. Read you loud and clear.* **2.** *Fig.* I understand what you are telling me. (Used in general conversation, not in radio communication.) ☐ *Bob: Okay. Now, do you understand exactly what I said? Mary: I read you loud and clear.* ☐ *Mother: I don't want to have to tell you again. Do you understand? Bill: I read you loud and clear.*

(I) really must go. an expression announcing or repeating one's intention to depart. ☐ *Bob: It's getting late. I really must go. Jane: Good night, then. See you tomorrow.* ☐ *Sally: I really must go. John: Do you really have to? It's early yet.*

I rest my case. 1. *Lit.* I have completed the presentation of my argument. (Said by a lawyer.) ☐ *Clearly the defendant is guilty. I rest my case.* **2.** *Fig.* What you just heard sums up my point of view. ☐ *Your remark just supported my position! I rest my case.*

I spoke out of turn. *Fig.* I said the wrong thing.; I should not have said what I did. (An apology.) ☐ *Bill: You said I was the one who did it. Mary: I'm sorry. I spoke out of turn. I was mistaken.* ☐ *Bill: I seem to have said the wrong thing. Bob: You certainly did. Bill: I spoke out of turn, and I'm sorry.*

I spoke too soon. 1. *Fig.* I am wrong.; I spoke before I knew the facts. ☐ *Bill: I know I said I would, but I spoke too soon. Sue: I thought so.* ☐ *John: You said that everything would be all right. Jane: I spoke too soon. That was before I learned that you had been arrested.* **2.** *Fig.* What I had said was just now contradicted. ☐ *Bob: It's beginning to brighten up. I guess it won't rain after all. John: I'm glad to hear that. Bob: Whoops! I spoke too soon. I just felt a raindrop on my cheek.* ☐ *Bill: Thank heavens! Here's John now. Bob: No, that's Fred. Bill: I spoke too soon. He sure looked like John.*

I suppose Go to I guess.

I suppose not. Go to I guess not.

I suppose (so). Go to I guess (so).

I suspect Go to I guess.

I suspect not. Go to I guess not.

I suspect (so). Go to I guess (so).

I swan! *Rur.* What a surprise! ☐ *Well, I swan! I didn't expect to see you here!* ☐ *Tom: I hear Charlie just won a thousand dollars! Jane: I swan!*

I think not. Go to I guess not.

I think so. Go to I guess (so).

(I was) just wondering. a comment made after hearing a response to a previous question. (See examples for typical patterns.) ☐ *John: Do you always keep your film in the refrigerator? Mary: Yes, why? John: I was just wondering.* ☐ *Bob: Did this cost a lot? Sue: I really don't think you need to know that. Bob: Sorry. Just wondering.*

I was up all night with a sick friend. an unlikely, but popular excuse for not being where one was supposed to be the night before. ☐ *Bill: Where in the world were you last night? Mary: Well, I was up all night with a sick friend.* ☐ *Mr. Franklin said rather sheepishly, "Would you believe I was up with a sick friend?"*

I wasn't brought up in the woods to be scared by owls. *Rur.* I am not foolish or easily frightened. ☐ *His threats don't scare me. I wasn't brought up in the woods to be scared by owls.* ☐ *Mary: You'll be sorry you ever crossed me. Jane: I wasn't brought up in the woods to be scared by owls.*

[I will] See the entries beginning with *I'll.*

I wish I'd said that. a comment of praise or admiration for someone's clever remark. ☐ *Mary: The weed of crime bears bitter fruit. Sue: I wish I'd said that. Mary: I wish I'd said it first.* ☐ *John: Tom is simply not able to see through the airy persiflage of Mary's prolix declamation. Jane: I wish I'd said that. John: I'm sorry I did.*

(I) wonder if a phrase introducing a hypothesis. ☐ *Henry: I wonder if I could have another piece of cake. Sue: Sure. Help yourself.* ☐ *Andy: Wonder if it's stopped raining yet. Rachel: Why don't you look out the window?* ☐ *Andy: I wonder if I'll pass algebra. Father: That thought is on all our minds.*

(I) won't breathe a word (of it). and **(I) won't tell a soul.** *Fig.* I will not tell anyone your secret. ☐ *Bill: Don't tell anybody, but Sally is getting married. Mary: I won't breathe a word of it.* ☐ *Alice: The Jacksons are going to have to sell their house. Don't spread it around. Mary: I won't tell a soul.*

I won't give up without a fight. *Fig.* I will not give in easily. (Compare this with Don't give up too eas(il)y.) ☐ *Sue: Stick by your principles, Fred. Fred: Don't worry, I won't give up without a fight.* ☐ *Bob: The boss wants me to turn the Wilson project over to Tom. Sue: How can he do that? Bob: I don't know. All I know is that I won't give up without a fight.*

(I) won't tell a soul. Go to (I) won't breathe a word (of it).

[I would] See also the entries beginning with *I'd.*

(I) would if I could(, but I can't). I simply can't do it. ☐ *Jane: Can't you fix this yourself? John: I would if I could, but I can't.* ☐ *Bob: Can you go to the dance? Hardly anyone is going. Alice: Would if I could.*

I would like you to meet someone. and **I would like to introduce you to** someone. an expression used to introduce one person to another. (The word *someone* can be used as the someone.) ☐ *Mary: I would like you to meet my Uncle Bill. Sally: Hello, Uncle Bill. Nice to meet you.* ☐ *Tom: I would like to introduce you to Bill Franklin. John: Hello, Bill. Glad to meet you. Bill: Glad to meet you, John.*

(I) wouldn't bet on it. and **(I) wouldn't count on it.** *Fig.* I do not believe that something will happen. (Also with *that* or some specific happening. See examples.) ☐ *John: I'll be a vice president in a year or two. Mary: I wouldn't bet on that.* ☐ *John: I'll pick up a turkey on the*

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day before Thanksgiving. Mary: Did you order one ahead of time? John: No. Mary: Then I wouldn't count on it.

(I) wouldn't count on it. Go to previous.

(I) wouldn't if I were you. *Fig.* a polite way to advise someone not to do something. ☐ *Mary: Do you think I should trade this car in on a new one? Sally: I wouldn't if I were you.* ☐ *Bob: I'm going to plant nothing but corn this year. Sue: I wouldn't if I were you. Bob: Why? Sue: It's better to diversify.*

(I) wouldn't know. There is no way that I would know the answer to that question. ☐ *John: When will the flight from Miami get in? Jane: Sorry, I wouldn't know.* ☐ *Bob: Are there many fish in the Amazon River? Mary: Gee, I wouldn't know.*

I wouldn't touch it with a ten-foot pole. *Cliché* I would not have anything to do with it under any circumstances. (Said about something you think is untrustworthy, as in the first example, or in response to a remark that seems to invite a nasty reply, as in the second example. The British version is "I would not touch it with a bargepole.") ☐ *Jill: This advertisement says I can buy land in Florida for a small investment. Do you think I should? Jane: I wouldn't touch it with a ten-foot pole.* ☐ *Jane: Can you believe this? Jill said she thinks I'm bossy. You don't think I'm bossy, do you? Mary: I wouldn't touch that with a ten-foot pole.*

I wouldn't wish that on a dog. Go to next.

I wouldn't wish that on my worst enemy. and **I wouldn't wish that on a dog.** *Fig.* I would not wish that to happen to even the worst or lowliest person. ☐ *A skunk sprayed him! I wouldn't wish that on my worst enemy.* ☐ *What a hideous disease! I wouldn't wish that on a dog.*

ice over [for water] to freeze and develop a covering of ice. ☐ *I can't wait for the river to ice over so we can do some ice fishing.*

ice something **down†** to cool something with ice. ☐ *They are icing the champagne down now.* ☐ *They are icing down the champagne now.*

ice something **up†** to cause something to become icy. ☐ *I hope the cold doesn't ice the roads up.* ☐ *The wind and rain iced up the roads.*

ice up to become icy. ☐ *Are the roads icing up?*

the **icing on the cake** *Fig.* an extra enhancement. ☐ *Oh, wow! A tank full of gas in my new car. That's icing on the cake!* ☐ *Your coming home for a few days was the icing on the cake.*

(I'd be) happy to (do something**).** and **Be happy to (**do something**).** I would do it with pleasure. (The *something* is often replaced with a description of an activity.) ☐ *John: I tried to get the book you wanted, but they didn't have it. Shall I try another store? Mary: No, never mind. John: I'd be happy to give it a try.* ☐ *Alice: Would you fix this, please? John: Be happy to.*

I'd bet money (on it). *Fig.* I am certain. ☐ *Charlie: Do you think Joe's planning to sell his house? Tom: I'd bet money on it.* ☐ *I'd bet money that Jane will get that job.*

(I'd) better be going. and **(I'd) better be off.** an expression announcing the need to depart. ☐ *Bob: Better be going. Got to get home. Bill: Well, if you must, you must. Bye.* ☐ *Fred: It's midnight. I'd better be off. Henry: Okay. Bye, Fred.* ☐ *Henry: Better be off. It's starting to snow. John: Yes, it looks bad out.*

(I'd) better get moving. *Inf.* an expression announcing the need to depart. ☐ *Jane: It's nearly dark. Better get moving. Mary: Okay. See you later.* ☐ *Bob: I'm off. Good night. Bill: Look at the time! I'd better get moving too.*

(I'd) better get on my horse. *Inf.* an expression indicating that it is time that one departed. ☐ *John: It's getting late. Better get on my horse. Rachel: Have a safe trip. See you tomorrow.* ☐ *"I'd better get on my horse. The sun'll be down in an hour," said Sue, sounding like a cowboy.*

(I'd) better hit the road. Go to **(It's) time to hit the road.**

I'd (just) as leave do something I would rather do something. ☐ *Tom: Do you want to go to Joe's party? Jane: We can if you want to, but I'd as leave not.* ☐ *I'd just as leave eat dinner at home tonight.*

I'd (just) as soon (as) do something I would prefer to do something. ☐ *Tom: Why don't you give Joe a call? Jane: I'd as soon as you did it.* ☐ *I'd just as soon we didn't stay here long.*

I'd like (for) you to meet someone. an expression used to introduce someone to someone else. (The *someone* can be a person's name, the name of a relationship, or the word *someone*.) ☐ *Tom: Sue, I'd like you to meet my brother, Bill. Sue: Hi, Bill. How are you? Bill: Great! How are you?* ☐ *Bob: Hello, Fred. I'd like for you to meet someone. This is Bill. Fred: Hello, Bill. I'm glad to meet you. Bill: Hello, Fred. My pleasure.*

I'd like (to have) a word with you. and **Could I have a word with you?** I need to speak to you briefly in private. (The alternate entry is also used with *can* or *may* in place of *could*.) ☐ *Bob: Can I have a word with you? Sally: Sure. I'll be with you in a minute.* ☐ *Sally: Tom? Tom: Yes. Sally: I'd like to have a word with you. Tom: Okay. What's it about?*

I'd like to speak to someone**, please.** the standard way of requesting to speak with a specific person on the telephone or in an office. ☐ *Sue (answering the phone): Hello? Bill: Hello, this is Bill Franklin. I'd like to speak to Mary Gray. Sue: I'll see if she's in.* ☐ *"I'd like to speak to Tom," said the voice at the other end of the line.*

I'd rather face a firing squad than do something *Fig.* I would prefer to stand and be executed by gunfire than to do something. ☐ *I'd rather face a firing squad than go shopping the day after Christmas.*

identify (oneself**) with** someone or something to classify oneself with someone or something; to relate to someone or something; to see part of oneself represented in someone or something. ☐ *I identify myself with the others.* ☐ *I identify with the birds and animals of the forest.*

identify someone **as** someone **1.** to determine that someone is a certain person. ☐ *Can you identify Fred as the perpetrator?* ☐ *Fred was identified as the thief.* **2.** to reveal one's identity or name. ☐ *Will you identify the man as Tom?* ☐ *The stranger identified himself as a meter reader from the gas company.*

identify someone or something **by** something to recognize someone or something because of something. ☐ *Can you*

identify your baggage by any special marks? ☐ *You can identify me by the red carnation in my lapel.*

identify someone or something **with** someone or something to associate people and things, in any combination. ☐ *I tend to identify Wally with big cars.* ☐ *We usually identify green with grass.* ☐ *We tend to identify big cars with greedy people.*

idle about to loiter around, doing nothing. ☐ *Please don't idle about. Get busy!* ☐ *Andy is idling about today.*

An **idle brain is the devil's workshop.** *Prov.* People who have nothing worthwhile to think about will usually think of something bad to do. ☐ *We need to figure out something constructive for Tom to do in the afternoons after school. An idle brain is the devil's workshop.*

Idle folk have the least leisure. Go to next.

Idle people have the least leisure. and **Idle folk have the least leisure.** *Prov.* If you are not energetic and hardworking, you will never have any free time, since you will have to spend all your time finishing your work. ☐ *My grandmother always told me not to dawdle, since idle people have the least leisure.*

idle something **away**† *Fig.* to waste one's time in idleness; to waste a period of time, such as an afternoon, evening, one's life. ☐ *She idled the afternoon away and then went to a party.* ☐ *Don't idle away the afternoon.*

Idleness is the root of all evil. *Prov.* If you have no useful work to do, you will think of harmful things to do in order to amuse yourself. (Compare this with Money is the root of all evil.) ☐ *Child: Why do you make me do so many chores? Father: Idleness is the root of all evil.*

idolize someone or something **as** something to worship or adore someone or something as being something. ☐ *We all idolized Jim as our hero.* ☐ *They idolized wealth as a cure for all their ills.*

If a thing is worth doing, it's worth doing well. *Prov.* If you decide to do something, do it as well as you possibly can. ☐ *Jill: Do we have to wash the walls before we paint them? It seems like such a lot of extra work. Fred: Yes, we have to. The paint won't stick properly otherwise. If a thing is worth doing, it's worth doing well.* ☐ *Bruce never did sloppy work. He believed that if something is worth doing, it's worth doing well.*

If a toady frog had wings, he wouldn't bump his ass. Go to If frogs had wheels, they wouldn't bump their butts.

If anything can go wrong, it will. *Prov.* Every possible disaster will occur, whether you have prepared for it or not. (This saying is also referred to as "Murphy's Law.") ☐ *Fred: Your car should be fine now, as long as the battery doesn't die. Alan: Then we'd better put a new battery in. If anything can go wrong, it will; so let's make sure it can't go wrong.*

if anything should happen and **if anything happens** *Euph.* If a disaster or emergency happens. ☐ *I'll give you the phone number of my hotel, so that you can reach me if anything happens.* ☐ *If anything should happen, I want you to look after my children.*

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. *Prov.* You have to keep trying until you get what you want. ☐ *Jill: I spent all morning trying to fix the computer, and it still won't work. Jane: If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.* ☐ *You'll learn that dance step eventually. If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.*

If frogs had wheels, they wouldn't bump their butts. and **If a toady frog had wings, he wouldn't bump his ass.** *Rur.* It is useless to wish for impossible things. (Use caution with *ass.*) ☐ *Tom: If I had two hundred thousand dollars, I could buy that farm. Jane: Yeah, and if frogs had wheels, they wouldn't bump their butts.* ☐ *Charlie: If I were rich and famous, I'd make people listen to me. Bill: If a toady frog had wings, he wouldn't bump his ass.*

If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent Him. *Prov.* People need a deity to worship. (This is an English translation of a quote from Voltaire. It is often parodied, using a person's name instead of *God* and implying that the person is somehow necessary.) ☐ *The atheist tried to convince Jerry that God does not exist, and that people should not waste their time worshiping Him. "But you can't stop people from worshiping God," Jerry replied. "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent Him."* ☐ *The unscrupulous mayor was such a convenient scapegoat for the city's problems that if she had not existed, it would have been necessary to invent her.*

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if I were you an expression introducing a piece of advice. ☐ *John: If I were you, I'd get rid of that old car. Alice: Gee, I was just getting to like it.* ☐ *Henry: I'd keep my thoughts to myself, if I were you. Bob: I guess I should be careful about what I say.*

If ifs and ands were pots and pans (there'd be no work for tinkers' hands). *Prov.* Wishing for things is useless. (Often said in reply to someone who says something beginning with "If only. . . .") ☐ *Daughter: If only we didn't have to move out of town, I'd be the happiest girl in the world. Grandmother: If ifs and ands were pots and pans, there'd be no work for tinkers' hands.*

If it ain't chickens, it's feathers. *Rur.* There are always problems.; That is life. ☐ *Now that I'm finally done with school, I've got to worry about getting a job. If it ain't chickens, it's feathers.* ☐ *He's got plenty of money now, but he's in such bad health he can't enjoy it. If it ain't chickens, it's feathers.*

If it was a snake it woulda bit you. *Rur.* It was very close to you. ☐ *Jane: Where's the phone book? Tom: Right there! If it was a snake it woulda bit you.* ☐ *Bill: I can't find my other shoe. I've looked all over the house. Mary: It's right behind you. If it was a snake it would have bit you.*

if I've told you once, I've told you a thousand times *Fig.* an expression that introduces a scolding, usually to a child. ☐ *Mother: If I've told you once, I've told you a thousand times, don't leave your clothes in a pile on the floor! Bill: Sorry.* ☐ *"If I've told you once, I've told you a thousand times, keep out of my study!" yelled Bob.*

if looks could kill a catchphrase said when someone makes a frown at someone or when someone casts a dirty look. ☐ *Did you see the way she looked at me? If looks could kill....* ☐ *If looks could kill.... What a nasty glare she gave me.*

if my memory serves me correctly *Fig.* if I have remembered it correctly... ☐ *If my memory serves me correctly, you are the cousin of my closest friend.*

if not if that is not [the case]; if that is not so. ☐ *If not cleaned, the clock will stop running.* ☐ *He should be here at noon. If not, we will eat without him.*

if one **knows what's good for** one *Fig.* one had better do what is expected of one. ☐ *You'd better be on time if you know what's good for you.* ☐ *If you know what's good for you, you'll call and apologize.*

if one's **a day** *Fig.* a phrase attached to an expression of someone's age. ☐ *She's fifty if she's a day!* ☐ *I'm sure he's forty-five if he's a day.*

if push comes to shove Go to when push comes to shove.

if so if that is [the case]; if that is so. ☐ *She might be late. If so, we will eat without her.* ☐ *She is supposed to be all right. If so, we have nothing to worry about.*

If that don't beat a pig a-pecking! *Rur.* That's amazing! ☐ *Tom: A Republican won the Senate seat! Jane: If that don't beat a pig a-pecking!* ☐ *Mary: Jim lost twenty pounds in one month. Charlie: If that don't beat a pig a-pecking!*

If that don't beat all! and **That beats everything!; Don't that (just) beat all!** *Rur.* That surpasses everything!; That is amazing!; That takes the cake! (The grammar error, *that don't* is built into this catchphrase.) ☐ *Tom: The mayor is kicking the baseball team out of the city. Bill: If that don't beat all!* ☐ *John: Now, here's a funny thing. South America used to be attached to Africa. Fred: That beats everything! John: Yeah.*

if the going gets tough Go to when the going gets tough.

If the mountain will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain. *Prov.* If things do not change the way you want them to, you must adjust to the way they are. (*Mohammed* is often used instead of *Mahomet.* Also *the mountain has come to Mahomet,* something or someone that you would not expect to travel has arrived. There are many variations of this proverb. See the examples.) ☐ *The president won't see me so I will have to go to his office. If the mountain will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain.* ☐ *If Caroline can't leave the hospital on her birthday, we'll have to take her birthday party to the hospital. If the mountain won't come to Mahomet, Mahomet will have to go to the mountain.* ☐ *It's true I don't usually leave my home, but if you can't come to see me, I'll have to come see you. The mountain will come to Mohammed.*

If the shoe fits(, wear it). *Prov.* An unflattering remark applies to you, so you should accept it. (Slightly rude.) ☐ *Fred: Hey, Jill, how's your love life? Jill: I don't like busybodies, Fred. Fred: Are you calling me a busybody? Jane: If the shoe fits, wear it.* ☐ *Ellen: The professor told me I don't write well! Bill: If the shoe fits, Ellen.*

if the truth were known *Prov.* if people knew how something really was, instead of how it appears to be. ☐ *If the truth were known, people wouldn't shop at that store. Its owners aren't as honest as they seem.* ☐ *Sam: You're always polite to Fred, but you don't really like him, do you? Alan: Well, no, if the truth were known.*

if (the) worst comes to (the) worst *Prov.* in the worst possible circumstances; if the worst possible thing should happen. ☐ *We should be able to catch the four-thirty train, but if the worst comes to the worst, we could get a taxi and still get into town on time.* ☐ *Of course, I hope that your wife's health recovers, but if worst comes to worst, I want you to know that we'd be happy to have you stay with us.*

If there's anything you need, don't hesitate to ask. a polite phrase offering help in finding something or by providing something. (Often said by a host or by someone helping someone settle into something. See also If you don't see what you want, please ask (for it).) ☐ *Mary: This looks very nice. I'll be quite comfortable here. Jane: If there's anything you need, don't hesitate to ask.* ☐ *"If there is anything you need, don't hesitate to ask," said the room clerk.*

If two ride on a horse, one must ride behind. *Prov.* When two people do something together, one of them will be the leader and the other will have to be subordinate. ☐ *Jane: How come every time we get together, we always do what you want to do, and never do what I want to do? Ellen: Well, dear, if two ride on a horse, one must ride behind.*

If wishes were horses, then beggars would ride. *Prov.* People make a lot of wishes, but wishing is useless. ☐ *Jill: If I were Queen of the World, I would make sure that everyone had enough to eat. Jane: And if wishes were horses, then beggars would ride.* ☐ *Alan: I sure wish I had one of those expensive cameras. Jane: If wishes were horses, then beggars would ride.*

If you can't be good, be careful. *Prov.* If you are going to do immoral things, make sure they are not dangerous.; If you are going to do something immoral, make sure to keep it secret. (Sometimes used as a flippant way of saying good-bye.) ☐ *Be a good girl on your vacation trip. Or if you can't be good, be careful.* ☐ *Ernest likes to close his letters with, "If you can't be good, be careful."*

If you can't beat them, join them. and **If you can't lick 'em, join 'em.** *Prov.* If you have to give up fighting some group because you can't win, band together with them. (The version with *lick* is informal.) ☐ *Jill: I just got a kitten. Jane: I can't believe it! You used to hate people who owned cats. Jill: If you can't beat them, join them.* ☐ *Alan: I hear you're a Republican now. Fred: Yeah, I figured, if you can't lick 'em, join 'em.*

If you can't lick 'em, join 'em. Go to previous.

If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen. *Prov.* If the pressures of some situation are too much for you, you should leave that situation. (Somewhat insulting; implies that the person addressed cannot tolerate pressure.) ☐ *Alan: I didn't think being a stockbroker could be so stressful. Fred: If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen.* ☐ *Jill: This exercise class is too tough; the teacher should let us slow down. Jane: If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen.*

If you don't like it, (you can) lump it. *Prov.* Things cannot be changed to suit your preferences. ☐ *We're having fish for dinner tonight. And if you don't like it, you can lump it.* ☐ *We're going to go visit Aunt Sally this weekend. If you don't like it, lump it.*

If you don't make mistakes, you don't make anything. *Prov.* If you try to do something, you will likely make mistakes.; The only way to make no mistakes is to avoid trying to do anything. (Can be used to console someone who has made a mistake.) ☐ *Alan: I'm sorry*

there's no dessert. I tried to make a cake, but I messed it up. Jane: That's OK, dear; if you don't make mistakes, you don't make anything. ☐ *It's a shame that you ruined the sweater you were making, but if you don't make mistakes, you don't make anything.*

If you don't mind! 1. an expression that rebukes someone for some minor social violation. ☐ *When Bill accidentally sat on Mary's purse, which she had placed in the seat next to her, she said, somewhat angrily, "If you don't mind!"* ☐ *Bill (pushing his way in front of Mary in the checkout line): Excuse me. Mary: If you don't mind! I was here first! Bill: I'm in a hurry. Mary: So am I!* **2.** a polite way of introducing a request. ☐ *Bill: If you don't mind, could you move a little to the left? Sally: No problem. (moving) Is that all right? Bill: Yeah. Great! Thanks!* ☐ *Jane: If you don't mind, could I have your broccoli? John: Help yourself.* **3.** a vague phrase answering yes to a question that asks whether one should do something. ☐ *Tom: Do you want me to take these dirty dishes away? Mary: If you don't mind.* ☐ *Bill: Shall I close the door? Sally: If you don't mind.*

If you don't see what you want, please ask (for it). and **If you don't see what you want, just ask (for it).** a polite phrase intended to help people get what they want. (See also If there's anything you need, don't hesitate to ask.) ☐ *Clerk: May I help you? Sue: I'm just looking. Clerk: If you don't see what you want, please ask.* ☐ *Clerk: I hope you enjoy your stay at our resort. If you don't see what you want, just ask for it. Sally: Great! Thanks.*

if you get my drift *Fig.* if you understand what I am saying or implying. (Akin to get someone's drift.) ☐ *I've heard enough talk and seen enough inaction—if you get my drift.*

if you know what's good for you *Fig.* if you know what will be to your benefit; if you know what will keep you out of trouble. ☐ *Mary: I see that Jane has put a big dent in her car. Sue: You'll keep quiet about that if you know what's good for you.* ☐ *Sally: My teacher told me I had better improve my spelling. Bill: If you know what's good for you, you'd better do it too.*

If you lie down with dogs, you will get up with fleas. *Prov.* If you associate with bad people, you will acquire their faults. ☐ *Granddaughter: It's not fair. I'm starting to get a bad reputation just because I'm friends with Suzy and she has a bad reputation. Grandmother: It's only natural. People think that if you lie down with dogs, you will get up with fleas.*

if you must All right, if you have to. ☐ *Sally: It's late. I have to move along. Mary: If you must. Good-bye. See you tomorrow.* ☐ *Alice: I'm taking these things with me. Jane: If you must, all right. They can stay here, though.*

If you play with fire, you get burned. *Prov.* If you do something dangerous, you will get hurt. ☐ *Joe said, "I have no sympathy for race-car drivers who get injured. They should know that if you play with fire, you get burned."* ☐ *My mother always told us that experimenting with hard drugs was playing with fire.*

if you please and **if you would(, please) 1.** a polite phrase indicating assent to a suggestion. ☐ *Bill: Shall I unload the car? Jane: If you please.* ☐ *Sue: Do you want me to take you to the station? Bob: If you would, please.* **2.** a polite phrase introducing or following a request. ☐ *John: If you please, the driveway needs sweeping. Jane: Here's the broom. Have at it.* ☐ *Jane: Take these down to the basement, if you would, please. John: Can't think of anything I'd rather do, sweetie.*

If you run after two hares, you will catch neither. *Prov.* You cannot do two things successfully at the same time. ☐ *Vanessa: If I want to pursue my acting career, I'll have to take more days off to go to auditions. But I want to get ahead in the office, too. Jane: If you run after two hares, you will catch neither.*

If you want a thing done well, do it yourself. *Prov.* You cannot rely on other people to do things properly for you. (Sometimes *right* is used instead of *well.*) ☐ *I asked my son to chop the vegetables for me, but he's cut them into chunks too small to use. I should have known: if you want a thing done well, do it yourself.* ☐ *Laura wouldn't trust professional auto mechanics, and so did all her own car repair. "If you want something done right, do it yourself," she said.*

If you want peace, (you must) prepare for war. *Prov.* If a country is well armed, its opponents will be less likely to attack it. ☐ *Wilbur was always arguing with those of his friends who believed in disarmament. "Getting rid of our weapons won't promote peace," he would say. "If you want peace, you must prepare for war."*

If you would be well served, serve yourself. *Prov.* You should do things for yourself, since you cannot trust other people to do them exactly the way you want. ☐ *I would never hire a maid, because a maid wouldn't clean things the way I want them cleaned. Like they say: if you would be well served, serve yourself.*

if you would(, please) Go to if you please.

if you'll pardon the expression *Fig.* excuse the expression I am about to say or just said. ☐ *This thing is—if you'll pardon the expression—loused up.* ☐ *I'm really jacked, if you'll pardon the expression.*

If you're born to be hanged, then you'll never be drowned. *Prov.* If you escape one disaster, it must be because you are destined for a different kind of disaster. (Sometimes used to warn someone who has escaped drowning against gloating over good luck.) ☐ *When their ship was trapped in a terrible storm, Ellen told her husband that she feared they would die. "Don't worry," he replied with a yawn, "if you're born to be hanged, then you'll never be drowned."*

if you've a mind to do something *Rur.* if you really want to do something. ☐ *If you've a mind to run for class president, you'd best start making campaign posters.* ☐ *You can do just about anything if you've a mind to.*

Ignorance is bliss. *Prov.* Not knowing is better than knowing and worrying. ☐ *A: I never knew that the kid who mows our lawn has been in trouble with the police. B: Ignorance is bliss!*

Ignorance (of the law) is no excuse (for breaking it). *Prov.* Even if you do not know that something is against the law, you can still be punished for doing it. (An ancient legal principle.) ☐ *Police officer: I'm giving you a speeding ticket. Motorist: But I didn't know I was exceeding the speed limit! Police officer: Ignorance of the law is no excuse for breaking it.* ☐ *Terry protested that he didn't know it was illegal to break the windows of an abandoned build-*

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ing, but the judge informed him that ignorance of the law was no excuse.

ill at ease uneasy; anxious. ☐ *I feel ill at ease about the interview.* ☐ *You look ill at ease. Please relax.*

I'll be a monkey's uncle! *Fig.* I am amazed! ☐ *A: I just won $500,000 in the lottery! B: Well, I'll be a monkey's uncle!*

(I'll) be right there. I'm coming. ☐ *Bill: Tom! Come here. Tom: Be right there.* ☐ *Mother: Can you come down here a minute? Child: I'll be right there, Mom.*

(I'll) be right with you. Please be patient, I will attend to you soon. (Often said by someone attending a sales counter or by an office receptionist.) ☐ *Mary: Oh, Miss? Clerk: I'll be right with you.* ☐ *Bob: Sally, can you come here for a minute? Sally: Be right with you.*

(I'll) be seeing you. Good-bye, I will see you sometime in the (near) future. ☐ *Bob: Bye. Be seeing you. Sally: Yeah. See you later.* ☐ *John: Have a good time on your vacation. I'll be seeing you. Sally: See you next week. Bye.*

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I('ll) bet 1. *Inf.* I'm pretty sure that something is so or that something will happen. ☐ *Bob: You're late. I bet you miss your plane. Rachel: No, I won't.* ☐ *Sue: I'll bet it rains today. Alice: No way! There's not a cloud in the sky.* **2.** *Inf.* I agree. (Often sarcastic.) ☐ *Tom: They're probably going to raise taxes again next year. Henry: I bet.* ☐ *Fred: If we do that again, we'll really be in trouble. Andrew: I'll bet.*

I'll bite. *Inf.* Okay, I will answer your question.; Okay, I will listen to your joke or play your little guessing game. ☐ *Bob: Guess what is in this box? Bill: I'll bite. Bob: A new toaster!* ☐ *John: Did you hear the joke about the used car salesman? Jane: No, I'll bite.*

I'll call back later. a standard phrase indicating that a telephone caller will call again at a later time. ☐ *Sally: Is Bill there? Mary (speaking into the telephone): Sorry, he's not here right now. Sally: I'll call back later.* ☐ *John (speaking into the telephone): Hello. Is Fred there? Jane: No. Can I take a message? John: No, thanks. I'll call back later.*

(I'll) catch you later. *Inf.* I will talk to you later. ☐ *Mary: Got to fly. See you around. Sally: Bye. Catch you later.* ☐ *John: I have to go to class now. Bill: Okay, catch you later.*

I'll drink to that! *Inf.* I agree with that! (Originally used as a reply to a proposed toast.) ☐ *Great idea! I'll drink to that.* ☐ *That's a fine suggestion. I'll drink to that.*

I'll eat my hat. *Fig.* I will be very surprised. (Used to express strong disbelief in something.) ☐ *If Joe really joins the Army, I'll eat my hat.* ☐ *If this car gives you any trouble, I'll eat my hat.*

I'll get back to you (on that). and **Let me get back to you (on that).** I will report back later with my decision. (More likely said by a boss to an employee than vice versa.) ☐ *Bob: I have a question about the Wilson project. Mary: I have to go to a meeting now. I'll get back to you on that. Bob: It's sort of urgent. Mary: It can wait.* ☐ *Sue: Shall I close the Wilson account? Jane: Let me get back to you on that.*

I'll get right on it. I will begin work on that immediately. ☐ *Bob: Please do this report immediately. Fred: I'll get right on it.* ☐ *Jane: Please call Tom and ask him to rethink this proposal. John: I'll get right on it.*

I'll have the same. and The **same for me.** I would like the same thing that the last person chose. ☐ *Waitress: What would you like? Tom: Hamburger, fries, and coffee. Jane: I'll have the same.* ☐ *John: For dessert, I'll have strawberry ice cream. Bill: I'll have the same.*

I'll have to beg off. *Fig.* a polite expression used to turn down an informal invitation. ☐ *Andrew: Thank you for inviting me, but I'll have to beg off. I have a conflict. Henry: I'm sorry to hear that. Maybe some other time.* ☐ *Bill: Do you think you can come to the party? Bob: I'll have to beg off. I have another engagement. Bill: Maybe some other time.*

I'll (have to) let you go. *Fig.* It is time to end this phone conversation. ☐ *Well, I'll let you go. It's getting late.* ☐ *I have to go to work early tomorrow, so I'll let you go.*

I'll look you up when I'm in town. *Fig.* I will try to visit you or contact you the next time I am in town. ☐ *Bill: I hope to see you again sometime. Mary: I'll look you up when I'm in town.* ☐ *Andrew: Good-bye, Fred. It's been nice talking to you. I'll look you up when I'm in town. Fred: See you around, dude.*

I'll put a stop to that. I'll see that the just-mentioned undesirable activity is stopped. ☐ *Fred: There are two boys fighting in the hall. Bob: I'll put a stop to that.* ☐ *Sue: The sales force is ignoring almost every customer in the older neighborhoods. Mary: I'll put a stop to that!*

(I'll) see you in a little while. a phrase indicating that the speaker will see the person spoken to within a few hours at the most. ☐ *John: I'll see you in a little while. Jane: Okay. Bye till later.* ☐ *Sally: I have to get dressed for tonight. Fred: I'll pick you up about nine. See you in a little while. Sally: See you.*

I'll see you later. and **(See you) later.** Good-bye until I see you again. ☐ *John: Good-bye, Sally. I'll see you later. Sally: Until later, then.* ☐ *Bob: Time to go. Later. Mary: Later.*

(I'll) see you next year. a good-bye expression said toward the end of one year. ☐ *Bob: Happy New Year! Sue: You, too! See you next year.* ☐ *John: Bye. See you tomorrow. Mary: It's New Year's Eve. See you next year! John: Right! I'll see you next year!*

(I'll) see you (real) soon. Good-bye. I will meet you again soon. ☐ *Bill: Bye, Sue. See you. Sue: See you real soon, Bill.* ☐ *John: Bye, you two. Sally: See you soon. Jane: See you, John.*

(I'll) see you then. I will see you at the time we've just agreed upon. ☐ *John: Can we meet at noon? Bill: Sure. See you then. Bye. John: Bye.* ☐ *John: I'll pick you up just after midnight. Sally: See you then.*

(I'll) see you tomorrow. I will see you when we meet again tomorrow. (Typically said to someone whose daily schedule is the same as one's own.) ☐ *Bob: Bye, Jane. Jane: Good night, Bob. See you tomorrow.* ☐ *Sue: See you tomorrow. Jane: Until tomorrow. Bye.*

(I'll) talk to you soon. I will talk to you on the telephone again soon. ☐ *Sally: Bye now. Talk to you soon. John: Bye now.* ☐ *Bill: Nice talking to you. Bye. Mary: Talk to you soon. Bye.*

I'll thank you to keep your opinions to yourself. *Fig.* I do not care about your opinion of this matter. ☐

Jane: This place is sort of drab. John: I'll thank you to keep your opinions to yourself. ☐ *Bill: Your whole family is sort of loud. John: I'll thank you to keep your opinions to yourself.*

I'll thank you to mind your own business. *Fig.* a version of Mind your own business. (Shows a little anger.) ☐ *Tom: How much did this cost? Jane: I'll thank you to mind your own business.* ☐ *Bob: Is your house in your name or your brother's? John: I'll thank you to mind your own business.*

(I'll) try to catch you later. Go to next.

(I'll) try to catch you some other time. and **(I'll) try to catch you later.; I'll try to see you later.** *Fig.* We do not have time to talk now, so I'll try to talk to you or meet with you later. (An expression said when it is inconvenient for one or both parties to meet or converse.) ☐ *Bill: I need to get your signature on this contract. Sue: I really don't have a second to spare right now. Bill: Okay, I'll try to catch you some other time. Sue: Later this afternoon would be fine.* ☐ *Bill: I'm sorry for the interruptions, Tom. Things are very busy right now. Tom: I'll try to see you later.*

ill will hostile feelings or intentions. ☐ *I hope you do not have any ill will toward me because of our argument.* ☐ *Dave felt such ill will toward his family that he left his fortune to his best friend.*

ill-disposed to doing something not friendly; not favorable; opposed. ☐ *I am ill-disposed to doing hard labor.* ☐ *The police chief was ill-disposed to discussing the details of the case to the news reporters.*

ill-gotten gains money or other possessions acquired in a dishonest or illegal fashion. ☐ *Bill cheated at cards and is now living on his ill-gotten gains.* ☐ *Mary is enjoying her ill-gotten gains. She deceived an old lady into leaving her $5,000 in her will.*

illuminate something **with** something **1.** *Lit.* to light up something with something. ☐ *The lights illuminated the monument with a bright glow.* ☐ *The monument was illuminated with mercury vapor lamps.* **2.** *Fig.* to clarify or elucidate something with explanation. ☐ *Please try to illuminate this matter with an explanation.* ☐ *Could you illuminate your answer with a little more detail?* **3.** to decorate a manuscript with pictures or designs, as done in medieval monasteries. ☐ *The monks spent all their days illuminating manuscripts with pictures.* ☐ *No one has the patience to illuminate books with tiny designs.*

illustrate something **with** something **1.** to provide pictorial examples for a book or other document. ☐ *She illustrated her book with clever line drawings.* ☐ *We need someone to illustrate this book with drawings.* **2.** *Fig.* to use something to show how something works, how something is meant to be, or how to do something. ☐ *Would you please illustrate how to do it with a drawing or two?* ☐ *I think I can illustrate what I mean with a little more explanation.*

(I'm) afraid not. and **'Fraid not.** I believe, regrettably, that the answer is no. (The apostrophe is not always shown.) ☐ *Rachel: Can I expect any help with this problem? Henry: I'm afraid not.* ☐ *Andrew: Will you be there when I get there? Bill: Afraid not.*

(I'm) afraid so. and **'Fraid so.** I believe, regrettably, that the answer is yes. (The apostrophe is not always shown.) ☐ *Alice: Do you have to go? John: Afraid so.* ☐ *Rachel: Can I expect some difficulty with Mr. Franklin? Bob: I'm afraid so.*

I'm all ears. Go to I'm listening.

I'm awful at names. Go to I'm terrible at names.

I'm busy. Do not bother me now.; I cannot attend to your needs now. ☐ *Bob: Can I talk to you? Bill: I'm busy. Bob: It's important. Bill: Sorry, I'm busy!* ☐ *Fred: Can you help me with this? Bill: I'm busy. Can it wait a minute? Fred: Sure. No rush.*

I'm cool. *Inf.* I'm fine. ☐ *Bob: How you been? Fred: I'm cool, man. Yourself? Bob: The same.* ☐ *Father: How are you, son? Bill: I'm cool, Dad. Father (joking): So should I turn up the heat?*

I'm damned if I do and damned if I don't. *Fig.* There are problems if I do something and problems if I don't do it. ☐ *I can't win. I'm damned if I do and damned if I don't.* ☐ *No matter whether I go or stay, I am in trouble. I'm damned if I do and damned if I don't.*

(I'm) delighted to have you (here). and **(We're) delighted to have you (here).** You're welcome here any time.; Glad you could come. (See also (It's) good to have you here.) ☐ *Bill: Thank you for inviting me for dinner, Mr. Franklin. Bill: I'm delighted to have you.* ☐ *"We're delighted to see you," said Tom's grandparents. "It's so nice to have you here for a visit."*

(I'm) delighted to make your acquaintance. *Fig.* I am very glad to meet you. ☐ *Tom: My name is Tom. I work in the advertising department. Mary: I'm Mary. I work in accounting. Delighted to make your acquaintance. Tom: Yeah. Good to meet you.* ☐ *Fred: Sue, this is Bob. He'll be working with us on the Wilson project. Sue: I'm delighted to make your acquaintance, Bob. Bob: My pleasure.*

(I'm) doing okay. 1. *Inf.* I'm just fine. ☐ *Bob: How you doing? Bill: Doing okay. And you? Bob: Things could be worse.* ☐ *Mary: How are things going? Sue: I'm doing fine, thanks. And you? Mary: Doing okay.* **2.** *Inf.* I'm doing as well as can be expected.; I'm feeling better. ☐ *Mary: How are you feeling? Sue: I'm doing okay—as well as can be expected.* ☐ *Tom: I hope you're feeling better. Sally: I'm doing okay, thanks.*

I'm easy (to please). I accept that because I am not particular.; That's okay with me. ☐ *Tom: Hey, man! Do you care if we get a sausage pizza rather than mushroom? Bob: Fine with me. I'm easy.* ☐ *Mary: How do you like this music? Bob: It's great, but I'm easy to please.*

(I'm) feeling okay. I am doing well.; I am feeling well. ☐ *Alice: How are you feeling? Jane: I'm feeling okay.* ☐ *John: How are things going? Fred: Feeling okay.*

(I'm) glad to hear it. a phrase expressing pleasure at what the speaker has just said. ☐ *Sally: We have a new car, finally. Mary: I'm glad to hear it.* ☐ *Tom: Is your sister feeling better? Bill: Oh, yes, thanks. Tom: Glad to hear it.*

(I'm) glad you could come. and **(We're) glad you could come.** a phrase said by the host or hostess [or both] to a guest. ☐ *Tom: Thank you so much for having me. Sally: We're glad you could come. John: Yes, we are. Bye.* ☐ *Bill: Bye. Sally: Bye, Bill. Glad you could come.*

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(I'm) glad you could drop by. and **(We're) glad you could drop by.; (I'm) glad you could stop by.; (We're) glad you could stop by.** a phrase said by the host or hostess (or both) to a guest who has appeared suddenly or has come for only a short visit. ☐ *Tom: Good-bye. Had a nice time. Mary: Thank you for coming, Tom. Glad you could drop by.* ☐ *Tom: Thank you so much for having me. Sally: We're glad you could drop by.*

I'm gone. *Inf.* an expression said just before leaving. (See also I'm out of here.) ☐ *Bob: Well, that's all. I'm gone. Bill: See ya!* ☐ *Jane: I'm gone. See you guys. John: See you, Jane. Fred: Bye, Jane.*

(I'm) having a wonderful time; wish you were here. *Cliché* a catchphrase that is thought to be written onto postcards by people who are away on vacation. ☐ *John wrote on all his cards, "Having a wonderful time; wish you were here." And he really meant it too.* ☐ *"I'm having a wonderful time; wish you were here," said Tom, speaking on the phone to Mary, suddenly feeling very insincere.*

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I'm having quite a time. 1. *Lit.* I am having a very enjoyable time. ☐ *John: Having fun? Jane: Oh, yes. I'm having quite a time.* ☐ *Bob: Do you like the seashore? Sally: Yes, I'm having quite a time.* **2.** *Fig.* I am having a very difficult time. ☐ *Doctor: Well, what seems to be the problem? Mary: I'm having quite a time. It's my back. Doctor: Let's take a look at it.* ☐ *Father: How's school? Bill: Pretty tough. I'm having quite a time. Calculus is killing me.*

(I'm) having the time of my life. *Fig.* I am having the best time ever. ☐ *Bill: Are you having a good time, Mary? Mary: Don't worry about me. I'm having the time of my life.* ☐ *Mary: What do you think about this theme park? Bill: Having the time of my life. I don't want to leave.*

I'm history. *Inf.* Good-bye, I am leaving. ☐ *I'm history. See you tomorrow.* ☐ *Later. I'm history.*

(I'm) just getting by. an expression indicating that one is just surviving financially or otherwise. ☐ *Bob: How you doing, Tom? Tom: Just getting by, Bob.* ☐ *"I wish I could get a better job," remarked Tom. "I'm just getting by as it is."*

I'm just looking. Go to I'm only looking.

(I'm just) minding my own business. *Fig.* an answer to a greeting inquiry asking what one is doing. (This answer also can carry the implication "Since I am minding my own business, why aren't you minding your own business?") ☐ *Tom: Hey, man, what are you doing? Bill: Minding my own business. See you around.* ☐ *Sue: Hi, Mary. What have you been doing? Mary: I'm just minding my own business and trying to keep out of trouble.*

(I'm) (just) plugging along. *Inf.* I am doing satisfactorily.; I am just managing to function. ☐ *Bill: How are things going? Bob: I'm just plugging along.* ☐ *Sue: How are you doing, Fred? Fred: Just plugging along, thanks. And you? Sue: About the same.*

(I'm) (just) thinking out loud. *Fig.* I'm saying things that might better remain as private thoughts. (A way of characterizing or introducing one's opinions or thoughts. Also past tense.) ☐ *Sue: What are you saying, anyway? Sounds like you're scolding someone. Bob: Oh, sorry. I was just thinking out loud.* ☐ *Bob: Now, this goes over here. Bill: You want me to move that? Bob: Oh, no. Just thinking out loud.*

I'm like you an expression introducing a statement of a similarity that the speaker shares with the person spoken to. ☐ *Mary: And what do you think about this pair? Jane: I'm like you, I like the ones with lower heels.* ☐ *"I'm like you," confided Fred. "I think everyone ought to pay the same amount."*

I'm listening. and **I'm all ears.** *Inf.* You have my attention, so you should talk. ☐ *Bob: Look, old pal. I want to talk to you about something. Tom: I'm listening.* ☐ *Bill: I guess I owe you an apology. Jane: I'm all ears.*

I'm not finished with you. I still have more to say to you. ☐ *Bill started to turn away when he thought the scolding was finished. "I'm not finished with you," bellowed his father.* ☐ *When the angry teacher paused briefly to catch his breath, Bob turned as if to go. "I'm not finished with you," screamed the teacher, "Don't leave here until I say you can!"*

I'm not kidding. I am telling the truth.; I am not trying to fool you. ☐ *Mary: Those guys are all suspects in the robbery. Sue: No! They can't be! Mary: I'm not kidding!* ☐ *John (gesturing): The fish I caught was this big! Jane: I don't believe it! John: I'm not kidding!*

I'm not surprised. and **I don't wonder.** It is not surprising.; It should not surprise anyone. ☐ *Mary: All this talk about war has my cousin very worried. Sue: No doubt. At his age, I don't wonder.* ☐ *John: All of the better-looking ones sold out right away. Jane: I'm not surprised.*

I'm off. an expression said by someone who is just leaving. ☐ *Bob: Time to go. I'm off. Mary: Bye.* ☐ *Sue: Well, it's been a great party. Good-bye. Got to go. Mary: I'm off too. Bye.*

I'm only looking. and **I'm just looking.** I am not a buyer, I am only examining your merchandise. (A phrase said to a shopkeeper or clerk who asks May I help you?) ☐ *Clerk: May I help you? Mary: No, thanks. I'm only looking.* ☐ *Clerk: May I help you? Jane: I'm just looking, thank you.*

I'm out of here. and **I'm outa here.** *Inf.* I am leaving this minute. ☐ *In three minutes I'm outa here.* ☐ *I'm out of here. Bye.*

(I'm) pleased to meet you. an expression said when introduced to someone. (See also (I'm) (very) glad to meet you.) ☐ *Tom: I'm Tom Thomas. Bill: Pleased to meet you. I'm Bill Franklin.* ☐ *John: Have you met Sally Hill? Bill: I don't believe I've had the pleasure. I'm pleased to meet you, Sally. Sally: My pleasure, Bill.*

I'm (really) fed up (with someone or something**).** *Fig.* I have had enough of someone or something. Something must be done. ☐ *Tom: This place is really dull. John: Yeah. I'm fed up with it. I'm out of here!* ☐ *Sally: Can't you do anything right? Bill: I'm really fed up with your complaining! You're always picking on me!*

(I'm) sorry. an expression used to excuse oneself politely or apologize, especially when one has collided with someone, when one has offended someone, or to ask someone to repeat what has been said. ☐ *"I'm sorry," I said to the woman I bumped into.* ☐ *I'm sorry, what did you say? I couldn't hear you.*

(I'm) sorry to hear that. an expression of consolation or regret. ☐ *John: My cat died last week. Jane: I'm sorry to hear that.* ☐ *Bill: I'm afraid I won't be able to continue here as head teller. Bank manager: Sorry to hear that.*

(I'm) sorry you asked (that). I regret that you asked about something I wanted to forget. ☐ *Tom: What on earth is this hole in your suit jacket? Bill: I'm sorry you asked. I was feeding a squirrel and it bit through my pocket where the food was.* ☐ *Sally: Why is there only canned soup in the cupboard? John: Sorry you asked that. I just haven't been to the grocery store in awhile. Sally: Want some soup?*

I'm speechless. *Fig.* I am so surprised that I cannot think of anything to say. ☐ *Mary: Fred and I eloped last week. Sally: I'm speechless.* ☐ *Tom: The mayor just died! Jane: What? I'm speechless!*

I'm terrible at names. and **I'm awful at names.** I can't seem to remember anyone's name. (Said as an apology to someone whose name you have forgotten.) ☐ *I'm terrible at names. Please tell me yours again.* ☐ *Haven't we met already? I'm awful at names.*

(I'm) (very) glad to meet you. a polite expression said to a person to whom one has just been introduced. (See also (I'm) pleased to meet you.) ☐ *Mary: I'd like you to meet my brother, Tom. Bill: I'm very glad to meet you, Tom.* ☐ *Jane: Hi! I'm Jane. Bob: Glad to meet you. I'm Bob.*

I'm with you. I agree with you.; I will join with you in doing what you suggest. (With a stress on both *I* and *you*.) ☐ *Sally: I think this old bridge is sort of dangerous. Jane: I'm with you. Let's go back another way.* ☐ *Bob: This restaurant looks horrible. Bill: I'm with you. Want to go somewhere else?*

imagine someone or something **as** someone or something to think of someone or something as another person or another type of thing. ☐ *I really can't imagine you as a sailor.* ☐ *When I imagine John as our new president, I really worry about our future as a company.*

Imagine that! Go to Fancy that!

imbue someone **with** something to indoctrinate someone with something; to build something into someone. ☐ *I tried to imbue my children with a strong sense of justice.* ☐ *Her thinking and attitudes had been imbued with childhood fears.*

Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. *Prov.* Copying someone is flattering because it shows you want to be like that person. ☐ *Child: Susie's doing everything I do. Make her stop. Mother: Don't be cross with her. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.* ☐ *Imitation may be the sincerest form of flattery, but I don't feel flattered when Mary copies my answers to the homework.*

immediate occupancy [of an apartment or house] ready to be moved into at this moment. ☐ *This house is for immediate occupancy. You can move in today if you want.* ☐ *The apartment is empty, so that means immediate occupancy.*

immerse someone or something **in** something **1.** *Lit.* to submerge someone or something beneath the surface of a liquid; to soak someone or something in a liquid. ☐ *The preacher immersed the baptism candidate in the water.* ☐ *We immersed all the dirty plates in the soapy water and left them to soak.* ☐ *She immersed herself in the bathwater.* **2.** *Fig.* to saturate or steep someone or a group in information or some type of instruction. ☐ *The trainers immersed us in details day after day.* ☐ *The teachers will immerse the entire class in nothing but the Spanish language, day after day.*

immigrate (in)to some place **(from** some place**)** to migrate into a place from some other place. ☐ *Many of them immigrated into Minnesota from northern Europe.* ☐ *My family immigrated to Chicago.*

immunize someone **against** something to vaccinate someone against some disease; to do a medical procedure that causes a resistance or immunity to a disease to develop in a person. ☐ *They wanted to immunize all the children against the measles.* ☐ *Have you been immunized against polio?*

impact (up)on someone or something [for something] to have an effect on someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *This plant closing will impact upon the local economy for years to come.* ☐ *The day's troubles impacted on Rachel quite seriously.*

impale someone or something **on** something to put someone or something on a pointed object and press down. ☐ *The crowd had impaled an effigy of the dictator on a sharpened stick.* ☐ *The waves almost impaled me on a submerged tree branch.*

impart something **to** someone or something **1.** to bestow a quality on someone or a group. ☐ *That hat imparts an aura of grandeur to her presence.* ☐ *Walnut paneling imparts an expensive seriousness to a law office.* **2.** to tell something to someone or a group. ☐ *My professor tried to impart her knowledge to us.* ☐ *The speaker imparted a great deal of wisdom to the group.*

impeach someone **for** something **1.** to charge someone with doing something illegal. ☐ *You can't impeach her for just disagreeing!* ☐ *We tried to impeach Gus for failing to attend sessions.* **2.** to criticize or discredit someone for something. ☐ *The opposition impeached him for his position in no uncertain terms.* ☐ *Liz was impeached by the press for her views.*

impinge (up)on someone or something to affect or interfere with someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *This will not impinge upon me at all.* ☐ *Will this matter impinge on my policies in any way?*

implant something **in(to)** someone or something to embed something into someone or something. ☐ *The surgeon implanted a pacemaker into Fred.* ☐ *They implanted the device in Fred's chest.*

implicate someone **(in** something**)** to suggest that someone is involved in something. ☐ *The mayor was implicated in the bribery scandal.* ☐ *Jane's essay implicated her teacher in the cheating scandal.*

import something **(from** something**) ((in)to** something**)** to buy and transport something from a foreign place into a country. ☐ *We imported the carpets from the Orient into this country.* ☐ *They imported wine into this country from France.* ☐ *I imported this from Germany.*

an **important milestone in** someone's **life** Go to a milestone in someone's life.

I

impose something **(up)on** someone to force something on someone. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Don't try to impose your ideas upon me!* ☐ *The colonists tried to impose their values on the indigenous peoples.*

impose (up)on someone to be a bother to someone; to make a request of something to someone. (Often refers to being an overnight guest or having a meal at someone's house. *Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *I don't mean to impose upon you, but could you put me up for the night?* ☐ *Don't worry, I won't let you impose on me.*

impregnate something **with** something **1.** *Lit.* to saturate something with something; to penetrate something with some fluid. ☐ *They impregnated the boards with a wood preservative.* ☐ *The process impregnated the fibers with a bright yellow dye.* **2.** *Fig.* to put something negative into something. ☐ *You have impregnated the entire matter with unpleasantness.* ☐ *The whole scheme has been impregnated with needless flaws.*

I

impress someone **as** something to be memorable to someone as a particular type of person. ☐ *She didn't impress me as a particularly wise individual.* ☐ *Liz impressed us all as a skilled artisan.*

impress someone **by** something to make someone notice one's good qualities. ☐ *You impress me by your willingness to serve.* ☐ *We were all impressed by your candor.*

impress someone **with** someone or something to awe someone with someone or something. ☐ *Are you trying to impress me with your wisdom?* ☐ *She impressed him with her friend, who was very tall.*

impress something **into** something to press something into something. ☐ *I impressed the key into the wax, making a perfect copy.* ☐ *Andy impressed his thumb into the pie.*

impress something **(up)on** someone to make someone fully aware of something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *You must impress these facts upon everyone you meet.* ☐ *She impressed its importance on me.*

impress something **(up)on** something to press something into the surface of something, leaving a mark. ☐ *The ribbing of my socks impressed a pattern upon my calves.* ☐ *The heavy vase impressed its outline on the pine tabletop.*

imprint something **into** something Go to next.

imprint something **on(to)** something **1.** to print something onto something. ☐ *We imprinted your name onto your stationery and your business cards.* ☐ *Please imprint my initials on this label.* **2.** and **imprint** something **into** something to record something firmly in the memory of someone. ☐ *The severe accident imprinted a sense of fear onto Lucy's mind.* ☐ *Imprint the numbers into your brain and never forget them!* **3.** and **imprint** something **into** something to make a permanent record of something in an animal's brain. (As with newly hatched fowl, which imprint the image of the first moving creature they see into their brains.) ☐ *The sight of its mother imprinted itself on the little gosling's brain.* ☐ *Nature imprints this information into the bird's memory.*

imprint something **with** something to print something with a message. ☐ *Amy imprinted each bookmark with her name.* ☐ *Each bookmark was imprinted with her name.*

imprison someone **in** something to lock someone up in something. ☐ *The authorities imprisoned him in a separate cell.* ☐ *Bob imprisoned Timmy in the closet for an hour.*

improve (up)on something to make something better. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Do you really think you can improve upon this song?* ☐ *No one can improve on my favorite melody.*

improvise on something [for a musician] to create a new piece of music on an existing musical theme. ☐ *For an encore, the organist improvised on "Mary Had a Little Lamb."* ☐ *She chose to improvise on an old folk theme.*

impute something **to** someone or something to ascribe something to someone or something; to attribute something to someone or something. ☐ *I didn't mean to impute a bad intention to your company.* ☐ *The lawyer imputed perjury to the witness.*

***in a bad mood** sad; depressed; grouchy; with low spirits. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; put** someone **~**.) ☐ *He's in a bad mood. He may yell at you.* ☐ *Please try to cheer me up. I'm in a bad mood.*

in a bad way Go to in bad shape.

in a big way very much; intensely. ☐ *I'm really interested in her in a big way.* ☐ *He plays to win—in a big way.*

***in a bind** and ***in a jam** *Fig.* in a tight or difficult situation; stuck on a problem. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~; find** oneself **~**.) ☐ *I'm in a bind. I owe a lot of money.* ☐ *Whenever I get into a jam, I ask my supervisor for help.* ☐ *When things get busy around here, we get in a bind. We could use another helper.*

in a (blue) funk sad; depressed. ☐ *I've been in a blue funk all week.* ☐ *Don't get in a funk about your job. Things'll get better.*

***in a body** *Fig.* as a group of people; as a group; in a group. (*Typically: **arrive** some place **~; go ~; leave ~; reach** some place **~; travel ~**.) ☐ *The tour members always traveled in a body.*

in a cold sweat in a state of fear. ☐ *He stood there in a cold sweat, waiting for something bad to happen.* ☐ *I was in a cold sweat while they counted the ballots.*

in a (constant) state of flux Go to in flux.

in a coon's age and **in a month of Sundays** *Rur.* in a very long time. (The *coon* is a *raccoon*.) ☐ *How are you? I haven't seen you in a coon's age.* ☐ *I haven't had a piece of apple pie this good in a coon's age.*

in a dead heat *Fig.* [finishing a race] at exactly the same time; tied. ☐ *The two horses finished the race in a dead heat.* ☐ *They ended the contest in a dead heat.*

in a delicate condition *Euph.* pregnant. (Old fashioned.) ☐ *Are you sure you're up for this hike? I know you're in a delicate condition.* ☐ *She shouldn't be lifting those boxes. She's in a delicate condition.*

in a dither confused; nervous; bothered. ☐ *Mary is sort of in a dither lately.* ☐ *Don't get yourself in a dither.*

***in a family way** and ***in the family way** *Fig.* pregnant. (*Typically: **be ~; get** someone **~**.) ☐ *I've heard that Mrs. Smith is in a family way.* ☐ *Our dog is in the family way.*

***in a fix** *Fig.* in a bad situation. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~**.) ☐ *I really got myself into a fix. I owe a lot of money on my taxes.* ☐ *John is in a fix because he lost his wallet.* ☐ *John got into a fix.*

in a flash *Fig.* quickly; immediately. ☐ *I'll be there in a flash.* ☐ *It happened in a flash. Suddenly my wallet was gone.*

in a fog and **in a haze** *Fig.* dazed; not paying attention to what is going on around one; not alert. ☐ *Jane always seems to be in a fog.* ☐ *When I get up, I'm in a fog for an hour.* ☐ *After surgery, I was in a haze until the anesthetic wore off.*

in a heartbeat *Fig.* almost immediately. ☐ *If I had the money, I would go back to college in a heartbeat.* ☐ *Just tell me that you need me and I'll come there in a heartbeat.*

***in a huff** *Fig.* in an angry or offended manner. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~**.) ☐ *He heard what we had to say, then left in a huff.* ☐ *She came in a huff and ordered us to bring her something to eat.*

in a jam Go to in a bind.

in a jiffy *Fig.* very fast; very soon. ☐ *Just wait a minute. I'll be there in a jiffy.* ☐ *I'll be finished in a jiffy.*

***in a lather** *Fig.* flustered; excited and agitated. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~**.) ☐ *Now, calm down. Don't be in a lather.* ☐ *I always get in a lather when I'm late.* ☐ *I get into a lather easily.*

in a little bit *Fig.* in a small amount of time. ☐ *I will be there in a little bit. Please wait.* ☐ *In a little bit, we can go outside and play.*

in a mad rush *Fig.* in a hurry. ☐ *I ran around all day today in a mad rush, looking for a present for Bill.* ☐ *Why are you always in a mad rush?*

in a month of Sundays Go to in a coon's age.

in a nutshell *Fig.* [of news or information] in a (figurative) capsule; in summary. ☐ *This cable channel provides the latest news in a nutshell.* ☐ *In a nutshell, what happened at work today?*

In a pig's ass! Go to In a pig's eye!

In a pig's ear! Go to next.

In a pig's eye! and **In a pig's ass!; In a pig's ear!** *Rur.* Nonsense! (Use caution with *ass*.) ☐ *Tom: I wasn't going to steal it. I was just looking at it. Jane: In a pig's eye! I saw you put it in your pocket!* ☐ *Mary: Bill says he's sorry and he'll never yell at me again if I take him back. Jane: In a pig's ass! He's made those promises a hundred times before.* ☐ *Tom: I thought you said I could keep this. Charlie: In a pig's ear! I said you could borrow* it.

in a pinch as a substitute. ☐ *A piece of clothing can be used as a bandage in a pinch.* ☐ *In a pinch, you can use folded paper to prop up the table leg so the table won't rock.*

in a pique *Fig.* having a feeling of resentment; feeling that one's pride has been hurt. ☐ *In a real pique, Anne insulted all of her friends.* ☐ *John's found himself in a pique over Bob's harsh criticism.*

***in a (pretty) pickle** *Fig.* in a mess; in trouble. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~**.) ☐ *John has gotten himself into a pickle. He has two dates for the party.* ☐ *Now we are in a pretty pickle. We are out of gas.*

***in a quandary** uncertain about what to do; perplexed. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~**.) ☐ *Mary was in a quandary about what college to go to.* ☐ *I couldn't decide what to do. I was in such a quandary.*

***in a rut** *Fig.* in a type of boring habitual behavior. (As when the wheels of a buggy travel in the ruts worn into the ground by other buggies making it easiest to go exactly the way all the other buggies have gone before. *Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *My life has gotten into a rut.* ☐ *I try not to get into a rut.*

in a sense in a way; in one way of looking at it. ☐ *In a sense, cars make life better.* ☐ *But, in a sense, they also make life worse.*

in (a) shambles *Fig.* in a messy state; destroyed. ☐ *After the earthquake, the town lay in shambles.* ☐ *The TV set was in a shambles after John tried to fix it.*

***in (a) single file** *Fig.* lined up, one behind the other; in a line, one person or one thing wide. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~; march ~; walk ~**.) ☐ *Have you ever seen ducks walking in single file?* ☐ *Please get into single file.* ☐ *Please march in single file.*

in a snit *Fig.* in a fit of anger or irritation. ☐ *Don't get in a snit. It was an accident.* ☐ *Mary is in a snit because they didn't ask her to come to the shindig.*

in a split second Go to a split second.

in a stage whisper *Fig.* in a loud whisper that everyone can hear. ☐ *John said in a stage whisper, "This play is boring."* ☐ *"When do we eat?" asked Billy in a stage whisper.*

***in a stew (about** someone or something**)** *Fig.* upset or bothered about someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~**.) ☐ *I'm in such a stew about my dog. She ran away last night.* ☐ *Now, now. Don't get in a stew. She'll be back when she gets hungry.*

in a stupor in a dazed condition; in a condition in which one cannot concentrate or think. ☐ *The drunk driver walked away from the car accident in a stupor.* ☐ *In the morning, Mary remains in a stupor until she drinks coffee.*

***in a (tight) spot** *Fig.* caught in a problem; in a jam. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~**. See also in a bind and the examples.) ☐ *Look, John, I'm in a tight spot. Can you lend me twenty dollars?* ☐ *I'm in a spot too. I need $300.*

***in a tizzy** *Fig.* in an excited and confused condition. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~**.) ☐ *John is in a tizzy because we're an hour late.* ☐ *Mary was in a tizzy when she couldn't find her keys.*

in a twit upset; frantic. ☐ *She's all in a twit because she lost her keys.* ☐ *Pete was in a twit and was quite rude to us.*

in a twitter in a giddy state; silly. ☐ *Don't get yourself in a twitter.* ☐ *We were all in a twitter over the upcoming event.*

***in a vicious circle** *Fig.* in a situation in which the solution of one problem leads to a second problem, and the solution of the second problem brings back the first problem, etc. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~**.) ☐ *Life is so strange. I seem to be in a vicious circle most of the time.* ☐ *I put lemon in my tea to make it sour, then sugar to make it sweet. I'm in a vicious circle.* ☐ *Don't let your life get into a vicious circle.*

in a word *Fig.* said simply; concisely said. ☐ *Mrs. Smith is—in a word—haughty.* ☐ *In a word, the play flopped.*

***in a world of** one's **own** *Fig.* aloof; detached; self-centered. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~; live ~**.) ☐ *John lives in a world of his own. He has very few friends.* ☐ *Mary walks around in a world of her own, but she's very intelligent.*

in abeyance in reserve. ☐ *Until the judge determined that the evidence could be used in the trial, it was held in abeyance.* ☐ *I kept my opinion in abeyance.*

in accord (with someone or something**) (about** someone or something**)** agreeing with someone or something. ☐ *I am in complete accord with you about the policy changes.* ☐ *We are in accord about the proposal.*

in accordance with something in agreement with something; in conformity with something. ☐ *In accordance with our discussion, I have prepared a contract.* ☐ *I did this in accordance with your request.*

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in addition (to something**)** additionally; further; moreover; as an additional thing or person. ☐ *In addition, I would like for you to sweep the kitchen floor.* ☐ *I put the books away, and in addition to that, I cleaned up my desk.*

in advance [of something given, paid, or provided] before it is due. ☐ *The bill isn't due for a month, but I paid it in advance.* ☐ *I want my pay in advance.*

in agreement (with someone or something**)** in conformity with someone or something; agreeing with someone or something. ☐ *We are in total agreement.* ☐ *I am in agreement with your proposal.*

in (all) good conscience *Fig.* having good motives; displaying motives that will not result in a guilty conscience. ☐ *In all good conscience, I could not recommend that you buy this car.* ☐ *In good conscience, she could not accept the reward. She had only been acting as a good citizen should.*

in all my born days *Rur.* in my entire life. ☐ *I've never seen such fireworks in all my born days.* ☐ *That's the best party I was ever at in all my born days.*

in all probability very likely; almost certainly. ☐ *He'll be here on time in all probability.* ☐ *In all probability, they'll finish the work today.*

in an age of years *Rur.* in a long time. ☐ *How have you been? I haven't talked to you in an age of years.* ☐ *Jane hasn't ridden a horse in an age of years.*

***in an interesting condition** *Euph.* pregnant. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Young Mrs. Lutin is in an interesting condition.* ☐ *The bride appeared to be in an interesting condition.*

***in an ivory tower** *Fig.* in a place, such as a university, where one can be aloof from the realities of living. (*Typically: **be ~; dwell ~; live ~; work ~**.) ☐ *If you didn't spend so much time in your ivory tower, you'd know what people really think!* ☐ *Many professors are said to live in ivory towers. They don't know what the real world is like.*

in and of itself considering it alone. ☐ *The idea in and of itself is not bad, but the side issues introduce many difficulties.* ☐ *Her action, in and of itself, caused us no problem.*

in any case and **in any event** no matter what happens. ☐ *I intend to be home by supper time, but in any case by eight o'clock.* ☐ *In any event, I'll see you this evening.*

in any event Go to previous.

in any way, shape, or form *Fig.* in any manner. ☐ *I refuse to tell a lie in any way, shape, or form!*

***in apple-pie order** *Fig.* in very good order; very well organized. (*Typically: **be ~; get** something **~; put** something **~**.) ☐ *Please put everything in apple-pie order before you leave.* ☐ *I always put my desk in apple-pie order every evening.* ☐ *I've put my entire life into apple-pie order.*

***in arrears** [of debts; of an account] overdue. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Jane's student-loan payments are in arrears.* ☐ *The accounts of the bankrupt company were in arrears.*

in (at) one ear and out (of) the other *Prov.* heard but not remembered. (Used to describe something that someone does not listen to.) ☐ *Ellen: Did you tell Junior to be careful with the car when he drives it? Fred: Yes, but I think it went in one ear and out the other.* ☐ *The teacher felt that everything she told her students was in one ear and out the other.*

in at the kill and **in on the kill 1.** *Lit.* present and participating in the killing of prey. ☐ *The baby cheetah wanted to be in on the kill.* **2.** *Fig.* involved at the final moment of something in order to share in the spoils. ☐ *At the end of the battle, everyone wanted to be in at the kill.* ☐ *The press packed the room, wanting to be in on the kill of the governor's resignation.*

in awe (of someone or something**)** fearful and respectful of someone or something. ☐ *Everyone in the country was in awe of the king and queen.* ☐ *I love my new car. In fact, I'm in awe of it.*

in bad faith *Fig.* without sincerity; with bad or dishonest intent; with duplicity. ☐ *It appears that you acted in bad faith and didn't live up to the terms of our agreement.* ☐ *If you do things in bad faith, you'll get a bad reputation.*

in bad shape and **in a bad way 1.** *Lit.* injured or debilitated in any manner. ☐ *Fred had a little accident, and he's in bad shape.* ☐ *Tom needs exercise. He's in bad shape.* **2.** pregnant. ☐ *Jill's in bad shape again, I hear.* ☐ *Yup, she's in bad shape all right—about three months in bad shape.* **3.** *Fig. Inf.* intoxicated. ☐ *Two glasses of that stuff and I'm in really bad shape.* ☐ *Fred is in bad shape. I think he's going to toss his cookies.*

in bad sorts in a bad humor. ☐ *Bill is in bad sorts today. He's very grouchy.* ☐ *I try to be extra nice to people when I'm in bad sorts.*

in bad taste and **in poor taste** rude; vulgar; obscene. ☐ *Mrs. Franklin felt that your joke was in bad taste.* ☐ *We found the play to be in poor taste, so we walked out in the middle of the second act.*

***in bad (with** someone**)** in trouble with someone. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I tried not to get in bad with Wally.* ☐ *We got in bad with each other from the start.*

in behalf of someone and **in** someone's **behalf; on behalf of** someone; **on** someone's **behalf; in** someone's **name** [doing something] as someone's agent; [doing something] in place of someone; for the benefit of someone. ☐ *I'm writing in behalf of Mr. Smith, who has applied*

for a job with your company. ☐ *I'm calling on behalf of my client, who wishes to complain about your actions.* ☐ *I'm calling in her behalf.* ☐ *I'm acting on your behalf.*

in between located in the middle of two things, states, or possibilities. ☐ *The bath water is not hot or cold. It's in between.* ☐ *A sandwich consists of two slices of bread with some other food in between.*

***in black and white** *Fig.* [of an agreement, contract, or statement] official, in writing or printing. (*Typically: **be ~; get** something **~**.) ☐ *I have it in black and white that I'm entitled to three weeks of vacation each year.*

in bloom Go to next.

in blossom and **in bloom** blooming; covered with blossoms. ☐ *All the apple trees are in blossom now.* ☐ *When are the fruit trees in bloom in this part of the country?*

in brief briefly; concisely. ☐ *The whole story, in brief, is that Bob failed algebra because he did not study.* ☐ *Please tell me in brief why you want this job.*

in broad daylight in the open light of day; clearly visible. ☐ *The crime was committed in broad daylight.* ☐ *Bill stood there in broad daylight, but we never saw him.*

in bulk in large quantities or amounts, rather than smaller, more convenient quantities or amounts. ☐ *Jane always bought office supplies in bulk to save money.* ☐ *Dave purchased cereal in bulk because his family used so much of it.*

in business operating; equipped or ready to operate. ☐ *We're in business now, and things are running smoothly.* ☐ *Now it works. Now we're in business.*

in cahoots (with someone**)** *Rur.* in conspiracy with someone; in league with someone. ☐ *The mayor is in cahoots with the construction company that got the contract for the new building.* ☐ *Those two have been in cahoots before.*

in care of someone [to be delivered to someone] through someone or by way of someone. (Indicates that mail is to be delivered to a person at some other person's address.) ☐ *Bill Jones is living at his father's house. Address the letter to Bill in care of Mr. John Jones.* ☐ *Bill said, "Please send me my mail in care of my father at his address."*

in case of something if a problem occurs; if something happens; in the event that something happens. ☐ *What do we do in case of fire?* ☐ *In case of an accident, call the police.*

in case (something happens**)** in the event that something takes place. ☐ *She carries an umbrella in case it rains.* ☐ *I have some aspirin in my office in case I get a headache.* ☐ *He keeps a fire extinguisher in his car, just in case.*

in character *Fig.* typical of someone's behavior. ☐ *For Tom to shout that way wasn't at all in character. He's usually quite pleasant.* ☐ *It was quite in character for Sally to walk away angry.*

in charge (of someone or something**)** in control of someone or something; having the responsibility for someone or something. ☐ *Who is in charge of this office?* ☐ *Do you like being in charge?*

in clover *Fig.* having good fortune; in a very good situation, especially financially. ☐ *If I get this contract, I'll be in clover for the rest of my life.* ☐ *I have very little money saved, so when I retire I won't exactly be in clover.*

in cold blood *Fig.* without feeling; with cruel intent. (Frequently said of a crime, especially murder.) ☐ *The killer walked up and shot the woman in cold blood.* ☐ *How insulting! For a person to say something like that in cold blood is just horrible.*

in cold storage dead; in a state of death. (Alludes to the actual storage of certain things, such as fur coats, in cold storerooms.) ☐ *Tom gets paid for putting his subjects in cold storage.* ☐ *Poor old Jed is in cold storage.*

in concert (with someone**)** *Fig.* in cooperation with someone; with the aid of someone. ☐ *Mrs. Smith planned the party in concert with her sister.* ☐ *In concert they planned a lovely event.*

in condition and **in(to) shape** in good health; strong and healthy; fit. ☐ *Bob exercises frequently, so he's in condition.* ☐ *If I were in shape, I could run faster and farther.* ☐ *I'm really overweight. I have to try to get into shape.*

in consequence (of something**)** as a result of something; because of something. ☐ *In consequence of the storm, there was no electricity.* ☐ *The wind blew down the wires. In consequence, we had no electricity.*

in consideration of something in return for something; as a result of something. ☐ *In consideration of your many years of service, we are pleased to present you with this gold watch.* ☐ *In consideration of your efforts, here is a check for $3,000.*

in contact (with someone or something**)** communicating with someone or a group; to share information with someone or a group. ☐ *I have been in contact with our supplier, who will deliver the part next week.* ☐ *I am in contact with the Senate committee now.*

in contempt (of court) showing disrespect for a judge or courtroom procedures. ☐ *The bailiff ejected the lawyer who was held in contempt.* ☐ *The judge found the juror in contempt of court when she screamed at the attorney.*

in control of someone or something **1.** in charge of someone or something. ☐ *Who is in control of this place?* ☐ *I am not in control of her. She works for another department.* **2.** to have someone or something mastered or subdued; to have achieved management of someone or something. ☐ *You should be in control of your dog at all times.* ☐ *The attendant was instructed to be in control of his patient at all times.*

in creation Go to on earth.

in custody (of someone or something**)** and **in** someone's or something's **custody** being kept guarded by legal authorities. ☐ *The suspect was in the sheriff's custody awaiting a trial.* ☐ *The prisoner is in the custody of the state.* ☐ *The police have two suspects in custody.*

in debt having debts; having much debt; owing money. ☐ *Mary is deeply in debt.* ☐ *I am in debt to the bank for my car loan.*

in deep 1. *Fig.* deeply involved (with someone or something). ☐ *Mary and Sam are in deep.* ☐ *Wilbur got in deep with the mob.* **2.** *Fig.* deeply in debt. (Often with *with* or *to*.) ☐ *Willie is in deep with his bookie.* ☐ *I'm in deep to the department store.*

in deep water *Fig.* in a dangerous or vulnerable situation; in a serious situation, especially one that is too difficult or is beyond the level of one's abilities; in trouble. ☐ *John is having trouble with back taxes. He's in deep water.* ☐ *Bill*

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got in deep water in algebra class. The class is too difficult for him, and he's almost failing.

in defiance (of someone or something) against someone's will or against instructions; in bold resistance to someone or someone's orders. ☐ *Jane spent the afternoon in the park in defiance of her mother's instructions.* ☐ *She did it in defiance of her mother.* ☐ *She has done a number of things in defiance lately.*

in denial in a state of refusing to believe something that is true. ☐ *Mary was in denial about her illness and refused treatment.* ☐ *Tom doesn't think he's an alcoholic because he's still in denial.*

in detail with lots of details; giving all the details. (Often used with an adjective showing the level of detail, such as *great*, *enormous*, etc., as in the second example.) ☐ *I explained the policy to the customer in detail.* ☐ *We planned the entire project in great detail.*

in dire straits *Fig.* in a very serious, bad circumstance. ☐ *We are nearly broke and need money for medicine. We are in dire straits.*

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in disguise hidden behind a disguise; looking like something else. ☐ *Santa Claus was really the little child's father in disguise.* ☐ *What I thought was terrible turned out to be a blessing in disguise!*

in drag wearing the clothing of the opposite sex. (Usually refers to a man wearing women's clothing.) ☐ *Two actors in drag did a skit about life on the farm.* ☐ *Gary looks better in drag than he does in a suit.*

in dribs and drabs in small portions; bit by bit. ☐ *I'll have to pay you what I owe you in dribs and drabs.* ☐ *The whole story is being revealed in dribs and drabs.*

in droves *Fig.* in large numbers. (See also **be out in droves**.) ☐ *The settlers arrived on the prairie in droves.*

in due course and **in due time; in good time; in the course of time; in time** in a normal or expected amount of time. ☐ *The roses will bloom in due course.* ☐ *The vice president will become president in due course.* ☐ *I'll retire in due time.* ☐ *Just wait, my dear. All in good time.* ☐ *It'll all work out in the course of time.* ☐ *In time, things will improve.*

in due time Go to previous.

***in Dutch (with someone)** in trouble with someone. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I'm in Dutch with my parents for my low grades.* ☐ *You're in Dutch quite often, it seems.*

***in earnest** with sincerity. (*Typically: **act ~; be ~; speak ~**.) ☐ *I've done all the research I need. I spent the day writing the paper in earnest.* ☐ *Mary's comments were in earnest. She really meant them.*

in effect producing a particular effect; effectively. ☐ *In effect, this new law will raise taxes for most people.* ☐ *This policy harms domestic manufacturers. In effect, all our clothing will be made in foreign countries.*

in essence basically; essentially. ☐ *I have lots of detailed advice for you, but in essence, I want you to do the best you can.* ☐ *In essence, lightning is just a giant spark of electricity.*

in exchange (for someone or something) in return for someone or something. ☐ *They gave us two of our prisoners in exchange for two of theirs.* ☐ *I gave him chocolate in exchange for some licorice.* ☐ *John gave Mary a book and got a sweater in exchange.*

in existence now existing; currently and actually being. ☐ *The tiger may not be in existence in a few decades.* ☐ *All the oil in existence will not last the world for another century.*

in fact in reality; really; actually. ☐ *I'm over forty. In fact, I'm forty-six.* ☐ *This is a very good computer. In fact, it's the best.*

in fashion in style; current and socially acceptable. ☐ *Is that kind of thing still in fashion?* ☐ *It won't be in fashion very long.*

in favor of someone to someone, as when writing a check. ☐ *Please make out a check for $300 in Tom's favor.* ☐ *I'm making out the check in favor of Mr. Brown.*

in favor (of someone or something) approving, supporting, or endorsing someone or something. ☐ *Are you in favor of lower taxes?* ☐ *Of course, I'm in favor.*

in fear and trembling *Cliché* with anxiety or fear; with dread. ☐ *In fear and trembling, I went into the room to take the test.* ☐ *The witness left the courtroom in fear and trembling.*

in fine feather 1. *Fig.* well dressed; of an excellent appearance. (Alludes to a bird that has clean, bright, and flawless feathers.) ☐ *Well, you are certainly in fine feather today.* ☐ *I like to be in fine feather when I have to give a speech.* **2.** *Fig.* in good form; in good spirits. ☐ *Mary was really in fine feather tonight. Her concert was great!* ☐ *I feel in fine feather and ready to go!*

in fits and starts Go to **fits and starts**.

in flight while flying. ☐ *A passenger became ill in flight and the pilot had to return to the airport.* ☐ *I really don't care to eat in flight. I am too nervous.*

in flux and **in a (constant) state of flux** in constant change; ever-changing. ☐ *I can't describe my job because it's in a constant state of flux.* ☐ *The price of gold is in flux.*

***in focus 1.** *Lit.* [of an image] seen clearly and sharply. (*Typically: **be ~; come [into] ~; get [into] ~; get something [into] ~**.) ☐ *I have the slide in focus and can see the bacteria clearly.* **2.** *Lit.* [for optics, such as lenses, or an optical device, such as a microscope] to be aligned to allow something to be seen clearly and sharply. ☐ *I've adjusted the telescope; Mars is now in focus.* **3.** *Fig.* [of problems, solutions, appraisals of people or things] perceived or understood clearly. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~; get something [into] ~**.) ☐ *Now that things are in focus, I feel better about the world.*

in for something due to receive a surprise; due to receive punishment. (When the *something* is *it*, the *it* usually means punishment.) ☐ *I hope I'm not in for any surprises when I get home.* ☐ *Tommy, you broke my baseball bat. You're really in for it!* ☐ *If I ever catch that chicken thief, he'll be in for it for sure.*

***in force 1.** [of a rule or law] currently valid or in effect. (*Typically: **be ~**.) ☐ *Is this rule in force now?* ☐ *The constitution is still in force.* **2.** *Fig.* in a very large group. (*Typically: **arrive ~; attack ~**.) ☐ *The entire group arrived in force.* ☐ *The mosquitoes will attack in force this evening.*

in full flight fleeing at great speed; escaping rapidly. ☐ *The robbers were in full flight before the bank manager even called the sheriff.*

***in full swing** and ***in high gear** *Fig.* at the peak of activity; moving fast or efficiently. (*Typically: **be ~; move [into] ~; get [into] ~**.) ☐ *In the summer months, things really get into full swing around here.* ☐ *We go skiing in the mountains each winter. Things are in high gear there in November.*

in general referring to the entire class being discussed; speaking of the entire range of possibilities; in most situations or circumstances. ☐ *I like vegetables in general, but not beets.* ☐ *In general, I prefer a hotel room on a lower floor, but will take a higher room if it's special.*

in glowing terms *Fig.* using words of praise; using complimentary expressions. ☐ *The college president described his accomplishments in glowing terms and awarded him with an honorary degree.*

in good condition Go to in good shape.

in good faith *Fig.* with good and honest intent; with sincerity. ☐ *We are convinced you were acting in good faith, even though you made a serious error.* ☐ *I think you didn't sign the contract in good faith. You never intended to carry out our agreement.*

in good hands *Fig.* in the safe, competent care of someone. ☐ *Don't worry. Your children are in good hands. Sally is an experienced baby-sitter.* ☐ *Your car is in good hands. My mechanics are factory-trained.*

in good repair *Fig.* operating well; well taken care of. (Usually said of a thing rather than a person.) ☐ *The house is in good repair and ought to attract a number of potential buyers.* ☐ *If the car were in good repair, it would run more smoothly.*

***in good shape** and ***in good condition** physically and functionally sound and sturdy. (Used for both people and things. *Typically: **be ~; get ~; keep ~**.) ☐ *This car isn't in good shape. I'd like to have one that's in better condition.* ☐ *Mary is in good condition. She exercises and eats right to stay healthy.* ☐ *You have to make an effort to get into good shape.*

in good spirits *Fig.* happy and cheerful; positive and looking toward the future, despite unhappy circumstances. ☐ *The patient is in good spirits and that will speed her recovery.* ☐ *Tom wasn't in very good spirits after he heard the bad news.*

in good time Go to in due course.

***in (good) (with someone)** in someone's favor. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I hope I can get in good with the teacher. I need an A in the course.* ☐ *Mary is always trying to get in with the people who are in charge.*

in great demand wanted by many people. ☐ *Liz is in great demand as a singer.* ☐ *Mary's paintings are in great demand.*

in great haste very fast; in a big hurry. ☐ *John always did his homework in great haste.* ☐ *Why not take time and do it right? Don't do everything in great haste.*

***in hand** in one's possession or control. (*Typically: **be ~; have something ~**.) ☐ *It's in hand. I have it right here.* ☐ *The papers are in hand. Have no fear.*

***in harm's way** *Fig.* liable to be harmed; subject to potential causes of harm. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; put someone ~**.) ☐ *Soldiers are expected to know what to do when they are in harm's way.*

***in harmony (with someone or something) 1.** *Lit.* in musical concord with someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *This part is in harmony with the tenor's solo.* ☐ *The tenor part is not in harmony with the accompaniment.* **2.** *Fig.* agreeable or compatible with someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *This is in complete harmony with our earlier discussions.* ☐ *Fred's position is quite clear. What you have said is not in harmony with Fred.*

***in heat** in a period of sexual excitement; in estrus. (*Estrus* is the period of time in which females are most willing to breed. This expression is usually used for animals. It has been used for humans in a joking sense. *Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~; go [into] ~**.) ☐ *Our dog is in heat.* ☐ *She goes into heat every year at this time.*

in heaven *Fig.* in a state of absolute bliss or happiness. ☐ *Lisa was in heaven after winning the lottery.* ☐ *Resting in his hammock, John was simply in heaven.*

in high cotton and **in tall cotton** *Rur.* to be doing very well; successful. ☐ *Jim's in high cotton ever since he got that raise.* ☐ *Tom: How's your sister? Mary: She's in high cotton. Just bought a nice new house.* ☐ *We were in tall cotton until the IRS caught up with us.*

in high dudgeon *Fig.* feeling or exhibiting great resentment; taking great offense at something. (Often with *leave*.) ☐ *After the rude remarks, the person who was insulted left in high dudgeon.* ☐ *Dennis strode from the room in high dudgeon, and we knew he would get his revenge eventually.*

***in high gear 1.** [of a machine, such as a car] set in its highest gear, giving the greatest speed. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~; move [into] ~**.) ☐ *When my car is in high gear, it goes very fast.* ☐ *You can't start out in high gear. You must work up through the low ones.* **2.** Go to in full swing.

in (high) hopes of something *Fig.* expecting something. ☐ *I was in hopes of getting there early.* ☐ *We are in high hopes that John and Mary will have a girl.*

in hindsight Go to in retrospect.

in hock in debt. ☐ *After buying the luxury car, Bob was in hock for years.*

in hog heaven *Fig.* very happy; having a wonderful time. ☐ *Bill's a fan of Clark Gable, so when the movie theater had a Clark Gable movie festival, Bill was in hog heaven.* ☐ *Jane loves to quilt, so she was in hog heaven when they opened that new store for quilters.*

in honor of someone or something showing respect or admiration for someone or something. ☐ *Our club gave a party in honor of the club's president.* ☐ *I wrote a poem in honor of John and Mary's marriage.*

in horror with intense shock or disgust. ☐ *Mike stepped back from the rattlesnake in horror.* ☐ *The jogger recoiled in horror when she came upon a body in the park.*

***in hot water (with someone) (about someone or something)** *Fig.* in trouble. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~**.) ☐ *You are going to get into hot water with Rebecca about*

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that. ☐ *Amy got into hot water about Todd with Rebecca.* ☐ *John got himself into hot water by being late.*

in ink written or signed with a pen that uses ink, not with a pencil. ☐ *You should write your report in ink.* ☐ *You must sign your checks in ink.*

in its entirety and **in their entirety** completely; until completely done or gone. ☐ *I watched the basketball game in its entirety.* ☐ *My friends and I ate the two large pizzas in their entirety.*

in its prime Go to **in** one's **prime.**

in jeopardy to be at risk; to be at peril. ☐ *John puts himself in jeopardy every time he goes skydiving.* ☐ *I was in jeopardy when my car broke down on the deserted road.*

in (just) a minute Go to next.

in (just) a second and **in (just) a minute** in a very short period of time. ☐ *I'll be there in a second.* ☐ *I'll be with you in just a minute. I'm on the phone.*

in keeping (with something**)** and **in line with** something in accord or harmony with something; following the rules of something. ☐ *In keeping with your instructions, I've canceled your order.* ☐ *I'm disappointed with your behavior. It really wasn't in line with what it should be.*

in kind 1. in goods rather than in money. ☐ *The country doctor was usually paid in kind. He accepted two pigs as payment for an operation.* ☐ *Do you have to pay tax on payments made in kind?* **2.** similarly; [giving] something similar to what was received. ☐ *John punched Bill, and Bill gave it back in kind.* ☐ *She spoke rudely to me, so I spoke to her in kind.*

in labor [of a woman] experiencing the pains and exertion of childbirth. ☐ *Susan was in labor for nearly eight hours.* ☐ *As soon as she had been in labor for an hour, she went to the hospital.*

in league (with someone**)** *Fig.* [of people] secretly cooperating, often to do something bad or illegal. ☐ *The county sheriff is in league with criminals.* ☐ *The car thieves and some crooked police are in league to make money from stolen cars.*

in less than no time *Fig.* very quickly. (See also **in no time (at all)**.) ☐ *I'll be there in less than no time.* ☐ *Don't worry. This won't take long. It'll be over with in less than no time.*

in lieu of something *Fig.* in place of something; instead of something. (The word *lieu* occurs only in this phrase.) ☐ *They gave me roast beef in lieu of ham.* ☐ *We gave money to charity in lieu of sending flowers to the funeral.*

In like a lion, out like a lamb. Go to **March comes in like a lion, and goes out like a lamb.**

***in limbo 1.** *Lit.* a region of the afterlife on the border of hell. (In some Christian religions, there is a *limbo* set aside for souls that do not go to either heaven or hell. This sense is used only in this religious context. *Typically: **be ~; remain ~; stay ~**.) ☐ *The baby's soul was in limbo because she had not been baptized.* **2.** *Fig.* in a state of neglect; in a state of oblivion; in an indefinite state; on hold. (*Typically: **be ~; leave** something **~; put** something **~**.) ☐ *We'll have to leave the project in limbo for a month or two.* ☐ *After I got hit on the head, I was in limbo for about ten minutes.*

in line and **on line** standing and waiting in a line of people. (*On line* is used especially in the New York City area.) ☐ *I've been in line for an hour.* ☐ *Get in line if you want to buy a ticket.* ☐ *We waited on line to see the movie.*

in line with something Go to **in keeping (with** something**).**

in love (with someone or something**)** feeling love for someone or something; experiencing a strong affectionate emotion for someone or something. ☐ *Mary was in love with her new car! It was perfect for her.* ☐ *John is deeply in love with Mary.*

in low cotton *Rur.* depressed. ☐ *She was in low cotton because her dress got torn.* ☐ *Jed is in low cotton because his favorite hound is dead.*

in luck fortunate; lucky. ☐ *You want a red one? You're in luck. There is one red one left.* ☐ *I had an accident, but I was in luck. It was not serious.*

in many respects Go to **in some respects.**

in marching order organized and equipped; ready to go. (Originally military.) ☐ *Is our luggage all packed and in marching order?* ☐ *We're in marching order and eager to go, sir.*

in memory of someone to continue the good memories of someone; for the honor of a deceased person. ☐ *Many streets were renamed in memory of John F. Kennedy.* ☐ *We planted roses in memory of my deceased father.*

in midair in a point high in the air. ☐ *The planes crashed in midair.* ☐ *Extra fuel was released from the plane in midair.*

***in mint condition** *Fig.* in perfect condition. (*Typically: **be ~; find** something **~**.) ☐ *This is a fine car. It runs well and is in mint condition.* ☐ *We saw a house in mint condition and decided to buy it.*

in my humble opinion *Cliché* a phrase introducing the speaker's opinion. ☐ *"In my humble opinion," began Fred, arrogantly, "I have achieved what no one else ever could."* ☐ *Bob: What are we going to do about the poor condition of the house next door? Bill: In my humble opinion, we will mind our own business.*

in my opinion Go to **as I see it.**

in my view Go to **as I see it.**

in name only nominally; not actual, only by terminology. ☐ *The president is head of the country in name only. Congress makes the laws.* ☐ *Mr. Smith is the boss of the Smith Company in name only. Mrs. Smith handles all the business affairs.*

in need (of something**)** [of someone or an animal] to require something. ☐ *We are in need of a new car.* ☐ *The company is in need of a larger building to hold all its employees.*

in neutral with the shift lever of a vehicle in the position where the motor is running but is not powering the wheels or other moving parts. ☐ *The car rolled down the hill because I'd left it in neutral and did not put on the brake.* ☐ *If you are moving and in neutral, you do not have control of your vehicle.*

in no mood to do something not feeling like doing something; not wishing to do something. ☐ *I'm in no mood to cook dinner tonight.* ☐ *Mother is in no mood to put up with our arguing.*

in no time (at all) very quickly. (Compare this with **in less than no time.**) ☐ *I'll be there in no time.* ☐ *It won't take long. I'll be finished in no time at all.*

in no time flat Go to **in nothing flat.**

in no uncertain terms *Cliché* in very specific and direct language. ☐ *I was so mad. I told her in no uncertain terms to leave and never come back.* ☐ *I told him in no uncertain terms to stop calling me.*

in nothing flat and **in no time flat** *Fig.* very quickly; in much less time than expected. ☐ *Of course I can get there in a hurry. I'll be there in nothing flat.* ☐ *We covered the distance between New York and Philadelphia in nothing flat.* ☐ *The waiter brought our food in no time flat.*

***in on** something **1.** involved with something, such as an organization or an idea; informed about special plans. (*Typically: **be ~; come ~; get ~; let** someone **~**.) ☐ *There is a party upstairs, and I want to get in on it.* ☐ *I want to get in on your club's activities.* ☐ *Mary and Jane know a secret, but they won't let me in on it.* **2.** receiving a share of something. (*Typically: **be ~; come ~; get ~; let** someone **~**.) ☐ *I want to get in on the new European business that is supposed to develop.* ☐ *We will all want to get in on the scheme.*

***in on the act** *Fig.* involved in something with someone else. (Often refers to an unwelcome attempt to join someone's performance. *Typically: **be ~; get ~; let** someone **~**.) ☐ *Everybody wants to get in on the act.* ☐ *Why are you trying to get in on the act?*

***in on the ground floor** *Fig.* involved at the very beginning of something. (Alludes to riding in an elevator that will become increasingly crowded as it ascends. You will be able to get in most easily at the lowest level. *Typically: **be ~; get ~; let** someone **~**.) ☐ *If you are starting a new project, I want to get in on the ground floor.* ☐ *Invest now so you can get in on the ground floor.*

in on the kill Go to **in at the kill.**

in one fell swoop Go to **at one fell swoop.**

***in** one's **birthday suit** *Fig.* naked; nude. (In the "clothes" in which one was born. *Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~**.) ☐ *I've heard that John sleeps in his birthday suit.* ☐ *We used to go down to the river and swim in our birthday suits.*

in one's **blood** Go to **in the blood.**

in one's **book** *Fig.* according to one's own opinion. ☐ *He's okay in my book.* ☐ *In my book, this is the best that money can buy.*

in one's **cups** *Euph.* drunk. ☐ *She doesn't make much sense when she's in her cups.* ☐ *The speaker—who was in his cups—could hardly be understood.*

in one's **element** *Fig.* in a natural or comfortable situation or environment. ☐ *Sally is in her element when she's working with algebra or calculus.* ☐ *Bob loves to work with color and texture. When he's painting, he's in his element.*

in one's **glory** *Fig.* at one's happiest or best. ☐ *When I go to the beach on vacation, I'm in my glory.* ☐ *Sally is a good teacher. She's in her glory in the classroom.*

in one's **mind's eye** *Fig.* in one's mind or imagination. (Alludes to visualizing something in one's mind.) ☐ *In my mind's eye, I can see trouble ahead.* ☐ *In her mind's eye, she could see a beautiful building beside the river. She decided to design such a building.*

in one's **opinion** according to one's belief or judgment. ☐ *In my opinion, that is a very ugly picture.* ☐ *That isn't a good idea in my opinion.*

in one's or its **prime** *Fig.* at one's or its peak or best time. ☐ *Our dog—which is in its prime—is very active.* ☐ *The building was in its prime back in the Fifties, but it has not been well maintained.* ☐ *I could work long hours when I was in my prime.*

in one's **(own) backyard** *Fig.* very close to one, where one lives, or where one is. ☐ *That kind of thing is quite rare. Imagine it happening right in your backyard.* ☐ *You always think of something like that happening to someone else. You never expect to find it in your own backyard.*

in one's **(own) (best) interest(s)** to one's advantage; as a benefit to oneself. ☐ *It is not in your own interests to share your ideas with Jack. He will say that they are his.* ☐ *Jane thought it was in the best interest of her friend to tell his mother about his illness.*

in one's **own way 1.** as the best one can do; using a personal and individual strategy. ☐ *I don't know the answer to the problem, but perhaps I can help in my own way.* ☐ *She couldn't go to war and carry a gun, but she helped the war effort in her own way.* **2.** in the special way that one wishes or demands. ☐ *I don't like doing it your way. I want to do it in my own way.* ☐ *I prefer to do it in my own way.*

in one's **right mind** *Fig.* sane; rational and sensible. (Often in the negative.) ☐ *That was a stupid thing to do. You're not in your right mind.* ☐ *You can't be in your right mind! That sounds crazy!*

in one's **salad days** *Fig.* in one's youth. (Usually formal or literary. Comparing the greenness of a salad with the greenness, or freshness and inexperience, of youth.) ☐ *I recall the joys I experienced on school vacations in my salad days.* ☐ *In our salad days, we were apt to get into all sorts of mischief on the weekends.*

in one's **second childhood** *Fig.* [of an adult] interested in things or people that normally interest children. ☐ *My father bought himself a toy train, and my mother said he was in his second childhood.* ☐ *Whenever I go to the river and throw stones, I feel as if I'm in my second childhood.*

in one's **spare time** in one's extra time; in the time not reserved for work or doing something else. ☐ *I write novels in my spare time.* ☐ *I'll try to paint the house in my spare time.*

***in** one's **Sunday best** *Rur.* in one's best clothes; in the clothes one wears to church. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~**.) ☐ *All the children were dressed up in their Sunday best.* ☐ *I like to be in my Sunday best whenever I go out.* ☐ *Let's get into our Sunday best and go out for dinner.*

in opposition (to someone or something**)** against someone or something; opposing someone or something. ☐ *You'll find that I'm firmly in opposition to any further expenditures.* ☐ *The council and the mayor are usually in opposition.*

***in orbit 1.** *Lit.* [of something] circling a heavenly body. (*Typically: **be ~; put** something **[into] ~**.) ☐ *The moon is in orbit around the earth.* ☐ *They put the satellite into orbit.* **2.** *Fig.* ecstatic; thrilled; emotionally high.

(*Typically: **be ~**.) □ *Jane is in orbit about her new job.* □ *John went into orbit when he got the check in the mail.* **3.** *Inf.* intoxicated. □ *After having six drinks all to herself, Julie was in orbit.*

***in order** properly arranged. (*Typically: **get** something **~; have** something **~; put** something **~**.) □ *Please get your desk in order.* □ *I wish you would put things in order!*

in order to do something for the purpose of doing something; as a means of doing something. □ *I went to college in order to further my education.* □ *I gave John three dollars in order to buy lunch.*

in other words a phrase introducing a restatement of what has just been said. □ *Henry: Sure I want to do it, but how much do I get paid? Andrew: In other words, you're just doing it for the money.* □ *Bill: Well, I suppose I really should prepare my entourage for departure. Bob: In other words, you're leaving? Bill: One could say that, I suppose. Bob: Why didn't one?*

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***in over** one's **head (with** someone or something**) 1.** *Lit.* in water that is deeper than one is tall. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) □ *Johnny! Don't go out too far! You are in over your head.* **2.** *Fig.* too deeply involved with someone or something, beyond what one can deal with. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) □ *They are all in over their heads with this money business.* **3.** *Fig.* having more difficulties than one can manage. □ *Calculus is very hard for me. I'm in over my head.*

in park [of an automobile transmission] having the gears locked so the automobile cannot move. □ *The driver stopped the car and placed it in park.* □ *You have to be in park in order to start this car.*

in part partly; to a lesser degree or extent. □ *I was not there, in part because of my disagreement about the purpose of the meeting. I also had a previous appointment.* □ *I hope to win, in part because I want the prize money.*

in particular specifically; especially. □ *I'm not going anywhere in particular.* □ *Of the three ideas, there is one I like in particular.*

in passing casually; said or mentioned as an aside. □ *I just heard your name in passing. I didn't hear more than that.* □ *The lecturer referred to George Washington in passing.*

in pencil written or signed with a pencil. □ *Why did you write your report in pencil?* □ *You can't sign a check in pencil!*

in perpetuity for an indefinitely long period of time; eternally. □ *My trust fund generates income in perpetuity.* □ *The right for the road to cross my land was granted in perpetuity to the county.*

in person [of someone] actually physically present in a place rather than appearing in a film, on a television or computer screen, on a telephone, or through a radio broadcast. □ *All the famous movie stars were there in person.* □ *You must appear in our office in person to collect the money that is due to you.*

***in perspective** within a reasonable view or appraisal. (*Typically: **be ~; get** something **~; have** something **~; put** something **[into] ~**.) □ *Let's try to keep everything in perspective.* □ *If we put the matter into perspective, I think we can discuss it reasonably.*

***in place** in (someone's or something's) proper place or location. (*Typically: **be ~; put** something **[into] ~**.) □ *The maid came into the room and put everything into place.* □ *It's good to see everything in place again.*

in place of someone or something instead of someone or something; as a substitute for someone or something. □ *I changed my mind. I want a red one in place of the blue one.* □ *John came to help in place of Max, who was sick.*

in plain English Go to next.

***in plain language** and ***in plain English** *Fig.* in simple, clear, and straightforward language. (*Typically: **be ~; put** something **[into] ~; say** something **~; write** something **~**.) □ *That's too confusing. Please say it again in plain English.* □ *Tell me again in plain language.*

***in play 1.** *Lit.* [of a ball, in a game] under the effect of the rules of the game. (*Typically: **be ~; get back ~; put** something **back ~**.) □ *The ball is in play again and the activity is furious.* □ *The ball is not in play yet.* **2.** *Fig.* [of a company or its stock] in the process of being bought out by another company. (*Typically: **be ~; put** something **~**.) □ *The company I bought stock in is now in play.* □ *This stock is in play.*

in point of fact just to point out a fact; in fact. □ *In point of fact, I am not late. You are simply way too early.*

in poor taste Go to in bad taste.

***in power** in control; in charge. (*Typically: **be ~; come [into] ~; get [into] ~**.) □ *Who is in power now?* □ *No one is in power.* □ *The provisional government came into power six months ago.*

in practice 1. in the actual doing of something; in reality. □ *Our policy is to be very particular, but in practice we don't care that much.* □ *The instructions say not to set it too high. In practice I always set it as high as possible.* **2.** well-rehearsed; well-practiced; well-exercised. □ *The swimmer was not in practice and almost drowned.* □ *I play the piano for a living, and I have to keep in practice.*

in press [of a book or other document] in the process of being printed. □ *This book is in press. It won't be available for at least two months.* □ *This book has been in press for a long time.*

in print [of a book, magazine, newspaper, or other written material] to be available from the publisher. □ *Ten thousand copies of the first edition remain in print.* □ *The publisher listed all of its books in print.*

in private privately; without others present. □ *I'd like to speak to you in private.* □ *I enjoy spending the evening in private.*

in progress under way; happening; developing or moving right now. □ *Don't enter the studio. There's a show in progress.* □ *We now return you to the regularly scheduled show in progress.*

in proportion showing the correct size or proportion relative to something else. □ *That man's large head is not in proportion to his small body.* □ *The cartoonist drew the dog in proportion to its surroundings.*

in public in a place or way so that other people can see or know about something. □ *It's illegal to walk naked in public.* □ *John always tries to embarrass me whenever we're in public.*

in pursuit of something chasing after something. ☐ *Bill spends most of his time in pursuit of money.* ☐ *Every year Bob goes into the countryside in pursuit of butterflies.*

in quest of someone or something and **in search of** someone or something seeking or hunting something; trying to find something. ☐ *They went into town in quest of a reasonably priced restaurant.* ☐ *Monday morning I'll go out in search of a job.*

in rags *Fig.* in worn-out and torn clothing. ☐ *Oh, look at my clothing. I can't go to the party in rags!* ☐ *I think the new casual fashions make you look as if you're in rags.*

in rare form 1. *Fig.* well prepared for a good performance; at one's best. ☐ *The goalie is in rare form today; that's his third great save already.* ☐ *We are not exactly in rare form on Monday mornings.* **2.** *Inf.* intoxicated. ☐ *Gert is in rare form, but she'll have time to sleep it off.* ☐ *When Harry was finally in rare form, he slid beneath the table.*

in reality viewing things realistically; really. ☐ *Jane dreamed it was snowing, but in reality, it was very warm.* ☐ *John looks happy, but in reality, he is miserable.*

in receipt of something in a state of having received something. (Used in business correspondence.) ☐ *We are in receipt of your letter of request.* ☐ *When we are in receipt of your check for the full balance, we will mark your bill as paid.*

in recent memory *Fig.* the period of time in which things are still remembered and discussed. ☐ *Never in recent memory has there been this much snow!* ☐ *I haven't been this happy in recent memory!*

in reduced circumstances *Euph.* in poverty. ☐ *After Frederick lost his position, we lived in reduced circumstances while waiting for my inheritance.*

in reference to someone or something and **with reference to** someone or something concerning or about someone or something; in connection with someone or something. ☐ *What shall we do in reference to Bill and his problem?* ☐ *With reference to what problem?*

in regard to someone or something Go to **with regard to** someone or something.

in rehearsal a stage of development in the production of a play, opera, or concert, involving many rehearsals. ☐ *The play is in rehearsal now and will open next month.* ☐ *While the opera was still in rehearsal, the star developed a hatred for the director.*

in relation to someone or something relating to someone or something; in connection with someone or something. ☐ *I mention this fact in relation to your proposed trip.* ☐ *Let's discuss Bill in relation to his future with this company.*

in remission [of a serious disease] not worsening or progressing. ☐ *While the disease was in remission, John got to leave the hospital.* ☐ *The doctor said my cancer was in remission.*

in retrospect and **in hindsight** reconsidering the past with the knowledge one now has. ☐ *In retrospect, I would have gone to a better college.* ☐ *David realized, in hindsight, that he should have finished school.*

in return for (someone or something**)** by way of giving something back; as a way of paying someone back for something; as part of an exchange. ☐ *I helped Tom yesterday, and he helped me in return for my efforts.* ☐ *I paid $20 and received four tickets in return.*

in round figures Go to next.

***in round numbers** and ***in round figures** *Fig.* as an estimated number; a figure that has been rounded off. (*Typically: **be ~; express** something **~; write** something **~**.) ☐ *Please tell me in round numbers what it'll cost.* ☐ *I don't need the exact amount. Just give it to me in round figures.*

***in ruins** in a state of destruction. (*Typically: **be ~; lay ~; leave** something **~**.) ☐ *The enemy army left the cities they attacked in ruins.* ☐ *The crops laid in ruins after the flood.*

in search of someone or something Go to **in quest of** someone or something.

in season 1. [of a game animal] subject to legal hunting. ☐ *You cannot shoot ducks. They are not in season.* **2.** [of a female animal] ready to breed; in estrus; in heat. ☐ *The cat's in season again.* **3.** to be currently available for selling. (Some foods and other things are available only at certain seasons. *Typically: **be ~; come [into] ~**.) ☐ *Oysters are available in season.* ☐ *Strawberries aren't in season in January.*

in secret secretly. ☐ *They planned in secret to blow up the bridge.* ☐ *I will tell her in secret so no one else will hear.*

in service [of something] operating or operable. (See also **put** something **in(to) service**.) ☐ *Is this elevator in service?*

in session [of a court, congress, or other organization] operating or functioning. ☐ *Use of cameras is forbidden while the meeting is in session.* ☐ *The spectators must remain quiet while court is in session.*

in seventh heaven *Fig.* in a very happy state. ☐ *Ann was really in seventh heaven when she got a car of her own.* ☐ *I'd be in seventh heaven if I had a million dollars.*

in shape Go to **in condition**.

in short stated briefly. ☐ *At the end of the financial report, the board president said, "In short, we are okay."* ☐ *My remarks, in short, indicate that we are in good financial shape.*

in short order very quickly. ☐ *I can straighten out this mess in short order.* ☐ *The maids came in and cleaned the place up in short order.*

in short supply *Fig.* scarce. ☐ *Fresh vegetables are in short supply in the winter.* ☐ *Yellow cars are in short supply because everyone likes them and buys them.* ☐ *At this time of the year, fresh vegetables go into short supply.*

in sight 1. *Lit.* within the range of vision; visible. ☐ *The goal is in sight.* ☐ *The end of the road is in sight.* **2.** *Fig.* known; expected. ☐ *The end of the project is finally in sight.*

in so many words *Fig.* exactly; explicitly; in plain, clear language. ☐ *I told her in so many words to leave me alone.* ☐ *He said yes, but not in so many words.*

in some **neck of the woods** *Rur.* in some vicinity or neighborhood; in some remote place. (The *some* is usually *this, that, your, their,* etc. Can be used to refer to some specific section of a forest.) ☐ *I think that the Smiths live in your neck of the woods.* ☐ *What's happening over in that neck of the woods?*

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in some respects and **in many respects** with regard to some or many details. ☐ *In some respects, Anne's comments are similar to yours.* ☐ *The three proposals are quite different in many respects.*

in some transaction **for** someone having value for someone; having a benefit for someone. (Usually a question: **What's in it for me?**) ☐ *What is in this deal for me?* ☐ *There is a lot of money in it for you.*

in someone else's **place** Go to next.

in someone else's **shoes** and **in** someone else's **place** *Fig.* seeing or experiencing something from someone else's point of view. (See also in a bind and the examples.) ☐ *You might feel different if you were in her shoes.* ☐ *Pretend you're in Tom's place, and then try to figure out why he acts the way he does.*

in someone's **behalf** Go to in behalf of someone.

in someone's **care** Go to in the care of someone.

***in** someone's **face** *Sl.* in a provocative attitude, as if ready to fight or argue. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Ted's a real pain. He likes to get in your face. He'll argue about anything.* ☐ *I know you are angry, but don't get in my face. I had nothing to do with it.*

in someone's **favor 1.** to someone's advantage or credit. (Especially in sports scores, as in the examples.) ☐ *The score was ten to twelve in our favor.* ☐ *At the end of the second half, the score was forty to three in the other team's favor.* **2. *in** someone's **favor** liked by someone; approved of by someone. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~**.) ☐ *John might be able to help me. I hope I'm currently in his favor.* ☐ *My mother is mad at me. I'm certainly not in her favor.* ☐ *I'll try to get into her favor.*

***in** someone's **good graces** *Fig.* in good with someone; in someone's favor. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I'm not in her good graces so I shouldn't be the one to ask her.*

***in** someone's **hair 1.** *Lit.* tangled in someone's hair. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~**.) ☐ *My bubble gum got in my hair and I had to cut it out.* **2.** *Fig.* annoying someone. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~**.) ☐ *You can watch what I am doing, but don't get in my hair.* ☐ *I wish you wouldn't get in my hair when I'm trying to do something.*

in someone's **name 1.** in someone's ownership; as someone's property. ☐ *The house is in my name. I own all of it.* ☐ *The car is in our names.* **2.** Go to in behalf of someone.

in someone's or something's **way** and **in the way of** someone or something *Fig.* in the pathway or movement of someone or something. ☐ *Don't get in my way.* ☐ *That car is in the way of the bus and all the other traffic.*

***in** someone's **possession** held by someone; owned by someone. (*Typically: **be ~; come [into] ~**.) ☐ *The book is now in my possession.* ☐ *How long has this object been in your possession?*

in someone's **prayers** [of someone] remembered and called by name when someone prays. ☐ *I am sorry to hear of your sickness. You will be in our prayers.* ☐ *The whole family is in my prayers because they have suffered so much.*

***in** someone's **way 1.** *Lit.* in the pathway of someone. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~; stand ~**.) ☐ *Don't get in Bob's way while he is bringing groceries in from the car.* **2.** and **in the way of** someone**('s plans)** *Fig.* interfering with a person in the pursuit of plans or intentions; hindering someone's plans. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; stand ~**.) ☐ *I am going to leave home. Please don't get in my way.* ☐ *She intends to become a lawyer and no one had better get in her way.* ☐ *I would never get into the way of her plans.*

in spades in the best or most extreme way possible; extravagantly. ☐ *He flunked the test in spades.* ☐ *He succeeded at life in spades—honors degree, great career, rich wife, lovely children, and early retirement.*

in spite of someone or something without regard to someone or something; even though another course had been prescribed; ignoring a warning. ☐ *In spite of her orders to stay, I left.* ☐ *In spite of the bad weather, I had fun on vacation.*

***in step (with** someone**)** *Fig.* [marching or dancing] in cadence with another person. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~; march ~; keep ~**.) ☐ *Please keep in step with Jane.* ☐ *You two, back there. You aren't in step.*

in step (with someone or something**)** *Fig.* as up-to-date as someone or something. ☐ *Bob is not in step with the times.* ☐ *We try to keep in step with the fashion of the day.*

in step (with something**)** and **in time (with** something**)** *Fig.* keeping in cadence with music. ☐ *John, your violin isn't in step with the beat. Sit up straight and try it again.* ☐ *I'm trying to play in time.*

in stitches *Fig.* laughing very hard. ☐ *Charlie had us in stitches with all his jokes.* ☐ *The movie sure was funny. I was in stitches!*

in stock to have merchandise available and ready for sale. ☐ *Do you have extra-large sizes in stock?* ☐ *Of course, we have all sizes and colors in stock.*

in storage in a place where things are stored or kept. ☐ *Mary placed her winter clothes in storage during the summer.* ☐ *John's furniture is in storage while he is in the army.*

***in store (for** someone**)** awaiting someone in the future. (*Typically: **be ~; hold** something **~; lie ~**.) ☐ *None of us knows what lies in store for us tomorrow.* ☐ *Some good lies in store for me, I think.*

in style 1. *Lit.* in fashion; fashionable. ☐ *This old coat isn't in style anymore.* ☐ *I don't care if it's not in style. It's warm.* ☐ *I hope this coat comes into style again.* **2.** *Fig.* in elegance; in luxury. ☐ *If I had a million dollars, I could really live in style.* ☐ *If he saves his money, someday he'll be able to live in style.*

in surgery to be involved in surgery. (Can refer to a doctor, nurse, or patients.) ☐ *Dr. Smith is in surgery now.* ☐ *The patient is still in surgery.*

in tall cotton Go to in high cotton.

in tandem [of two or more things] in single file. ☐ *We marched to the door in tandem.* ☐ *They rode along in tandem.*

in tatters *Fig.* in torn pieces of cloth. ☐ *The poor man's clothes hung in tatters.* ☐ *The flag was in tatters after the storm.*

in terms of something regarding something; concerning something. ☐ *I don't know what to do in terms of John's problem.* ☐ *Now, in terms of your proposal, don't you think you're asking for too much?*

in the absence of someone or something while someone or something isn't here; without someone or something. ☐ *In the absence of the cook, I'll prepare dinner.* ☐ *In the absence of opposition, she won easily.*

in the act (of doing something**)** while doing something. ☐ *There he was, in the act of opening the door.* ☐ *I tripped while in the act of climbing.*

in the affirmative in the form of an answer that means yes. ☐ *The soldier answered in the affirmative by nodding his head "yes."* ☐ *My manager's response was in the affirmative.*

in the air *Fig.* everywhere; all about. ☐ *There is such a feeling of joy in the air.* ☐ *We felt a sense of tension in the air.*

***in the altogether** and ***in the buff; *in the nude; *in the raw** *Fig.* naked; nude. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~; sleep ~**.) ☐ *The museum has a painting of some ladies in the buff.* ☐ *Mary felt a little shy about getting into the altogether.* ☐ *Bill says he sleeps in the raw.*

in the back in the back part of a building; in the back room of a building. ☐ *I don't have your size here, but perhaps I can find it in the back.* ☐ *He's not in the shop right now. I'll see if he's in the back.*

***in the back of** someone's **mind** *Fig.* remembered by someone, but not very important; vaguely remembered by someone. (*Typically: **have** something **~; keep** something **~; leave** something **~; put** something **~; remain ~; stay ~**.) ☐ *You should put this problem in the back of your mind and concentrate on other things.*

***in the bag 1.** *Fig.* cinched; achieved. (*Typically: **be ~; have** something **~**.) ☐ *It's in the bag—as good as done.* ☐ *The election is in the bag unless the voters find out about my past.* **2.** *Fig. Inf.* intoxicated. (*Typically: **be ~**.) ☐ *Kelly looks like he is in the bag.* ☐ *John is in the bag and mean as hell.*

***in the balance** in an undecided state; at risk. (*Typically: **be ~; hang ~**.) ☐ *He stood on the edge of the cliff, his life in the balance.* ☐ *With his fortune in the balance, John rolled the dice.*

in the ballpark *Fig.* within certain boundaries; [of an estimate] close to what is expected. ☐ *Your estimate is not even in the ballpark. Please try again.*

***in the best of health** very healthy. (*Typically: **be ~; get** oneself **~**.) ☐ *Bill is in the best of health. He eats well and exercises.* ☐ *I haven't been in the best of health. I think I have the flu.*

in the black *Fig.* not in debt; in a financially profitable condition. (As opposed to in the red.) ☐ *I wish my accounts were in the black.* ☐ *Sally moved the company into the black.*

in the blood and **in** one's **blood** *Fig.* built into one's personality or character. ☐ *John's a great runner. It's in his blood.* ☐ *The whole family is very athletic. It's in the blood.*

***in the boondocks** and ***in the boonies** in a rural area; far away from a city or population. (*Typically: **be ~; camp ~; live ~; stay ~**.) ☐ *Perry lives out in the boonies with his parents.*

in the boonies Go to previous.

in the buff Go to in the altogether.

***in the bull pen 1.** *Lit.* [of a baseball pitcher to be] in a special place near the playing field, warming up to pitch. (*Typically: **be ~; go [into] ~**.) ☐ *You can tell who is pitching next by seeing who is in the bull pen.* ☐ *Our best pitcher just went into the bull pen. He'll be pitching soon.* **2.** *Fig.* in reserve, ready if needed. ☐ *I'm willing to be in the bull pen. Just call me if you need me.*

***in the cards** *Fig.* in the future. (*Typically: **be ~; see** something **~**.) ☐ *Well, what do you think is in the cards for tomorrow?* ☐ *I asked the boss if there was a raise in the cards for me.*

***in the care of** someone and ***in the charge of** someone; ***in** someone's **care; *under** someone's **care** in the keeping of someone. (*Typically: **be ~; leave** someone or something **~; place** someone or something **[into] ~**.) ☐ *I left the baby in the care of my mother.* ☐ *I placed the house into the care of my friend.*

in the case of someone or something in the matter of someone or something; in the instance of someone or something. ☐ *In the case of John, I think we had better allow his request.* ☐ *In the case of this woman, we'll not grant permission.*

in the catbird seat *Sl.* in a dominant or controlling position. ☐ *Sally's in the catbird seat—telling everybody where to go.* ☐ *I hold all the aces. I'm in the catbird seat.*

in the C.E. Go to in the Common Era.

in the charge of someone Go to in the care of someone.

in the chips *Fig.* wealthy; having lots of money. (Having lots of gambling chips.) ☐ *I'm in the chips this month. Let's go squander it.* ☐ *If I were in the chips, I'd buy a Rolls Royce.*

***in the clear 1.** *Lit.* not obstructed; not enclosed. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~; get** someone or something **[into] ~**.) ☐ *You're in the clear. Go ahead and back up.* ☐ *Once the deer got into the clear, it ran away.* **2.** *Fig.* to be innocent; not to be guilty. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~; get** someone or something **[into] ~**.) ☐ *Don't worry, Tom. I'm sure you're in the clear.* ☐ *I'll feel better when I get into the clear.*

in the Common Era and **in the C.E.** [of dates] a year after the year 1 according to the Western calendar. (Offered as a replacement for *Anno Domini* and A.D.) ☐ *The comet was last seen in the year 1986 in the Common Era.* ☐ *The Huns invaded Gaul in 451 C.E.*

in the context of something in the circumstances under which something happens or has happened. ☐ *In the context of a funeral, laughing loudly is inappropriate.* ☐ *In the context of an argument, it is fine to speak firmly.*

In the country of the blind, the one-eyed man is king. *Prov.* A person who is not particularly capable can attain a powerful position if the people around him or her are even less capable. ☐ *Jill: How on earth did Joe get promoted to be head of his department? He's such a blunderer! Jane: In the country of the blind, the one-eyed man is king.*

in the course of time Go to in due course.

***in the dark (about** someone or something**)** *Fig.* uninformed about someone or something; ignorant about someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; keep** someone **~; stay ~**.) ☐ *I'm in the dark about who is in charge around here.* ☐ *I can't imagine why they are keeping me in the dark.* ☐ *She's in the dark about how this machine works.*

***in the doghouse** *Fig.* in trouble; in (someone's) disfavor. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; find** oneself **~; put** someone **[into] ~**.) ☐ *I'm really in the doghouse with my boss. I was late for an appointment.* ☐ *I hate being in the doghouse all the time. I don't know why I can't stay out of trouble.*

***in the doldrums** *Fig.* sluggish; inactive; in low spirits. (*Typically: **be ~; put** someone **[into] ~**.) ☐ *He's usually in the doldrums in the winter.* ☐ *I had some bad news yesterday, which put me into the doldrums.*

***in the drink** *Fig.* in the water; in the ocean. (*Typically: **be ~; fall ~; throw** someone **~**.) ☐ *He fell in the drink and had to be rescued.*

in the driver's seat *Fig.* in control; in charge of things. (As if one were driving and controlling the vehicle.) ☐ *Now that Fred is in the driver's seat, there is a lot less criticism about how things are being done.* ☐ *Joan can't wait to get into the driver's seat and do what she can to turn things around.*

in the event of something if something happens; on the chance that something happens. ☐ *In the event of his late arrival, please call me.* ☐ *In the event of rain, the parade is canceled.*

in the family way Go to in a family way.

***in the fast lane** *Fig.* in a very active or possible risky manner. (See also life in the fast lane. *Typically: **be ~; live ~; move~; stay ~**.) ☐ *Fred lives in the fast lane. It's lucky he's still alive.*

in the final analysis and **in the last analysis** in truth; when all the facts are known; when the truth becomes known. (Usually used when someone is speculating about what the final outcome will be.) ☐ *In the final analysis, it is usually the children who suffer most in a situation like this.* ☐ *In the last analysis, you simply do not want to do as you are told!*

in the first instance Go to next.

in the first place and **in the first instance** initially; to begin with. ☐ *In the first place, you don't have enough money to buy one. In the second place, you don't need one.* ☐ *In the first instance, I don't have the time. In the second place, I'm not interested.*

in the flesh *Fig.* bodily present; in person; totally real. ☐ *I've heard that the queen is coming here in the flesh.* ☐ *I've wanted a flat-screen TV for years, and now I've got one right here in the flesh.*

in the forefront (of something**)** Go to at the forefront (of something).

***in the groove** *Sl.* attuned to something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I was uncomfortable at first, but now I'm beginning to get in the groove.* ☐ *Fred began to get in the groove, and things went more smoothly.*

***in the gutter** *Fig.* [of a person] in a low state; poor and homeless. (*Typically: **be ~; fall [into] ~; put** someone **[into] ~**.) ☐ *You had better straighten out your life, or you'll end in the gutter.* ☐ *His bad habits put him into the gutter.*

***in the hole** *Fig.* in debt. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; go ~; put** someone **~**.) ☐ *I'm $200 in the hole.* ☐ *We went into the hole on that deal.*

***in the (home)stretch** *Fig.* in the last stage of a process. (From horse racing. *Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *We're in the homestretch with this project and can't change it now.* ☐ *We're in the stretch. Only three more days till we graduate.*

in the hopper *Fig.* in process; in line to be processed. (A hopper is a chute for incoming work or material to be processed.) ☐ *It's in the hopper. I'll get to it.* ☐ *Your job is in the hopper, and your turn is next.*

in the hot seat Go to on the hot seat.

in the interest of saving time in order to hurry things along; in order to save time. ☐ *Mary: In the interest of saving time, I'd like to save questions for the end of my talk. Bill: But I have an important question now!* ☐ *"In the interest of saving time," said Jane, "I'll give you the first three answers."*

in the interest of someone or something as an advantage or benefit to someone or something; in order to advance or improve someone or something. ☐ *In the interest of health, people are asked not to smoke.* ☐ *The police imprisoned the suspects in the interest of the safety of the public.*

in the interim (between things**)** in the meantime; in the time between the ending of something and the beginning of something else. ☐ *In the interim between her morning and afternoon classes, Susan rushed home to get a book she had forgotten.* ☐ *My favorite show starts in five minutes, but I'll talk to you in the interim.*

in the know knowledgeable. ☐ *Let's ask Bob. He's in the know.* ☐ *I have no knowledge of how to work this machine. I think I can get myself in the know very quickly though.*

in the lap of luxury *Cliché* in luxurious surroundings. ☐ *John lives in the lap of luxury because his family is very wealthy.* ☐ *When I retire, I'd like to live in the lap of luxury.*

in the last analysis Go to in the final analysis.

in the laundry with the clothes that are waiting to be washed. ☐ *Is my blue shirt clean or is it in the laundry?* ☐ *All my socks are in the laundry. What shall I do?*

in (the) light of something *Fig.* because of certain knowledge now in hand; considering something. (As if knowledge or information shed light on something.) ☐ *In light of what you have told us, I think we must abandon the project.* ☐ *In light of the clerk's rudeness, we didn't return to that shop.*

in the limelight Go to in the spotlight.

in the line of duty *Fig.* as part of one's expected duties. ☐ *When soldiers fight people in a war, it's in the line of duty.* ☐ *Police officers have to do things they may not like in the line of duty.*

in the long haul Go to over the long haul.

in the long run Go to over the long haul.

in the loop *Fig.* in the group of persons communicating regularly about a specific plan or project. ☐ *I don't know what's going on with the Jones deal since I'm not in the loop.* ☐ *Bob and Jean are in the loop. They can tell you what's happening.*

in the main basically; generally. ☐ *Mary: Everything looks all right—in the main. Sally: What details need attention? Mary: Just a few things here and there. Like on page 27.* ☐

John: Are you all ready? Sue: I think we're ready, in the main. John: Then, we shall go.

***in the mainstream (of** something**)** following the current trends or styles that are popular or are considered normal. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~**.) ☐ *Bob is too old-fashioned to be in the mainstream of modern living.*

in the making in development; in the process of developing. ☐ *This is a real problem in the making. Let's try to keep it from getting any worse.*

***in the market (for** something**)** *Fig.* wanting to buy something. (*Typically: **be ~; find** oneself **~**.) ☐ *I'm in the market for a new camera.* ☐ *If you have a boat for sale, we're in the market.*

in the meantime the period of time between two things; the period of time between now and when something is supposed to happen. ☐ *The movie starts at 6:00. In the meantime, let's eat dinner.* ☐ *My flight was at 8:00. In the meantime, I played solitaire.*

***in the middle of nowhere** *Fig.* in a very remote place. (*Typically: **be ~; drive [into] ~; put** someone or something **[into] ~**.) ☐ *To get to my house, you have to drive into the middle of nowhere.* ☐ *We found a nice place to eat, but it's out in the middle of nowhere.*

in the money 1. *Fig.* wealthy. ☐ *John is really in the money. He's worth millions.* ☐ *If I am ever in the money, I'll be generous.* **2.** *Fig.* in the winning position in a race or contest. (As if one had won the prize money; in horse racing the top three finishers can pay off on bets.) ☐ *I knew when Jane came around the final turn that she was in the money.* ☐ *The horses coming in first, second, and third are said to be in the money.*

in the mood (for something**)** and **in the mood (to** do something**)** having the proper state of mind for a particular situation or for doing something. ☐ *I'm not in the mood to see a movie tonight.* ☐ *Are you in the mood for pizza?*

in the near future *Cliché* in the time immediately ahead. ☐ *I don't plan to go to Florida in the near future.* ☐ *Today's prices won't be around in the near future.*

in the nude Go to in the altogether.

in the offing happening at some time in the future. ☐ *There is a big investigation in the offing, but I don't know when.* ☐ *It's hard to tell what's in the offing if you don't keep track of things.*

***in the open** in the outdoors; in an area that is not closed in. (*Typically: **be ~; put** something **~**.) ☐ *John's bike was stolen because he left it out in the open.* ☐ *Mary loves gardening because she loves to be in the open.*

***in the picture** *Fig.* well-informed; aware of what is going on. (*Typically: **be ~; keep** someone **~; put** someone **~**.) ☐ *Please, keep me fully in the picture.* ☐ *John found out about the plan. He's in the picture, so take care.*

***in the pink (of condition)** and ***in the pink (of health)** *Fig.* in very good health; in very good condition, physically and emotionally. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~**.) ☐ *He recovered completely from his surgery and has been in the pink ever since.* ☐ *She was lively and active and in the pink of condition.*

in the pink (of health) Go to previous.

in the pipeline *Fig.* backed up somewhere in a process; in process; in a queue. ☐ *There's a lot of goods still in the pipeline. That means no more new orders will be shipped for a while.* ☐ *Your papers are in the pipeline somewhere. You'll just have to wait.*

***in the poorhouse 1.** *Lit.* in a (historical) communal dwelling for impoverished persons. (*Typically: **live ~; end up ~**.) ☐ *He couldn't pay his debts and had to live in the poorhouse.* **2.** *Fig.* in a state of poverty. (*Typically: **live ~; end up ~**.) ☐ *If I lose my job, we'll end up in the poorhouse.*

in the prime of life *Fig.* in the best and most productive and healthy period of life. ☐ *The good health of one's youth can carry over into the prime of life.* ☐ *He was struck down by a heart attack in the prime of life.*

***in the public eye** *Fig.* publicly; visible to all; conspicuous. (*Typically: **be ~; find** oneself **~; get [into] ~**.) ☐ *Elected officials find themselves constantly in the public eye.* ☐ *The mayor made it a practice to get into the public eye as much as possible.*

in the raw Go to in the altogether.

in the rear located in the space or area behind someone or something. ☐ *The waiter told me that the bathrooms were in the rear.* ☐ *All deliveries must be made in the rear.*

***in the red** *Fig.* losing money. (*Typically: **be ~; go [into] ~**; as opposed to in the black.) ☐ *State government has been operating in the red for five straight years.* ☐ *What with all those car repairs, we're going to be in the red this month.*

in the right correct; morally or legally correct. ☐ *I know I'm in the right.* ☐ *You are not in the right on this point.*

in the right place at the right time in the location where something good is to happen exactly when it happens. ☐ *I got a good deal on a car because I was in the right place at the right time.* ☐ *Unless you are in the right place at the right time, you won't get a chance to meet a movie star.*

in the road 1. *Lit.* on the roadway. ☐ *What's that in the road ahead?* **2.** *Fig.* in the way; obstructing the way. ☐ *You are always in the road. Move aside.*

in the running *Fig.* in competition; competing and having a chance to win. (See also in a bind and the examples.) ☐ *Is Tom still in the running? Does he still have a chance to be elected?* ☐ *I don't know about Tom, but Gladys is definitely still in the running.*

***in the same boat (as** someone**)** in the same situation; having the same problem. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~**.) ☐ *Tom: I'm broke. Can you lend me twenty dollars? Bill: Sorry. I'm in the same boat.* ☐ *Jane and Mary are both in the same boat. They have been called for jury duty.*

in the same breath *Fig.* [stated or said] almost at the same time. ☐ *He told me I was lazy, but then in the same breath he said I was doing a good job.* ☐ *The teacher said that the students were working hard and, in the same breath, that they were not working hard enough.*

in the second place secondly; in addition. (Usually said after one has said in the first place.) ☐ *In the first place, you don't have enough money to buy one. In the second place, you don't need one.* ☐ *In the first place, I don't have the time. In the second place, I'm not interested.*

in the short haul Go to over the short haul.

in the short run Go to over the short haul.

***in the soup** *Fig.* in a bad situation. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~**.) ☐ *Now I'm really in the soup. I broke Mrs. Franklin's window.* ☐ *I make a lot of mistakes. It's easy for me to get into the soup.*

in the spotlight 1. *Fig.* in the beam of a spotlight, as on a stage. ☐ *The singer was in the spotlight but the band was almost in the dark.* **2.** and **in the limelight** *Fig.* at the center of attention. (*Limelight* refers to an obsolete type of spotlight, and the word occurs only in this phrase.) ☐ *John will do almost anything to get himself into the limelight.* ☐ *I love being in the spotlight.* ☐ *All elected officials spend a lot of time in the limelight.*

***in the swim of things** *Fig.* involved in or participating in events or happenings. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~**.) ☐ *I've been ill, but soon I'll be back in the swim of things.* ☐ *I can't wait to settle down and get into the swim of things.*

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***in the trust of** someone under the responsibility or in the care of someone. (*Typically: **be ~; leave** someone or something **~; place** someone or something **~**.) ☐ *The state placed the orphan in the trust of the foster parents.* ☐ *Our bonds are left in the trust of our broker.*

in the twinkling of an eye and **in the wink of an eye** *Fig.* very quickly. ☐ *In the twinkling of an eye, the deer had disappeared into the forest.* ☐ *I gave Bill ten dollars and, in the twinkling of an eye, he spent it.*

in the unlikely event of something and **in the unlikely event that** something **happens** if something—which probably will not happen—actually happens. ☐ *In the unlikely event of my getting the job, I'll have to buy a car to get there every day.* ☐ *In the unlikely event of a fire, please walk quickly to an exit.*

***in the (very) nick of time** *Fig.* just in time; at the last possible instant; just before it's too late. (*Typically: **arrive ~; get there ~; happen ~; reach** something **~; save** someone **~**.) ☐ *The doctor arrived in the nick of time. The patient's life was saved.* ☐ *I reached the airport in the very nick of time and made my flight.*

in the wake of something *Fig.* after something; as a result of some event. (Alludes to a ship's wake.) ☐ *We had no place to live in the wake of the fire.* ☐ *In the wake of the storm, there were many broken tree limbs.*

in the way of someone**('s plans)** Go to in someone's way.

in the way of someone or something Go to in someone's or something's way.

in the way of something as a kind of something; as a style of something. ☐ *What do you have in the way of dress shoes?* ☐ *We have nothing in the way of raincoats.*

in the wind *Fig.* about to happen. ☐ *There are some major changes in the wind. Expect these changes to happen soon.* ☐ *There is something in the wind. We'll find out what it is soon.*

in the wink of an eye Go to in the twinkling of an eye.

in the works *Fig.* being prepared; being planned; being done. ☐ *There are some new laws in the works that will affect all of us.* ☐ *I have some ideas in the works that you might be interested in.*

in the world Go to on earth.

in the worst way *Fig.* very much. ☐ *I want a new car in the worst way.* ☐ *Bob wants to retire in the worst way.*

in the wrong wrong; morally or legally incorrect. ☐ *I am not in the wrong, you are.* ☐ *No, you are in the wrong.*

in the wrong place at the wrong time in the location where something bad is to happen exactly when it happens. ☐ *I always get into trouble. I'm just in the wrong place at the wrong time.* ☐ *It's isn't my fault. I was just in the wrong place at the wrong time.*

in their entirety Go to in its entirety.

in theory according to a theory; theoretically. ☐ *In theory, if I take my medicine regularly, I will get well.* ☐ *How things work in theory doesn't always match with how things work in reality.*

in there *Sl.* sincere; likeable. ☐ *Martha is really in there. Everybody likes her.* ☐ *I like a guy who's in there—who thinks about other people.*

in there pitching *Fig.* trying very hard. ☐ *Bob is always in there pitching.* ☐ *Just stay in there pitching. You'll make some progress eventually.*

in these parts *Rur.* around here; in this area. ☐ *There aren't any big hospitals in these parts.* ☐ *Joe's the richest man in these parts.*

the **in thing (to do)** the fashionable thing to do. ☐ *Eating low-fat food is the in thing to do.* ☐ *Bob is very old-fashioned. He never does the in thing.*

in this day and age *Fig.* now; in these modern times. ☐ *Bill: Ted flunked out of school. Mother: Imagine that! Especially in this day and age.* ☐ *Bill: Taxes keep going up and up. Bob: What do you expect in this day and age?*

in those parts *Rur.* around there; in that area. ☐ *I've got a cousin who lives in those parts.* ☐ *We used to spend our vacations in those parts.*

in time Go to in due course.

in time (with something**)** Go to in step (with something).

in times past *Fig.* long ago; in previous times. ☐ *In times past, you would not have been able to wear casual clothing to work.* ☐ *In times past, the air always seemed fresher and cleaner.*

in top form 1. [of someone or some creature] in very good physical condition. ☐ *The runners are in top form, so this should be a good race.* ☐ *I'm not in top form, but I'm not completely out of shape either.* **2.** able to make witty remarks and clever statements quickly and easily. ☐ *That was really funny, Bob. You are in top form tonight.* ☐ *The president was in top form and entertained the audience with her speech.*

***in touch (with** someone**) 1.** *Fig.* in contact with someone by letter or telephone. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; keep ~**.) ☐ *I tried to get in touch with her, but she never answered her phone.* ☐ *I just couldn't seem to get in touch.* **2.** *Fig.* [of oneself] having self-knowledge. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I need to get in touch with myself and the way I really feel about things.* ☐ *She needs to try more to be in touch with herself and her feelings.*

***in touch with** someone or something **1.** *Fig.* in communication with someone or a group. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Are you in touch with your brother, or have you two grown apart?* ☐ *I am in touch with the person whom you asked about.* **2.** *Fig.* sympathetic or sensitive to someone or something; having good contact or rapport with someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *We talk to each other, but we're not really in touch with each other.*

in tow closely following; under someone's control. ☐ *The nanny walked into the park with three children in tow.* ☐ *The manager went to the meeting with her staff in tow.*

in transit while in the process of being transported. ☐ *Dave is in transit from London to Chicago.* ☐ *The new stereo is now in transit from the manufacturer.*

in triplicate [of a document] produced in three copies. ☐ *Mr. Smith asked me to copy his notes in triplicate.* ☐ *I completed each form in triplicate.*

***in trouble 1.** in danger; in difficulty; due for punishment. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~**.) ☐ *If you don't be quiet, you're going to be in trouble.* ☐ *The company was in trouble for months, and then went bankrupt.* **2.** *Euph.* pregnant and unmarried. (*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~**.) ☐ *They had to get married. She was in trouble.* ☐ *She'll be in trouble before long, if she doesn't quit running around like that.*

in tune in a state where musical notes are at their proper intervals so that none are flat or sharp. ☐ *Your piano is in tune.* ☐ *The choir members all sang in tune.*

***in tune with** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* in musical harmony with someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *The violin is in tune with the piano.* ☐ *The tenor is not in tune with the bass.* **2.** *Fig.* in agreement with someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Bill is just not in tune with the company's policies.*

***in tune with the times** *Fig.* up-to-date; in fashion. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Look at that old jacket, Bill. You're not in tune with the times.*

in turn in the appropriate point in the series or order; when one's turn comes. ☐ *Someone has to wash the dishes after every meal. All of us will have to do it in turn.* ☐ *All three of them shared the task of carrying water in turn.*

in two shakes of a lamb's tail *Fig.* in a very short time; very quickly. ☐ *Jane returned in two shakes of a lamb's tail.* ☐ *Mike was able to solve the problem in two shakes of a lamb's tail.*

in unison [of musical notes, instruments, or voices] having the same pitch. ☐ *This part of the piece is performed in unison.* ☐ *The twins sang in unison.*

in use [of some facility or device] occupied or busy. ☐ *Sorry, this room is in use.* ☐ *How long will it be in use?*

in vain for no purpose; [done] as a failure. ☐ *They rushed her to the hospital, but they did it in vain.* ☐ *We tried in vain to get her there on time.*

in view of something in consideration of something; because of something. ☐ *In view of the high cost of gasoline, I sold my car.* ☐ *I won't invite John to the meeting in view of his attitude.*

***in vogue** fashionable; faddish. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *This style of coat is no longer in vogue.* ☐ *That word isn't in vogue any longer.*

*an **in (with** someone**)** a way to request a special favor from someone; an amount of influence with someone. (The *in* is a noun. *Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Did you get an in with the mayor? I have to ask him a favor.* ☐ *Sorry, I don't have an in, but I know someone who does.*

***in with** someone favored by someone; experiencing someone's goodwill. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I'm really in with my Spanish professor.* ☐ *I am trying to get in with the bank manager so I can get a loan.* ☐ *Are you in with John? I need to ask him for a favor.*

***in writing** in written form rather that spoken. (*Typically: **get** something **~; have** something **~; put** something **~**.) ☐ *Be sure to get their salary offer in writing.*

inaugurate someone **as** something to install or introduce someone as something. ☐ *The club inaugurated Amy as the new president.* ☐ *We will inaugurate Ken as vice president.*

incapacitate someone **(for** something**) (for** a period of time**)** to make someone physically unfit for [doing] something for a period of time. ☐ *The accident incapacitated Rick for further work for a year.* ☐ *Sam's carelessness incapacitated Frank for a month.*

incarcerate someone **in** something to imprison someone in something. ☐ *The sheriff incarcerated Lefty in the county jail.* ☐ *He had wanted to incarcerate Max in the jail too.*

inch along (something**)** to move slowly along something little by little. ☐ *The cat inched along the carpet toward the mouse.* ☐ *Traffic was inching along.*

inch back to move back very slowly. ☐ *The trainer inched back from the angry tiger.* ☐ *The tiger inched back and sprang.*

inch by inch *Fig.* one inch at a time; little by little. ☐ *Traffic moved along inch by inch.* ☐ *Inch by inch, the snail moved across the stone.*

inch forward to move forward very slowly. ☐ *Inch forward very slowly, and try not to make any noise.* ☐ *The cat inched forward, taking care not to alert the bird to its presence.*

inch one's **way across** something and **inch** oneself **across** something to creep slowly across something. ☐ *The little green worm inched its way across the branch.* ☐ *It inched itself across the leaf.*

inch one's **way along** something and **inch** oneself **along** something to creep slowly on or along something. ☐ *I inched my way along the ledge and almost fell off.* ☐ *Sharon inched herself along the side of the bridge.*

inch oneself **across** something Go to **inch** one's **way across** something.

inch oneself **along** something Go to **inch** one's **way along** something.

inch over to move over a tiny bit. ☐ *Could you inch over a little? I need just a little more room.* ☐ *Please inch over a little.*

incite someone **to** something to excite or provoke someone to something. ☐ *The radicals tried to incite the students to*

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violence. ☐ *The students were incited to violent behavior by the lecturer.*

incline away (from someone or something**)** to lean or slope away from someone or something. ☐ *I inclined away from her to avoid her alcohol breath.* ☐ *The land inclined away from the house.*

incline forward to lean forward; to slant forward. ☐ *The earthquake-ravaged building inclined forward a little bit more and looked as if it was going to fall.* ☐ *My chair inclined forward and I kept feeling as if I were going to fall off.*

incline something **forward** to lean something forward; to make something slant forward. ☐ *Incline the light forward a little bit, so you can see better.* ☐ *The fence had been inclined slightly forward to make it harder to climb.*

incline toward someone or something **1.** to lean or slant toward someone or something. ☐ *The piece of scenery inclined toward Roger very slowly and he jumped out of the way just in time.* ☐ *The tree inclined toward the direction of the wind.* **2.** to favor or "lean" toward choosing someone or something. ☐ *I don't know which to choose. I incline toward Terri but I also favor Amy.* ☐ *I'm inclining toward chocolate.*

inclined to do something to tend to do something; to lean toward doing something. ☐ *Tom is inclined to tell jokes when he is with a group of people.* ☐ *I'm inclined to go to the beach tomorrow if it doesn't rain.*

include someone **in (**something**)** to invite someone to participate in something. ☐ *Let's include Terri in the planning session.* ☐ *Without asking, Henry included himself in the group going on a picnic.*

include someone or something **among** something to count someone or something as a member of a group or collection. ☐ *I am happy to include you among my friends.* ☐ *Do you include chocolate among your favorite flavors?*

include someone **out (of** something**)** *Fig.* to exclude someone from something. (Jocular.) ☐ *I'm not interested in your games. Include me out of them.* ☐ *Include me out too.*

include something **in the bargain** Go to **throw** something **into the bargain.**

incorporate someone or something **in(to)** something to build someone or something into something; to combine someone or something into something. ☐ *We want to incorporate you into our sales force very soon.* ☐ *The prince had incorporated himself into the main governing body.*

increase by leaps and bounds *Fig.* to increase or grow by large increments. (See also **gain by leaps and bounds.**) ☐ *The price of our stock is increasing by leaps and bounds.*

increase in something to grow or expand in some quality. ☐ *He increased in stature and wisdom.* ☐ *The tree increased in size every year.*

increase something **by** something to enlarge something by an amount or degree. ☐ *They increased the size of the house by two hundred square feet.* ☐ *The engine size on the new model has been increased by a small amount.*

increase something **(from** something**) (to** something**)** to enlarge something from something to something bigger; to enlarge something from one size to a larger size. ☐ *We plan to increase sales from four million to six million dollars.* ☐ *I increased my bid to two thousand from one thousand.*

increment something **by** something to increase a sum by a supplement [of a certain figure]. ☐ *Increment the numbering by ten so that 1, 2, 3 becomes 10, 20, 30.* ☐ *The base number was incremented by 4.*

inculcate someone **with** something to touch or impress someone with some specific knowledge. ☐ *The teacher sought to inculcate the students with the knowledge they needed.* ☐ *Her parents inculcated her with good manners.*

inculcate something **in(to)** someone to instill specific knowledge into someone; to teach something to someone so that it will be remembered. ☐ *They inculcated good manners into their children all their lives.* ☐ *We tried to inculcate good morals into our students.*

incumbent (up)on someone **to** do something obligatory for someone to do something. ☐ *It is incumbent upon me to inform you that you are up for review.* ☐ *It was incumbent on Mary to mail her application before June 1st.*

indemnify someone or something **against** something to agree to protect someone or something against something, such as damage or a lawsuit. ☐ *Their employer indemnified them against legal action.* ☐ *We indemnified the publisher against legal trouble.*

indicate something **to** someone to signify something to someone. (By speech, writing, or some other sign.) ☐ *Karen indicated her agreement to the lawyer.* ☐ *Fred indicated his assent to me.*

indict someone **for** something [for a legal body] to arraign someone for a crime or name someone formally as the one accused of a crime. ☐ *The grand jury indicted her for murder.* ☐ *Then they indicted Max for grand larceny.*

indoctrinate someone **into** something to teach someone the ways of a group or some activity. ☐ *The staff sought to indoctrinate Walter into the ways of office procedure.* ☐ *Todd indoctrinated Ken into camp life.*

indoctrinate someone **with** something to teach someone the official or fundamental knowledge about something. ☐ *They indoctrinated all their spies with the importance of being loyal to the death.* ☐ *Ken indoctrinated Todd with revolutionary thinking.*

induce labor in someone to cause the onset of childbirth in a mother-to-be. ☐ *They decided to induce labor in the mother-to-be.* ☐ *They decided not to induce labor in Alice.*

induct someone **into** something **1.** to conscript someone into the armed services; to bring a nonvolunteer into the armed services. ☐ *They inducted Wally into the army in a little ceremony.* **2.** to draft someone into something. ☐ *They inducted a number of new members into the group.* **3.** to install someone in an office or position. ☐ *They inducted her into the presidency.* ☐ *The college inducted a new president into office last week.*

indulge in something **1.** to take pleasure in doing something; to do something habitually. ☐ *No, I don't indulge in contact sports anymore.* ☐ *We don't indulge in strenuous activity.* **2.** to choose to eat a certain food or drink something, usually alcohol. ☐ *I don't usually indulge in hard spirits, but just this once.* ☐ *I indulge in chocolate until I can't hold any more.*

indulge someone **with** something to grant someone the favor or privilege of something. ☐ *Please indulge me with this one favor.* ☐ *He always indulged himself with dinner at a nice restaurant when he went into town.*

***infatuated with** someone or something to be in love with someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *She is infatuated with John.* ☐ *John is infatuated with chocolate ice cream.*

infect someone **with** something **1.** to transmit disease-causing organisms to someone. (*Someone* includes *oneself*.) ☐ *Please don't infect me with your cold germs.* ☐ *Somehow, she infected herself with the virus she was studying.* **2.** to affect someone with something, such as excitement, joy, desires, etc. ☐ *Her explosive laughter infected everyone with good spirits.*

infer something **from** something to reach a conclusion from something; to deduce facts from something, such as someone's words, a situation, etc. ☐ *What can we infer from the experience we have just had?* ☐ *You should not infer anything from Sue's remarks.*

***infested with** something to be contaminated with a swarm or throng of some pest. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *All the campers are infested with lice.* ☐ *The dog is infested with ticks.*

infiltrate into something **1.** to permeate something; to filter into something. ☐ *The sour smell infiltrated into everything in the refrigerator.* ☐ *The paint smell infiltrated into every room in the house.* **2.** and **infiltrate** something to penetrate a group, secretly, for the purposes of spying or influencing the activities of the group. ☐ *The spy infiltrated into the enemy headquarters.* ☐ *They infiltrated into the government.*

inflate something **with** something **1.** *Lit.* to fill up something with air or some other gas. ☐ *Jerry has to inflate all the balloons with helium.* ☐ *Ken inflated the balloons with gas.* **2.** *Fig.* to make a sum appear larger by including additional irrelevant amounts. ☐ *I think that she has inflated her expense report with too many miles of travel.* ☐ *Don't inflate your expense report with extra costs.*

inflict someone **(up)on** someone to burden someone with the care or keeping of someone else. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Please don't inflict Bob upon me.* ☐ *My brother inflicted his children on us for the weekend.* ☐ *Well, I certainly don't want to inflict myself on you for the weekend, but I do need a place to stay.*

inflict something **(up)on** someone or something to impose something, such as pain, a burden, a problem, etc., on someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *I hate to inflict an additional burden upon you, but someone has to clean the oven.* ☐ *Please don't inflict that on me.*

inform on someone to tell the authorities about someone; to tattle on someone. ☐ *I am going to have to inform on you.* ☐ *Liz informed on Ken to their mother.*

inform someone **about** someone or something to tell someone about someone or something. ☐ *How is my friend Tom getting on? I asked you to inform me about him from time to time.* ☐ *Please inform me about the state of the contract for the book.*

inform someone **of** something to tell someone a fact. ☐ *Please inform Sally of my decision.* ☐ *Sally has been informed of your decision.*

inform someone **on** someone to **tattle (on** someone**) (to** someone**)**. ☐ *I will inform the teacher on you!* ☐ *Billy informed his mother on Bobby.*

infringe (up)on something to interfere with the rights of someone or with someone's property rights; to encroach on something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *You are infringing upon my right to free speech.* ☐ *I am not infringing on your property. I'm in my own yard.*

infuse someone **with** something to teach someone a body of knowledge or a perspective on a body of knowledge. ☐ *The schools sought to infuse the children with a sense of history.* ☐ *Children should be infused with a respect for the rights of others.*

infuse something **into** someone to instill specific knowledge into a person; to teach someone something very well. ☐ *The boss infused a lot of company information into the new assistant before she took another job.* ☐ *The teacher infused a lot of knowledge into the students in a short time.*

infuse something **into** something to mix something into something. ☐ *You should infuse this mixture into the tea.* ☐ *The tea was infused into the water very slowly.*

infuse something **with** something to make something mix into some liquid. ☐ *He infused the mixture with a strong solution of soap.* ☐ *The chemical mixture was infused with the other solution.*

ingratiate oneself **into** something to work hard to bring oneself into the favor of someone. ☐ *Oh, how he fawns over the guests! Isn't it terrible the way he tries to ingratiate himself into their favor?* ☐ *You will never succeed in ingratiating yourself into my good graces.*

ingratiate oneself **with** someone to work oneself into someone's favor. ☐ *Why do you have to ingratiate yourself with everyone? Don't you know how to be just plain friends?* ☐ *She was very obvious in her effort to ingratiate herself with the boss.*

inherit something **from** someone **1.** to receive something from the estate of a person who has died. ☐ *I inherited this silver bowl from my aunt.* ☐ *Liz inherited her house from her parents.* **2.** to receive a genetic or behavioral trait from a relative. ☐ *I inherited my stubbornness from my father's side of the family.* ☐ *My dark hair was inherited from my father.*

inhibit someone **from** doing something to keep someone from doing something. ☐ *We will attempt to inhibit Karen from doing it, but we have no control over her.* ☐ *A serious case of shyness inhibited Harry from participating in things.*

inhibit something **from** doing something to keep something from happening. ☐ *We need to inhibit the weeds from further growth.* ☐ *The weeds were inhibited from spreading by the application of a pesticide.*

initiate someone **into** something **1.** to induct someone into an organization or activity, usually in a ceremony. ☐ *They will initiate me into the fraternity next week.* ☐ *They initiated all their new members into the club at once.* **2.** to introduce someone to the activities associated with a job or other situation. ☐ *The personnel department will initiate you into our office routines.* ☐ *Our procedures are com-*

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plicated and it takes weeks to initiate a new employee into all our procedures.

inject something **into** someone, something, or some creature and **inject** someone, something, or some creature **with** something to give a hypodermic injection of something to someone or an animal. ☐ *The nurse injected the medicine into my arm.* ☐ *He injected a very large dose into the patient.*

inject something **into** something **1.** *Lit.* to squirt something, such as oil, water, etc., into something. ☐ *The pump injected the oil into the wheel bearings when I squeezed the lever.* ☐ *The mechanic injected a solvent into the lock.* **2.** *Fig.* to put something, such as humor, excitement, etc., into a situation. ☐ *Let's inject a little humor into this dismal affair.* ☐ *She likes to inject a lot of excitement into her books.*

ink something **in**† **1.** to fill in an outline with ink. ☐ *Please ink the drawing in with care.* ☐ *Ink in the drawing carefully.* **2.** to write something in ink. ☐ *Please ink your name in on the dotted line.* ☐ *Now, ink in your signature on this line right here.*

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*****an **inkling (about** someone or something**)** an idea about someone or something; a hint about the nature of someone or something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I had an inkling about the problems that you were going to run into.*

*****an **inkling (of** something**)** a hint about something that is to happen. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *The speeches gave us an inkling of what we could expect from the new president.*

inlay something **with** something to decorate something by cutting in a design and filling the cut with some decorative substance. ☐ *The workers inlaid the tabletop with bits of polished seashell.* ☐ *The tabletop was inlaid with a lovely design.*

***innocent as a lamb** and ***innocent as a newborn babe 1.** guiltless. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *"Hey! You can't throw me in jail," cried the robber. "I'm innocent as a lamb."* **2.** naive; inexperienced. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *She's eighteen years old, but innocent as a newborn babe.*

innocent as a newborn babe Go to previous.

inoculate someone **against** something to immunize someone against a disease. ☐ *We need to inoculate all the children against whooping cough.* ☐ *Have you been inoculated against measles?*

inoculate someone **with** something to use a particular substance in immunizing someone against a disease. ☐ *Donna inoculated Richard and Nancy with yellow fever vaccine for their trip.* ☐ *She also inoculated Sam with something to prevent malaria.*

inquire about someone or something to ask about someone or something. ☐ *I inquired about Tom and was told that he doesn't live here anymore.* ☐ *You will have to inquire about that at the front desk.*

inquire after someone to ask about the well-being of someone. ☐ *Jerry inquired after you when I saw him at the store today.* ☐ *I will inquire after his wife the next time I see him.*

inquire for someone to ask to see someone. ☐ *Mr. Franklin, there is a man out here inquiring for you. What shall I tell him?* ☐ *Who is inquiring for me?*

inquire into something to look into something; to investigate something by asking questions. ☐ *I will inquire into your complaint. It sounds as if something is wrong.* ☐ *We have not inquired into it yet.*

inquire something **of** someone to ask some information of someone. ☐ *I need to inquire something of you.* ☐ *May I inquire something personal of you?*

inquire within to ask questions of a person inside [some place, such as a store or office]. (Formula. On a sign posted outside.) ☐ *"Help wanted. Inquire within," read the sign on the door.* ☐ *If you want to apply, you must inquire within.*

the **ins and outs (of** something**)** the correct and successful way to do something; the special things that one needs to know to do something. ☐ *I don't understand the ins and outs of politics.* ☐ *Jane knows the ins and outs of repairing computers.*

inscribe something **into** something to write or engrave a dedication on a gift to someone. (Emphasis is on the act of inscribing.) ☐ *It was a lovely watch. I asked them to inscribe something into the back, so I could remember the occasion.* ☐ *My initials were inscribed into the wristband.*

inscribe something **on(to)** something to write or engrave certain information on something. (Emphasis is on the message that is inscribed.) ☐ *The jeweler inscribed Amy's good wishes onto the watch.* ☐ *I inscribed my name on my tools.*

inscribe something **with** something to engrave something with a message. ☐ *Could you please inscribe this trophy with the information on this sheet of paper?* ☐ *I inscribed the bracelet with her name.*

insert something **between** something **and** something else to put something in between things. ☐ *Insert this marker between pages ten and eleven.* ☐ *A marker was inserted between the pages.*

insert something **in(to)** something to push or stick something into something. ☐ *Insert the card into the slot and pull the lever.* ☐ *Insert the coins in the machine.* ☐ *I need to insert another paragraph into this article.*

inside a week in less than a week. ☐ *We must get all this sorted out inside a week; all right?* ☐ *We've got inside a week to get it right.*

inside information information known only by those most involved with the issue; secret information relating to an organization. ☐ *I have some inside information about the Smith Company.*

an **inside job** a crime committed by someone working or living at the scene of the crime. ☐ *There was little doubt that it was an inside job, thought the inspector.* ☐ *It's a particularly cunning way to carry out an inside job.*

an **inside joke** a joke that only certain people understand; a joke understood only by people who know certain facts and context. ☐ *What you said must be an inside joke. It makes no sense to me.*

the **inside story** an explanation known only by those most involved with the issue. ☐ *Well, I've heard the inside story, and it isn't what you were told at all!*

*the **inside track** *Fig.* an advantage (over someone) gained through special connections, special knowledge, or favoritism. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *If I could get the inside track, I could win the contract.* ☐ *The boss likes me. Since I've got the inside track, I'll probably be the new office manager.*

insinuate oneself **into** something to work oneself into a group or situation. ☐ *She had sought for years to insinuate herself into Terry's organization.* ☐ *Must you always insinuate yourself into my set of friends?*

insinuate something **to** someone to hint at something to someone; to imply something to someone. ☐ *You think I am interested in you for your money! Is that what you are insinuating to me?* ☐ *I did not insinuate anything to you!*

insist (up)on something to demand something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *I want you here now! We all insist upon it!* ☐ *I insist on it too.*

inspire someone **with** something to use something to inspire someone; to stimulate or encourage someone with something. ☐ *The president inspired us all with patriotic speeches.* ☐ *She inspired us all with her story of heroism.*

inspire something **in** someone to stimulate a particular quality in someone. ☐ *You do not particularly inspire trust in me.* ☐ *She inspires fear in me.*

install someone **as** something to inaugurate or launch someone into the role of something. ☐ *The board installed Jerry as the new parliamentarian.* ☐ *She installed herself as the boss of the kitchen and wouldn't allow anyone else in.*

install something **in** someone or something to insert or build something into someone or something. ☐ *We are going to install a trash compactor in our kitchen.* ☐ *The doctors installed a pacemaker in Donald.*

instigate someone **to** do something to prompt someone to do something; to urge or cause someone to do something. ☐ *Are you the one who instigated Terry to start all this trouble?* ☐ *Did you instigate the children to do this?*

instill someone **with** something to imbue or impress someone with something. ☐ *Her story instilled us all with courage.* ☐ *She instilled us with courage.*

instill something **in(to)** someone to impress something into someone's mind. ☐ *You need to remember your manners. I want to instill that into you.* ☐ *Good manners were instilled in me at home.*

instill something **in(to)** something to add something to a situation. ☐ *The presence of the mayor instilled a legitimacy into the proceedings.* ☐ *Sharon sought to instill a little levity in the meeting.*

institute something **against** someone or something to initiate something against someone or something. ☐ *The hospital decided to institute proceedings against her for failing to pay her bill.* ☐ *The prosecutor instituted a case against the county board.*

instruct someone **in** something to teach someone about something. ☐ *Amy will instruct you in the way to hang paper.* ☐ *The manager instructed Ken in the best method of entering data into the computer.*

instrumental in doing something playing an important part in doing something. ☐ *John was instrumental in getting the contract to build the new building.* ☐ *Our senator was instrumental in defeating the bill.*

insulate someone or something **against** someone or something and **insulate** someone or something **from** someone or something to protect someone or something against the effect of someone or something. ☐ *Use an extra blanket to insulate the baby against the cold.* ☐ *John is a bad influence on the children, and I've taken care to insulate them against him.* ☐ *We insulated the children from the effects of John and his bad habits.*

insure against something to guard or protect against something. ☐ *You must insure against theft and fire.* ☐ *I will insure against all risks.*

insure someone or something **(against** something**) (for** something**)** to provide insurance for someone or something against certain perils up to a certain amount of money. ☐ *I insured my wife against accidental death for $100,000.* ☐ *We insured the car for its current value against all losses.*

insure someone or something **with** something to provide insurance for someone or something from a specific company. ☐ *I insured Amy with a fine old insurance company.* ☐ *We insured the car with Acme Insurance in Adamsville.*

integrate someone or something **into** something to combine someone or something into something; to work someone or something into something. ☐ *We sought to integrate Amy into the everyday affairs of the company.* ☐ *We sought to integrate the new family into the ways of the community.*

integrate someone **with** someone to mix people together; to unify people into one group. ☐ *The new regional YMCA will help Hispanics integrate with others in our community.* ☐ *They integrated themselves with the people already in attendance.*

integrate something **with** something to merge things together; to join things into one. ☐ *I want to integrate the accounting department with the auditing department to save a little money.* ☐ *They integrated your department with mine.*

intend something **as** something to mean something to serve as something. ☐ *We intend this money as a gift. Do not even think about paying it back.* ☐ *This money is intended as a gift.*

intend something **for** someone or something to mean for someone or something to get something. ☐ *I intended this one for you. I'm sorry I failed to give it to you in time.* ☐ *Aunt Em intended this cake for the county fair, but you can have it instead.*

intent on doing something determined to do something. ☐ *The children were intent on making a snowman.* ☐ *The prisoner was intent on escaping.*

inter someone **in** something to bury someone in something or in some place. ☐ *They chose to inter her in the family burial plot.* ☐ *She was interred in the vault with the rest of the family.*

interact with someone to converse with and exchange ideas with someone. ☐ *In act two, I want Terri to interact with Amy a little more. They act as if they never even met each other.* ☐ *The students will interact with one another in their study projects.*

interact with someone to have a reciprocal action with something; to react with something. (Often refers to the negative consequences of interaction.) ☐ *Will this drug interact with coffee?* ☐ *This drug will not interact with your current medication.*

intercede (for someone**) (with** someone or something**)** to intervene on behalf of someone with someone or a group; to plead someone's case with someone or a group. ☐ *I will intercede for Charlotte with the council.* ☐ *Tom interceded with Fred for Sharon, who was too shy to speak for herself.*

interchange someone **with** someone else to exchange one person for another. ☐ *I interchanged Sally with Roger for the honor of being first speaker.* ☐ *Roger has been interchanged with Sally.*

interchange something **with** something to exchange one thing for another. ☐ *Please interchange the orange one with the purple one.* ☐ *The orange one has been interchanged with the red one.*

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interest someone **in** someone or something to arouse the interest of someone in someone or something. ☐ *Yes, I can recommend someone for you to hire. Could I interest you in Tom? He's one of our best workers.* ☐ *Can I interest you in checking out a book from the library?*

interest someone **in** something to cause someone to wish to purchase something. ☐ *Could I interest you in something with a little more style to it?* ☐ *Can I interest you in some additional insurance on your life?*

interface someone or something **with** someone or something to bring about a complex connection of people and things, in any combination. (Originally having to do with computers.) ☐ *Let's interface Walter with the staff from the main office.* ☐ *I want to interface my data with Sam, who has some relevant statistics from prior years.*

interface with someone or something to develop a connection or interaction with someone or something. ☐ *Call Walter and set up a meeting so we can interface with him.* ☐ *This computer is meant to interface with as many as five others just like it.*

interfere in something to meddle in something; to become involved in someone else's business. ☐ *Don't interfere in my business!* ☐ *Are you interfering in this matter again?*

interfere with someone or something to meddle with something or someone's affairs. ☐ *Please do not interfere with us.* ☐ *Are you interfering with my project?*

interject someone **into** something to force someone into something, usually into someone else's business. ☐ *I am going to have to interject Fred into this matter before it gets out of hand.* ☐ *I hate to interject myself into your affairs, but I have something to say.*

interject something **into** something to volunteer information or a comment into a conversation. ☐ *We can always count on Liz to interject something sensible into our discussions.* ☐ *At last, something sensible has been interjected into our discussions.*

interlace something **with** something to weave something into something else. ☐ *I will interlace some silver thread with the white yarn.* ☐ *The manufacturer had interlaced a silver thread into the yarn.*

intermarry with someone [for members of a group] to marry into another group, race, or clan. ☐ *Our people don't intermarry with people of that clan.* ☐ *They do not intermarry with other groups on purpose.*

intermingle something **with** something to mingle or merge things with things. ☐ *Don't intermingle the U.S. mail with the interoffice mail.* ☐ *The office mail had been intermingled with the regular mail!*

intermingle with someone to mingle or merge with people. ☐ *The mugger intermingled with the people on the street and could not be recognized.* ☐ *Let's intermingle with the guests.*

intern someone **in** something to detain or imprison a person in something. ☐ *The government interned the enemy prisoners in the camps for a few months.* ☐ *He was interned in a prison camp during the war.*

interpose someone or something **between** people or things to put someone or something between people or things, in any combination. ☐ *I do not wish to interpose Randy between the twins.* ☐ *We will not interpose our own standards between these two warring factions.*

interpose something **in(to)** something to introduce something into something; to put a question into a conversation. ☐ *The chairman interposed a question into the discussion.* ☐ *May I interpose an observation in the proceedings?*

interpret for someone to translate speech in a foreign language for someone. (Interpreting is done in real time.) ☐ *Nina interpreted for Michael, since he understood very little Russian.* ☐ *Is there someone who can interpret for me?*

interpret something **as** something to assume that something means something. ☐ *Don't interpret what I just said as criticism.* ☐ *It will be interpreted as criticism no matter what you say.*

interpret something **for** someone **1.** to translate a foreign language for someone. (Interpreting is done in real time.) ☐ *Could you interpret the ambassador's address for me?* ☐ *Nina interpreted the director's greetings for the visitors.* **2.** to explain something unclear to someone. ☐ *Let me interpret the instructions for you.* ☐ *The instructions have been interpreted for me by the manager.*

intersperse something **among** something to place something among things at random. ☐ *We interspersed a few chocolate doughnuts among all the plain ones.* ☐ *Some chocolate ones had been interspersed among the plain ones.*

intersperse something **between** something to place things between other things, perhaps regularly or in a pattern. ☐ *We interspersed an onion plant between each pair of plants.* ☐ *Onions had been interspersed between every two marigold plants.*

intersperse something **throughout** something to put things throughout something. ☐ *He interspersed recommendations for a better life throughout the book.* ☐ *Good advice had been interspersed throughout the book.*

intersperse something **with** something to provide or bestow something with something. ☐ *You should intersperse some red flowers with the orange ones.* ☐ *The book was interspersed with good advice.*

intertwine something **with** something to mingle or twist something together with something else. ☐ *She intertwined the flowers with the sprigs of greenery, making a*

lovely wreath. ☐ *The flowers were intertwined with sprigs of greenery.*

intertwine with something to twist together with something else. ☐ *The vines intertwined with the ropes and cables that had once held the beached raft together.* ☐ *The cables from the two cranes intertwined with each other, causing a serious accident.*

intervene between someone **and** someone else to intercede between someone and someone else. ☐ *I decided to intervene between Ralph and his brother, who were arguing endlessly.* ☐ *There was no point in intervening between Bill and Bob.*

intervene in something to get involved in something. ☐ *I will have to intervene in this matter. It's getting out of hand.* ☐ *I want to intervene in this before it becomes a major problem.*

intervene with someone or something to step into a matter concerning someone or something. ☐ *Megan said she would intervene with the bank manager on our behalf.* ☐ *Do I need to intervene with this process?*

interview someone **for** something [for an employer] to discuss employment in a particular job with a person seeking employment. ☐ *We will interview her for the manager's job.* ☐ *We will interview the rest of them for the position tomorrow.*

interview with someone **for** something [for a person seeking employment] to discuss employment in a particular job with an employer. ☐ *She interviewed with the civic opera company for a job in the business department.* ☐ *I interviewed with Roger for the job.*

intimate apparel *Euph.* women's underwear. ☐ *"You'll find bras and body shapers in the intimate apparel," said the salesclerk at the department store.* ☐ *The catalog features intimate apparel for the grande dame.*

intimate something **to** someone to suggest or imply something to someone. ☐ *What are you intimating to me?* ☐ *I intimated nothing at all to you.*

***intimate with** someone *Euph.* having sexual intercourse with someone. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *He had never been intimate with a woman before.* ☐ *They were intimate with each other for the first time that night.*

intimidate someone **into** something to threaten or frighten someone into doing something. ☐ *Do you think you can intimidate me into working for you?* ☐ *We weren't intimidated into doing it.*

intimidate someone **with** something to threaten or frighten someone with something. ☐ *Please don't try to intimidate me with your silly threats!* ☐ *We hadn't been intimidated with their threats.*

in(to) a jam *Fig.* in(to) a difficult situation. ☐ *Mary cannot keep track of the many times Dave got himself into a jam.* ☐ *I found myself in a jam when my car overheated on the highway.*

into being into existence. ☐ *The new law brought more problems into being.* ☐ *That idea came into being centuries ago.*

in(to) someone's **clutches** *Fig.* in the control of someone who has power or authority over someone else. ☐ *Snow White fell into the clutches of the evil witch.* ☐ *Once you're in my clutches, I'll ruin you.*

intoxicate someone **with** someone or something *Fig.* to enthrall or entrance someone with someone or something. (*See also* **intoxicate** someone **with** something.) ☐ *She intoxicated him with her smiling eyes.* ☐ *The king intoxicated the dignitaries with his beautiful daughter, whom he offered in marriage to the bravest of them all.*

intoxicate someone **with** something to make someone drunk with alcohol. ☐ *I think that the plaintiff set out to intoxicate the defendant with liquor and then fake a crime.* ☐ *Jed set out to intoxicate Max with gin and then rob him.* ☐ *Alice intoxicated herself with too much whiskey.*

intrigue someone **with** someone or something to fascinate someone with someone or something. ☐ *Walter intrigued the baby with his keys and funny faces.* ☐ *The king intrigued the guests with a seductive dancer who had trained in the Far East.*

intrigue (with someone**) (against** someone**)** to conspire with someone against someone. ☐ *You are guilty of intriguing with an enemy against the government.* ☐ *I did not intrigue against anyone.*

introduce someone **into** something to bring someone into something; to launch someone into something. ☐ *Tony introduced Wally into his club.* ☐ *You do not wish me to introduce myself into local social life, do you?*

introduce someone **to** someone to make someone acquainted with someone else. ☐ *I would like to introduce you to my cousin, Rudolph.* ☐ *Allow me to introduce myself to you.*

introduce something **into** something to bring something into something or some place; to bring something into something as an innovation. ☐ *The decorator introduced a little bit of bright red into the conference room.* ☐ *After I introduced the new procedures into the factory, production increased enormously.*

intrude into something to get involved in something that is someone else's business. ☐ *I don't want to intrude into your affairs, but I see that you're short of money.* ☐ *Please don't intrude into this matter.*

intrude oneself **into** something to work oneself into some matter that is someone else's business. ☐ *I hate to intrude myself into your conversation, but don't I know you?* ☐ *Please do not intrude yourself into this matter.*

intrude (up)on someone or something to encroach on someone or something or matters that concern only someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *I didn't mean to intrude upon you.* ☐ *Please don't intrude on our meeting. Please wait outside.*

inundate someone or something **with** something **1.** *Lit.* to flood someone or something with fluid. ☐ *The river inundated the fields with three feet of water.* ☐ *The storm inundated us with heavy rain.* **2.** *Fig.* to overwhelm someone with someone or something. ☐ *They inundated us with mail.* ☐ *The children inundated us with requests for their favorite songs.* ☐ *The citizens inundated the legislature with demands for jobs.*

inure someone or something **to** something to accustom someone to someone or something. ☐ *We wanted to inure you to this kind of problem, but here it is and you must face it.*

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☐ *The coach inured the team to the thought of losing.* ☐ *She had long ago inured herself to criticism of this type.*

invasion of (someone's**) privacy** *Fig.* an intrusion that results in the loss of someone's privacy. ☐ *Your invasion of my privacy is not welcome!* ☐ *The athlete complained about the invasion of his privacy by the press.*

inveigh against someone or something to attack someone or something verbally. ☐ *Why must you always inveigh against Dan whenever I mention his name?* ☐ *Stop inveighing against the government all the time.*

inveigle someone **into** something to coax or trick someone into doing something. ☐ *We tried to inveigle her into attending, but she caught on to us.* ☐ *I was inveigled into doing it.*

inveigle someone **out of** something to deceive someone into giving something up. ☐ *Are you trying to inveigle me out of my money?* ☐ *I was inveigled out of my money by a common thief.*

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inveigle something **out of** someone to get something away from someone, usually by deception or persuasion. ☐ *They inveigled a large donation out of Mrs. Smith.* ☐ *The crooks tried to inveigle a fortune out of the old lady.*

invest in someone or something to put resources into someone or something in hopes of increasing the value of the person or thing. (The emphasis is on the act of investing.) ☐ *We invested in Tom, and we have every right to expect a lot from him.* ☐ *She invested in junk bonds heavily.*

invest someone's **time in** something *Fig.* to put one's time, effort, or energy into a project. ☐ *Mary invests her time in charity work.* ☐ *I invested five weeks of my time building this model ship.*

invest someone **with** something to endow someone with something, such as power or privilege. ☐ *The constitution invests the vice president with the authority to act on the president's behalf in certain conditions.* ☐ *The state has invested me with the authority to unite this couple in marriage.*

invest something **in** someone or something **1.** to put money, time, effort, etc., into someone or something, hoping for a return. ☐ *We will invest time and effort in Fred and make him into a recording star.* ☐ *Sharon invested a lot of money in the stock market.* **2.** to place power or authority under control of someone or something. ☐ *The constitution has invested certain powers in the federal government and left the rest to the states.* ☐ *The law invests the power to arrest criminals in the sheriff's department.*

invite someone **into** some place and **invite** someone **in**† to bid or request someone to enter a place. ☐ *Don't leave Dan out there in the rain. Invite him into the house!* ☐ *Oh, do invite in the children!*

invite someone **out**† to ask someone out on a date. ☐ *I would love to invite you out sometime. If I did, would you go?* ☐ *Has he ever invited out a girl on a date?*

invite someone **over**† **(for** something**)** to bid or request someone to come to one's house for something, such as a meal, party, chat, cards, etc. ☐ *Let's invite Tony and Nick over for dinner.* ☐ *Let's invite over some new people.*

invite someone **to** something to bid or request someone to come to an event. ☐ *Shall we invite Sally to the party?* ☐ *I didn't invite her. She invited herself to this affair.*

invoke something **(up)on** someone or something to call something, such as judgment, power, wrath of God, etc., to deal with someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *The duke invoked the wrath of God upon his enemies—to no avail.* ☐ *Walter invoked divine assistance on the proceedings, which weren't going very well.*

involve someone **in** something to draw someone into a matter or problem. ☐ *Please don't involve me in this mess.* ☐ *I do not wish to involve myself in Alice's business.* ☐ *I didn't want to involve you in the problem we are having with the police.*

involve someone **with** someone or something **1.** to cause someone to associate with someone or something. ☐ *Don't try to involve me with John. I can't stand him.* ☐ *We will try to involve all the teachers with the new association.* ☐ *I will not involve myself with such goings-on.* **2.** to connect someone or someone's name to activity (often wrongdoing) associated with someone or something. ☐ *Don't try to involve Amy with the crime. She is innocent.* ☐ *We involved the committee with the intense lobbying effort, and everyone began to see the extent of its influence.*

***involved (with** someone**)** **1.** associated with someone romantically. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Sally is getting involved with Bill. They've been seeing a lot of each other.* ☐ *I hope they don't get too involved with each other.* **2.** having established a romantic association with something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Bill is involved with Jane, and it's looking serious.* ☐ *Mary is very much involved with Tom.*

***involved with** something established in an association with something or some organization. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; become ~**.) ☐ *Bill got involved with a volunteer organization.* ☐ *Mary is very much involved with her club activities.*

iron something **out**† **1.** *Lit.* to use a flatiron to make cloth flat or smooth. ☐ *I will iron the drapes out, so they will hang together.* ☐ *I ironed out the drapes.* **2.** *Fig.* to ease a problem; to smooth out a problem. (Here *problem* is synonymous with *wrinkle*.) ☐ *It's only a little problem. I can iron it out very quickly.* ☐ *We will iron out all these little matters first.*

is all *Rur.* That is all [and nothing more].; That is all I meant to say and there are no further implications. (Often used to end a sentence.) ☐ *I'm not mad at you. I'm just disappointed, is all.* ☐ *Jane's not a bad kid. She's headstrong, is all.*

(Is) anything going on? *Inf.* Is there anything exciting or interesting happening here? ☐ *Andrew: Hey, man! Anything going on? Henry: No. This place is dull as can be.* ☐ *Bob: Come in, Tom. Tom: Is anything going on? Bob: No. You've come on a very ordinary day.*

(Is) everything okay? *Inf.* How are you?; How are things? ☐ *John: Hi, Mary. Is everything okay? Mary: Sure. What about you? John: I'm okay.* ☐ *Waiter: Is everything okay? Bill: Yes, it's fine.*

(Is it) cold enough for you? *Inf.* a greeting inquiry made during very cold weather. ☐ *Bob: Hi, Bill! Is it cold enough for you? Bill: It's unbelievable!* ☐ *John: Glad to see you. Is it cold enough for you? Bill: Oh, yes! This is awful!*

(Is it) hot enough for you? *Inf.* a greeting inquiry made during very hot weather. ☐ *Bob: Hi, Bill! Is it hot enough for you? Bill: Yup.* ☐ *John: Nice to see you here! Is it hot enough for you? Bill: Good grief, yes! This is awful!*

Is someone **there?** a way of requesting to talk to someone in particular over the telephone. (This is not just a request to find out where *someone* is. The *someone* is usually a person's name.) ☐ *Tom: Hello? Mary: Hello. Is Bill there? Tom: No. Can I take a message?* ☐ *Tom: Hello? Mary: Hello. Is Tom there? Tom: Speaking.*

Is that everything? Go to (Will there be) anything else?

Is that right? Go to next.

Is that so? and **Is that right? 1.** Is what you said correct? (With rising question intonation.) ☐ *Henry: These are the ones we need. Andrew: Is that right? They don't look so good to me.* ☐ *Fred: Tom is the one who came in late. Rachel: Is that so? It looked like Bill to me.* **2.** That is what you say, but I do not believe you. (No rising question intonation. Slightly rude.) ☐ *Mary: You are making a mess of this. Alice: Is that so? And I suppose that you're perfect?* ☐ *Bob: I found your performance to be weak in a number of places. Henry: Is that right? I suppose you could have done better?*

Is there any truth to something? Is something true?; Is what I have heard true? (*no truth to* in the negative.) ☐ *Is there any truth to the gossip that Harry is leaving school?* ☐ *No, there is no truth to that at all.*

Is there anything else? Go to (Will there be) anything else?

Is there some place I can wash up? Go to Where can I wash up?

(Is) this (seat) taken? an inquiry made by a person in a theater, auditorium, etc., asking someone already seated whether an adjacent seat is available or already taken. ☐ *Finally, Bill came to a row where there was an empty seat. Bill leaned over to the person sitting beside the empty seat and whispered, "Is this seat taken?"* ☐ *Fred: 'Scuse me. This taken? Alice: No. Help yourself.*

isolate someone or something **from** someone or something to keep people or things separated from one another, in any combination. ☐ *They isolated everyone from Sam, who was ill with malaria.* ☐ *We isolated the children from the source of the disease.*

issue a call for something to make a public invitation or request for something. ☐ *The prime minister issued a call for peace.* ☐ *The person who organized the writing contest issued a call for entries.*

issue (forth) from some place to go out or come out of a place. ☐ *The news releases issued forth from the pressroom on a regular basis.* ☐ *Clear water issued from the side of the hill.*

issue from something to come out or flow out of something. ☐ *A delicious perfume issued from Sally's hair as she passed.* ☐ *A wonderful aroma issued from the kitchen as the bread baked.*

issue someone **with** something to provide someone with something; to distribute something to someone. ☐ *We issued them with the clothes they needed for the trip.* ☐ *Everyone was issued with supplies.*

issue something **as** something to release or send out something as something. ☐ *They issued this month's magazine as a special double issue.* ☐ *The publisher issued this month's magazine as the very last one.*

issue something **to** someone to distribute or dispense something to someone. ☐ *The front office issued new assignments to everyone today.* ☐ *New keys were issued to everyone.*

It ain't fittin'. *Rur.* It is not right; It is inappropriate. ☐ *It ain't fittin' for the bridegroom to see his bride before the ceremony.* ☐ *Young folks shouldn't talk back to their elders. It ain't fittin'.*

(It) beats me. and **(It's) got me beat.; You got me beat.** *Inf.* I do not know the answer.; I cannot figure it out. The question has me stumped. (The stress is on *me*.) ☐ *Bill: When are we supposed to go over to Tom's? Bill: Beats me.* ☐ *Sally: What's the largest river in the world? Bob: You got me beat.*

it behooves one **to** do something *Cliché* it is necessary for one to do something; it is incumbent (up)on someone to do something. ☐ *It behooves me to report the crime.* ☐ *It behooves you to pay for the window that you broke.*

It blows my mind! *Sl.* It really amazes and shocks me. ☐ *Bill: Did you hear about Tom's winning the lottery? Sue: Yes, it blows my mind!* ☐ *John: Look at all that paper! What a waste of trees! Jane: It blows my mind!*

(It) can't be helped. and **(It) couldn't be helped.** Nothing can be done to help the situation.; The situation could not have been avoided. ☐ *John: The accident has blocked traffic in two directions. Jane: It can't be helped. They have to get the people out of the cars and send them to the hospital.* ☐ *Bill: My goodness, the lawn looks dead! Sue: It can't be helped. There's no rain and water is rationed.* ☐ *John: I'm sorry I broke your figurine. Sue: It couldn't be helped. John: I'll replace it. Sue: That would be nice.* ☐ *Bill: I'm sorry I'm late. I hope it didn't mess things up. Bob: It can't be helped.*

(It) couldn't be better. and **(Things) couldn't be better.** Everything is fine. ☐ *John: How are things going? Jane: Couldn't be better.* ☐ *Bill: I hope everything is okay with your new job. Mary: Things couldn't be better.*

(It) couldn't be helped. Go to (It) can't be helped.

It cuts two ways. *Inf.* There are two sides to the situation. ☐ *You have to help, too. It cuts two ways.* ☐ *It cuts two ways, you know. It can't always all be my fault.*

(It) doesn't bother me any. and **(It) doesn't bother me at all.** It does not trouble me at all.; I have no objection. (Compare this with (It) don't bother me none. Not very polite or cordial. See also (It) won't bother me any. for the future tense of this expression.) ☐ *John: Do you mind if I sit here? Jane: Doesn't bother me any.* ☐ *Sally (smoking a cigarette): Do you mind if I smoke? Bill: It doesn't bother me any.*

(It) doesn't bother me at all. Go to previous.

(It) doesn't hurt to ask. and **(It) never hurts to ask.** a phrase said when one asks a question, even when the answer is known to be no. ☐ *John: Can I take some of these papers home with me? Jane: No, you can't. You know that. John: Well, it doesn't hurt to ask.* ☐ *Sue: Can I have two of*

these? Sally: Certainly not! Sue: Well, it never hurts to ask. Sally: Well, it just may!

It doesn't quite suit me. Go to This doesn't quite suit me.

(It) don't bother me none. *Inf.* It does not affect me one way or the other.; It doesn't bother me any. (Familiar and ungrammatical. Sometimes used for effect.) ☐ *John: Mind if I sit here? Bob: It don't bother me none.* ☐ *Mary: Can I smoke? Bill: Don't bother me none.*

(It) don't cut no ice (with someone**).** and **(It) don't cut no squares (with** someone**).** *Rur.* (It) doesn't influence me. ☐ *That excuse don't cut no ice with me.* ☐ *I'm tired of you coming home drunk. Your fancy apologies don't cut no squares.*

(It) don't cut no squares (with someone**)** Go to previous.

(It) don't make me no nevermind. Go to (It) makes no difference to me.

It figures. It makes sense.; It confirms what one might have guessed.; I'm not surprised. ☐ *Bob: Tom was the one who broke the window. Bill: It figures. He's very careless.* ☐ *Ann: Mary was the last one to arrive. Sally: It figures. She's always late.*

It has someone's **name on it.** *Fig.* It belongs to someone.; It is meant for someone. ☐ *A: Is that an extra piece of cake? B: Yes, and it has your name on it.*

(It) hasn't been easy. and **Things haven't been easy.** Things have been difficult, but I have gotten through. ☐ *Bill: I'm so sorry about all your troubles. I hope things are all right now. Bob: It hasn't been easy, but things are okay now.* ☐ *John: How are you getting on after your dog died? Bill: Things haven't been easy.*

[it is] See also the entries beginning with *it's*.

It is a long lane that has no turning. *Prov.* Bad times cannot continue forever.; Things will soon improve. ☐ *Nancy: It's been six months, and neither one of us can find work. I'm afraid we're going to lose everything. Bill: Don't despair, honey. It is a long lane that has no turning.* ☐ *Your luck has been bad for a long time, but it is a long lane that has no turning. I'm sure things will change soon.*

It is a poor heart that never rejoices. and **It is a sad heart that never rejoices.** *Prov.* Even a habitually sad person cannot be sad all the time. (Sometimes used to indicate that a habitually sad person is happy about something.) ☐ *Jill: I've never seen Sam smile before, but today, at his retirement party, he smiled. Jane: It is a poor heart that never rejoices.*

It is a wise child that knows its own father. *Prov.* You can never have certain proof that a certain man is your father. (Implies that the child in question might be illegitimate.) ☐ *It is a wise child that knows its own father, but Emily is so much like her dad that there's very little uncertainty.*

It is all over with someone**.** and **It is all over for** someone**.** *Euph.* Someone is about to die.; Someone has just died. ☐ *I am afraid it is all over with Aunt Sarah. Her last surgery did not go well at all.* ☐ *The doctor told us that it was all over for Daddy. We sat for a moment in shock.*

It is better to be born lucky than rich. *Prov.* If you are born rich, you may lose your money, but if you are born lucky, you will always get what you need or want just by chance. ☐ *Maybe your family doesn't have a lot of money, but you are lucky, you know. And it's better to be born lucky than rich.*

It is better to give than to receive. and **It is more blessed to give than to receive.** *Prov.* It is more virtuous to give things than to get them. (Biblical.) ☐ *Susan told her children, "Instead of thinking so much about what you want for your birthday, think about what to give your brothers and sisters for their birthdays. Remember, it is better to give than to receive."* ☐ *Our charity encourages you to share the good things you have. It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

It is better to travel hopefully than to arrive. *Prov.* You should enjoy the process of doing something, rather than anticipate the result of doing it. ☐ *Bill: I can't wait till I get my high school diploma. Fred: You should concentrate on enjoying high school instead. It is better to travel hopefully than to arrive.*

It is better to wear out than to rust out. *Prov.* It is better to work until you die than to be idle just because you are old. ☐ *Nancy: Grandma, you shouldn't work so hard. You're not young anymore, you know. Grandmother: Thanks for your concern, dear, but I plan to keep working. It's better to wear out than to rust out.* ☐ *Bill: You really ought to relax. I'm afraid you'll kill yourself with too much work. Nancy: So what? It's better to wear out than to rust out.*

It is easier to tear down than to build up. *Prov.* Destroying things is easier than building them. ☐ *Jill: That poor politician—he served honestly and well for all those years and now his career is ruined by one little scandal. Jane: It is easier to tear down than to build up.*

It is easy to be wise after the event. *Prov.* After you see the consequences of a decision, it is easy to tell if the decision was good, but it is also too late, since the consequences have already happened. ☐ *Jill: I should never have invited Aunt Betsy to stay with me; I haven't had a peaceful moment since she got here. Jane: Well, it's easy to be wise after the event.*

It is more blessed to give than to receive. Go to It is better to give than to receive.

It is never too late to learn. and **You are never too old to learn.** *Prov.* You can always learn something new. ☐ *Alan: Help me make the salad dressing. Jane: But I don't know anything about making salad dressing. Alan: You are never too old to learn.* ☐ *Grandma decided to take a course in using computers. "It's never too late to learn," she said.*

It is never too late to mend. *Prov.* It is never too late to apologize for something you have done or try to repair something you have done wrong. ☐ *Sue: I still miss Tony, but it's been a year since our big fight and we haven't spoken to each other since. Mother: Well, it's never too late to mend; why don't you call him up and apologize?*

It is not work that kills, but worry. *Prov.* Working hard will not hurt you, but worrying too much is bad for your health. ☐ *Nancy: You've been working so many hours every day, I'm afraid you'll get sick. Bill: It's not work that kills, but worry.*

It is the pace that kills. *Prov.* Trying to do too much too fast is bad for you. ☐ *Nancy: I hate college. Bill: Why? Is the subject material too difficult? Nancy: No, they just expect me to learn too much of it too fast. It is the pace that kills.*

It isn't worth it. 1. Its value does not justify the action you propose. ☐ *Mary: Should I write a letter in support of your request? Sue: No, don't bother. It isn't worth it.* ☐ *John: Do you suppose we should report that man to the police? Jane: No, it isn't worth it.* **2.** Its importance does not justify the concern you are showing. ☐ *Tom: I'm so sorry about your roses all dying. Mary: Not to worry. It isn't worth it. They were sort of sickly anyway.* ☐ *John: Should I have this coat cleaned? The stain isn't coming out. Sue: It isn't worth it. I only wear it when I shovel snow anyway.*

It isn't worth the trouble. Don't bother. It isn't worth it. ☐ *Tom: Shall I wrap all this stuff back up? Mary: No. It's not worth the trouble. Just stuff it in a paper bag.* ☐ *Jane: Do you want me to try to save this little bit of cake? John: Oh, no! It's not worth the trouble. I'll just eat it.*

(It) just goes to show (you) (something). That incident or story has an important moral or message. ☐ *Tom: The tax people finally caught up with Henry. Sally: See! It just goes to show.* ☐ *Angry at the young grocery clerk, Sally muttered, "Young people. They expect too much. It just goes to show you how society has broken down."*

(It) (just) goes without saying. *Cliché* [something] is so obvious that it need not be said. ☐ *It goes without saying that you are to wear formal clothing to the White House dinner.* ☐ *Of course you must be on time. That goes without saying.*

(It) makes me no difference. Go to next.

(It) makes no difference to me. and **(It) makes me no difference.; (It) makes me no nevermind.; (It) don't make me no nevermind.** *Inf.* I really do not care, one way or the other. (The first one is standard, the others are colloquial.) ☐ *Bill: Mind if I sit here? Tom: Makes no difference to me.* ☐ *Bill: What would you say if I ate the last piece of cake? Bob: Don't make me no nevermind.*

(It) never hurts to ask. Go to (It) doesn't hurt to ask.

It never rains but it pours. *Prov.* Good (or bad) things do not just happen a few at a time, but in large numbers all at once. ☐ *Fred: I can't believe this. This morning I had a flat tire. When I went to the garage to get the tire patched, I discovered I didn't have any money, and I couldn't even charge it because my credit card's expired. Jane: It never rains but it pours.*

It (only) stands to reason. It is only reasonable to hold a certain opinion. ☐ *It stands to reason that most people will not buy a new car if they don't think they can pay for it.* ☐ *I think he will come back to pick up his check. It only stands to reason.*

(It) (really) doesn't matter to me. I do not care. ☐ *Andrew: What shall I do? What shall I do? Alice: Do whatever you like. Jump off a bridge. Go live in the jungle. It really doesn't matter to me.* ☐ *Tom: I'm leaving you. Mary and I have decided that we're in love. Sue: So, go ahead. It doesn't matter to me. I don't care what you do.*

It's a (dead) cinch. *Fig.* It's a very easy task. (*Dead* means absolutely.) ☐ *Tom: Did you figure out how to change the tire? Jane: Yep! It was a cinch.* ☐ *Altering clothes patterns is difficult for me, but for Mary, it's a dead cinch.*

It's a deal. Okay.; It is agreed. ☐ *You want to sell me your stereo for $100? It's a deal.* ☐ *Bill: Let's go to dinner together tonight. Mary: It's a deal.*

It's a jungle out there. The real world is severe.; It's hard to get by in everyday life. ☐ *A: Gee, people are so rude in this town. B: Yup, it's a jungle out there.*

It's a snap. *Inf.* It's really easy to do. ☐ *Nothing to it. It's a snap. A baby could do it.*

It's a toss-up. *Inf.* It's hard to tell the winner, and it could be won by either player or either team. ☐ *The game's almost over, and it's a toss-up.*

It's about time! *Inf.* It is almost too late!; I've been waiting a long time! (Said with impatience.) ☐ *So you finally got here! It's about time!* ☐ *They finally paid me my money. It's about time!*

It's (all) Greek to me. Go to Greek to someone.

It's all over but the shouting. *Fig. Cliché* It is decided and concluded.; It is essentially decided and finished. (Meaning that though there may be more to some process, the outcome is clear. An elaboration of all over, which means "finished.") ☐ *The last goal was made with only 4 seconds to go in the game. "Well, it's all over but the shouting," said the coach.* ☐ *Tom worked hard in college and passed his last test with an A. When he saw the grade, he said, "It's all over but the shouting."*

It's all someone needs. Go to That's all someone needs.

It's always darkest just before the dawn. See The darkest hour is just before the dawn.

It's an ill bird that fouls its own nest. *Prov.* Only a foolish or dishonorable person would bring dishonor to his or her self or his or her surroundings.; Only a bad person would ruin the place where he or she lives. (See also foul one's own nest.) ☐ *I don't like my new neighbor. Not only does he never mow his lawn, he covers it with all kinds of trash. It's an ill bird that fouls its own nest.*

It's an ill wind that blows nobody (any) good. *Prov.* Even misfortune can benefit someone or something.; A calamity for one person usually benefits somebody else. ☐ *The tremendous hailstorm left gaping holes in most of the roofs in town, so many families were homeless. The roofing companies, however, made plenty of money fixing those holes. It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good.*

It's anybody's guess No one knows, so anyone's guess is as good as anyone else's. ☐ *A: When will the messenger be here? B: It's anybody's guess.*

It's been. *Inf.* a phrase said on leaving a party or other gathering. (A shortening of It's been lovely or some similar expression.) ☐ *Mary: Well, it's been. We really have to go, though. Andy: So glad you could come over. Bye.* ☐ *Fred: Bye, you guys. See you. Sally: It's been. Really it has. Toodle-oo.*

It's been a slice! *Sl.* It's been good. ☐ *Good-bye and thank you. It's been a slice!* ☐ *It's been a slice. I hope to see you again some day.*

(It's been) good talking to you. and **(It's) been good to talk to you.; (It's been) nice talking to you.** a polite phrase said upon departure, at the end of a

conversation. ☐ *Mary (as the elevator stops): Well, this is my floor. I've got to get off. John: Bye, Mary. It's been good talking to you.* ☐ *John: It's been good talking to you, Fred. See you around. Fred: Yeah. See you.*

(It's) better than nothing. Having something that is not satisfactory is better than having nothing at all. ☐ *John: How do you like your dinner? Jane: It's better than nothing. John: That bad, huh?* ☐ *John: Did you see your room? How do you like it? Jane: Well, I guess it's better than nothing.*

It's for a fact. *Rur.* It is true. ☐ *Charlie: I can't believe that Bill's selling his house. Tom: It's for a fact!* ☐ *It's for a fact that chocolate is poison to cats.*

It's for you. This telephone call is for you. ☐ *Henry: Hello? Fred: Hello. Is Bill there? Henry: Hey, Bill! It's for you. Bill: Thanks. Hello?* ☐ *"It's for you," said Mary, handing the telephone receiver to Sally.*

(It's) good to be here. and **(It's) nice to be here.** I feel welcome in this place.; It is good to be here. ☐ *John: I'm so glad you could come. Jane: Thank you. It's good to be here.* ☐ *Alice: Welcome to our house! John: Thank you, it's nice to be here.*

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(It's) good to have you here. and **(It's) nice to have you here.** Welcome to this place.; It is good that you are here. ☐ *John: It's a pleasure to have you here. Jane: Thank you for asking me.* ☐ *Alice: Oh, I'm so glad I came! Fred: Nice to have you here.*

(It's) good to hear your voice. a polite phrase said upon beginning or ending a telephone conversation. ☐ *Bob: Hello? Bill: Hello, it's Bill. Bob: Hello, Bill. It's good to hear your voice.* ☐ *Bill: Hello, Tom. This is Bill. Tom: Hi, Bill. It's good to hear your voice. What's cooking?*

(It's) good to see you (again). a polite phrase said when greeting someone whom one has met before. ☐ *Bill: Hi, Bob. Remember me? I met you last week at the Wilsons'. Bob: Oh, hello, Bill. Good to see you again.* ☐ *Fred: Hi. Good to see you again! Bob: Nice to see you, Fred.*

(It's) got me beat. Go to (It) beats me.

it's high time *Rur.* it is about the right time for something. ☐ *It's high time we were leaving.* ☐ *It's high time you started thinking about saving for your old age.*

It's ill waiting for dead men's shoes. *Prov.* You should not be eager for someone to die so that you inherit something. ☐ *Phil: Why should I bother to learn some kind of trade? I'll be rich when Grandpa dies and leaves me all his money. Alan: It's ill waiting for dead men's shoes.*

It's just one of those things. It is something that couldn't have been prevented.; It is an unfortunate thing caused by fate. ☐ *I'm sorry, too. It's not your fault. It's just one of those things.* ☐ *I feel terrible that I didn't pass the bar exam. I guess it was just one of those things.*

(It's) just what you need. Go to That's all someone needs.

(It's) nice to be here. Go to (It's) good to be here.

(It's) nice to have you here. Go to (It's) good to have you here.

(It's) nice to meet you. an expression said just after being introduced to someone. ☐ *Tom: Sue, this is my sister, Mary. Sue: It's nice to meet you, Mary. Mary: How are you, Sue?* ☐ *Bob: I'm Bob. Nice to see you here. Jane: Nice to meet you, Bob.*

(It's) nice to see you. an expression said when greeting or saying good-bye to someone. ☐ *Mary: Hi, Bill. It's nice to see you. Bill: Nice to see you, Mary. How are things?* ☐ *John: Come on in, Jane. Nice to see you. Jane: Thanks, and thank you for inviting me.*

It's no picnic! *Inf.* There is nothing easy or pleasant about it. ☐ *I was on welfare for a year, and it's no picnic.*

(It's) no trouble (at all). Do not worry, this is not a problem. ☐ *Mary: Do you mind carrying all this up to my apartment? Tom: It's no trouble.* ☐ *Bob: Would it be possible for you to get this back to me today? Bill: Sure. No trouble at all.*

It's no use crying over spilled milk. and **Don't cry over spilled milk.** *Prov.* Do not be upset about making a mistake, since you cannot change that now. ☐ *I know you don't like your new haircut, but you can't change it now. It's no use crying over spilled milk.* ☐ *OK, so you broke the drill I lent you. Don't cry over spilled milk.*

(It's) none of your business! It is nothing that you need to know. It is none of your concern. (Not very polite.) ☐ *Alice: How much does a little diamond like that cost? Mary: None of your business!* ☐ *John: Do you want to go out with me Friday night? Mary: Sorry, I don't think so. John: Well, what are you doing then? Mary: None of your business!*

It's not cricket. and **It's not kosher.** It's not done.; It's not acceptable. ☐ *You can't do that! It's not cricket!*

(It's) not half bad. It's not as bad as one might have thought. ☐ *Mary: How do you like this play? Jane: Not half bad.* ☐ *Jane: Well, how do you like college? Fred: It's not half bad.*

It's not kosher. Go to It's not cricket.

It's not over till it's over. *Inf.* It is not over yet and will not be until the event has completely played out. ☐ *It looks like we have won, but it's not over 'til it's over!* ☐ *They haven't won the game yet. It's not over 'til it's over.*

(It's) not supposed to. and **(Someone's) not supposed to.** a phrase indicating that someone or something is not meant to do something. (Often with a person's name or a pronoun as a subject. See the examples.) ☐ *Fred: This little piece keeps falling off. Clerk: It's not supposed to.* ☐ *Bill: Tom just called from Detroit and says he's coming back tomorrow. Mary: That's funny. He's not supposed to.*

It's not the heat, it's the humidity. *Prov.* When the air is damp, hot days feel even hotter and more miserable. ☐ *Jill: I hope the air-conditioning is fixed soon; the heat is unbearable in here. Jane: It's not the heat, it's the humidity.* ☐ *Alan: I thought the summers were hot when I was growing up in New Mexico, but they're even hotter here in Iowa. Jane: The climate is moister here; it's not the heat, it's the humidity.*

It's on me. I will pay this bill. (Usually a bill for a meal or drinks. Compare this with This one's on me.) ☐ *As the waiter set down the glasses, Fred said, "It's on me," and grabbed the check.* ☐ *John: Check, please. Bill: No, it's on me this time.*

It's raining cats and dogs. Go to next.

It's raining pitchforks (and hammer handles). and **It's raining cats and dogs.** *Rur.* It is raining very hard. ☐ *Take an umbrella. It's raining pitchforks and hammer handles out there!* ☐ *Charlie: Have you looked outside? How's the weather? Mary: It's raining cats and dogs.*

It's six of one, half a dozen of another. *Cliché* Two options are equivalent. ☐ *To get downtown, we can either take the highway or the side streets. It's six of one, half a dozen of another, since both routes take the same amount of time.* ☐ *Jill: Would you rather peel the carrots or wash the lettuce? Jane: It's six of one, half a dozen of the other.*

(It's) time for a change. an expression announcing a decision to make a change. ☐ *Bill: Are you really going to take a new job? Mary: Yes, it's time for a change.* ☐ *Jane: Are you going to Florida for your vacation again? Fred: No. It's time for a change. We're going skiing.*

(It's) time to go. It is now time to leave. (Usually said by guests, but can be said by an adult to children who are guests.) ☐ *Jane: Look at the clock! Time to go! John: Yup! I'm out of here too.* ☐ *Mother: It's four o'clock. The party's over. Time to go. Bill: I had a good time. Thank you.*

(It's) time to hit the road. and **(I'd) better hit the road.; (I've) got to hit the road.** *Inf. Fig.* a phrase indicating that it is time that one departed. (See also (I) have to shove off and (It's) time to run for other possible variations.) ☐ *Henry: Look at the clock. It's past midnight. It's time to hit the road. Andy: Yeah. We've got to go. Sue: Okay, good night.* ☐ *Bill: I've got to hit the road. I have a long day tomorrow. Mary: Okay, good night. Bill: Bye, Mary.*

(It's) time to run. and **(It's) time to move along.; (It's) time to push along.; (It's) time to push off.; (It's) time to split.** *Inf.* an announcement of one's desire or need to depart. (See also (I) have to shove off and (It's) time to hit the road for an illustration of other possible variations.) ☐ *Andy: Time to push off. I've got to get home. Henry: See you, dude.* ☐ *John: It's time to split. I've got to go. Sue: Okay. See you tomorrow.*

(It's) time to shove off. Go to (I) have to shove off.

(It's) time to split. Go to (It's) time to run.

It's time we should be going. a statement made by one member of a pair (or group) of guests to the other member(s), indicating a desire to leave. (Typically, a way for one person in a couple to signal the other, indicating a desire to leave.) ☐ *Mr. Franklin looked at his wife and said softly, "It's time we should be going."* ☐ *Tom: Well, I suppose it's time we should be going. Mary: Yes, we really should. Alice: So early?*

It's written all over one's **face.** *Fig.* It is very evident and can easily be detected when looking at someone's face. ☐ *I know she's guilty. It's written all over her face.*

It's you! It suits you perfectly.; It is just your style. ☐ *John (trying on jacket): How does this look? Sally: It's you!* ☐ *Sue: I'm taking a job with the candy company. I'll be managing a store on Maple Street. Mary: It's you! That's a nice step up, and that store is so close by.*

It's your funeral. *Fig.* If that is what you are going to do, you will have to endure the dire consequences. ☐ *Tom: I'm going to call in sick and go to the ball game instead of to work today. Mary: Go ahead. It's your funeral.* ☐ *Bill: I'm going to go into the boss and tell what I really think of him. Sue: It's your funeral.*

It's your move. 1. and **It's your turn.** *Lit.* [in a game] It's your time to play. ☐ *It's your move, and I think I have you trapped.* **2.** *Fig.* It is time for you to do something. ☐ *I've done everything I could do. Now, it's your move.*

It's your turn. Go to previous.

it strikes me that *Fig.* it seems to me that. ☐ *Henry: It strikes me that you are losing a little weight. Mary: Oh, I'm so glad you noticed!* ☐ *"It strikes me that all this money we are spending is accomplishing very little," said Bill.*

It sucks. Go to That sucks.

(It) suits me (fine). It is fine with me. ☐ *John: Is this one okay? Mary: Suits me.* ☐ *John: I'd like to sit up front where I can hear better. Mary: Suits me fine.*

It takes all kinds (to make a world). *Fig.* There are many different kinds of people, and you should not condemn them for being different. ☐ *Jill: Eleanor's trying another fad diet. This week she's sprinkling dried algae on all her food. Jane: It takes all kinds.* ☐ *Child: Mommy, I saw a weird man today. He was walking down the street singing real loud. I wish they'd put weird people like that away. Mother: Now, now, honey, it takes all kinds to make a world.*

It takes money to make money. *Prov.* In order to make money, you must first have some money to invest. ☐ *I've been reading a lot of books about how to become wealthy, and they all make it depressingly clear that it takes money to make money.*

(It) takes one to know one. *Inf.* You are one also. ☐ *A: You are a stupid oaf. B: So are you. It takes one to know one.*

It takes (some) getting used to. It is very unpleasant at first, but after a time it will not be so bothersome. (Said in recognition of the unpleasantness of something.) ☐ *I never ate raw oysters before. It takes some getting used to.* ☐ *These hot Mexican dishes seem impossible at first. They take some getting used to, I agree. But it's worth it.*

It takes two to make a bargain. *Prov.* Both parties in a negotiation must agree in order for the negotiation to be successful. ☐ *Jill: You'll give me a ride to work every day this week, like we agreed, won't you? Jane: Wait a minute. I only said I'd give you a ride to work today. It takes two to make a bargain.* ☐ *Ellen: We decided you should make dinner tonight, right? Fred: No, we didn't decide that; you decided that. It takes two to make a bargain.*

It takes two to make a quarrel. *Prov.* An argument is never only one person's fault.; If the other person refuses to participate, there cannot be an argument. ☐ *Sue: I think Mimi ought to apologize for arguing with me. Mother: It takes two to make a quarrel, dear. Maybe you ought to apologize to her.* ☐ *Jill: Why are you always so quarrelsome? Jane: Hey, it's not just my fault. It takes two to make a quarrel.*

(It) takes two to tango. *Prov.* Some things cannot happen by one person acting alone. ☐ *Alan: You're always arguing! Stop arguing all the time. Jane: I can't argue all by myself. It takes two to tango.* ☐ *Fred: Did you hear? Janice got herself pregnant. Jill: Well, she didn't do it all by herself. Takes two to tango, you know.*

It will be your ass! *Sl.* You will pay dearly!; You will suffer the consequences. (Potentially offensive. Use only with discretion.) ☐ *If you do that again, it will be your ass!* ☐ *It will be your ass if it isn't done right this time.*

It will take some doing. It will require considerable effort and care. ☐ *It'll take some doing, but it'll get done.* ☐ *It's not impossible. It'll just take some doing.*

(It) won't bother me any. and **(It) won't bother me at all.** *Inf.* It will not trouble me at all.; I have no objection if you wish to do that. (Not very polite or cordial. For the present tense of this expression, see also **(It) doesn't bother me any.**) ☐ *John: Will you mind if I sit here? Jane: Won't bother me any.* ☐ *Sally (lighting a cigarette): Do you mind if I smoke? Bill: It won't bother me at all.*

(It) won't bother me at all. Go to previous.

It won't wash! *Fig.* Nobody will believe it! ☐ *Sorry, it won't wash. Try another approach.* ☐ *Don't expect me to believe that! It won't wash.*

(It) works for me. *Inf.* It is fine with me. (With stress on *works* and *me*. The answer to a question implying **Does it work for you?**) ☐ *Bob: Is it okay if I sign us up for the party? Sally: It works for me.* ☐ *Tom: Is Friday all right for the party? Bill: Works for me. Bob: It works for me too.*

It would take an act of Congress to do something. It is almost impossible to do something. ☐ *It would take an act of Congress to get Bill to wear a necktie.* ☐ *She's a sour woman. It would take an act of Congress to get her to put a smile on her face.*

***an itch for** something a desire for something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I have an itch for some ice cream.* ☐ *We had an itch for a good movie, so we went.*

itch for something *Fig.* to desire something. ☐ *I'm just itching for a visit from Amy.* ☐ *We are itching for some chocolate.*

***an itch to** do something *Fig.* a desire to do something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I have an itch to see a movie tonight.* ☐ *Tom has an itch to go swimming.*

an **itching palm** Go to an **itchy palm**.

***itchy feet** *Fig.* the need to leave; a feeling of a need to travel. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Hearing the train whistle at night gives me itchy feet.*

***an itchy palm** and ***an itching palm** *Fig.* [of a hand] in need of a tip. (As if placing money in the palm would stop the itching. *Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *All the waiters at that restaurant have itchy palms.* ☐ *The cabdriver was troubled by an itching palm. Since he refused to carry my bags, I gave him nothing.* ☐ *Whenever he sees expensive luggage, the hotel doorman gets an itching palm.*

It'll all come out in the wash. *Fig.* It does not matter.; No lasting damage has been done. ☐ *Tom: I feel so bad about what I said to Bill. I don't think he'll ever forgive me. Mary: Oh, don't worry. It'll all come out in the wash.* ☐ *Jane: I'll never forgive myself for losing Mary's book. Charlie: Just tell her you're sorry, and offer to pay for the book. It'll all come out in the wash.*

It'll be a cold day in hell when something happens. *Rur.* Something will never happen or is highly unlikely. ☐ *It'll be a cold day in Hell when the city council agrees on where to build that bridge.* ☐ *It'll be a cold day in Hell when I forgive you.*

It'll be a long day in January when something happens. *Rur.* Something will never happen. (There are fewer hours of daylight in January.) ☐ *Tom: Maybe this will be the year that Mama treats herself to a nice vacation. Jane: Are you kidding? It'll be a long day in January when she does that!* ☐ *It'll be a long day in January when that car dealer gives an honest price.*

It'll never fly. *Fig.* It will never work!; It will never be approved! (Refers originally to an evaluation of an unlikely-looking aircraft of some type.) ☐ *I have read your report and studied your proposal. It'll never fly.* ☐ *Your design for a new electric automobile is interesting, but it'll never fly!*

it's no use (doing something**)** it is hopeless to do something; it is pointless to do something. ☐ *It's no use trying to call on the telephone. The line is always busy.* ☐ *They tried and tried, but it was no use.*

itty-bitty and **itsy-bitsy** very small. (Childish.) ☐ *I remember when you was just an itty-bitty baby.* ☐ *Gramma sewed with itsy-bitsy stitches.*

(I've) been getting by. *Inf.* a response to a greeting inquiry into one's well-being indicating that one is having a hard time surviving or that things could be much better. (See also **(I'm) just getting by.**) ☐ *John: How are things? Jane: Oh, I've been getting by.* ☐ *Sue: How are you doing? Mary: Been getting by. Things could be better.*

(I've) been keeping cool. and **(I've been) keeping cool.** *Inf.* an answer to a question about what one has been doing during very hot weather. ☐ *Jane: How do you like this hot weather? Bill: I've been keeping cool.* ☐ *Mary: Been keeping cool? Bob: Yeah. Been keeping cool.*

(I've) been keeping myself busy. and **(I've been) keeping myself busy.** a standard response to a greeting inquiry asking what one has been doing. ☐ *Bill: What have you been doing? Bob: I've been keeping myself busy. What about you? Bill: About the same.* ☐ *John: Yo! What have you been up to? Bill: Been keeping myself busy.*

(I've) been keeping out of trouble. and **(I've been) keeping out of trouble.** *Fig.* a standard response to a greeting inquiry that asks what one has been doing. ☐ *John: What have you been doing, Fred? Fred: Been keeping out of trouble. John: Yeah. Me too.* ☐ *Mary: How are things, Tom? Tom: Oh, I've been keeping out of trouble.*

(I've) been okay. *Inf.* a standard response to a greeting inquiry that asks how one has been. ☐ *Bill: Well, how have you been, good buddy? John: I've been okay.* ☐ *Sue: How you doing? Jane: Been okay. And you? Sue: The same.*

(I've) been there(, done that). *Inf.* I know exactly what you are talking about from my own experience.; I know exactly what you are going through. ☐ *John: Wow! Those sales meetings really wear me out! Jane: I know what you mean. I've been there.* ☐ *Sue: These employment interviews are very tiring. Bob: I know it! I've been there.*

(I've) been under the weather. *Fig.* a greeting response indicating that one has been ill. ☐ *John: How have you*

been? Sally: I've been under the weather, but I'm better. ☐ *Doctor: How are you? Mary: I've been under the weather. Doctor: Maybe we can fix that. What seems to be the trouble?*

I've done my do. *Rur.* I have done my share. ☐ *Tom: Aren't you going to finish cleaning the kitchen? Jane: I've done my do. You can do the rest.* ☐ *I feel I've done my do, and someone else should do the rest.*

(I've) (got) better things to do. There are better ways to spend my time.; I cannot waste any more time on this matter. (Either *I've got* or *I have.*) ☐ *Andy: Good-bye. I've got better things to do than stand around here listening to you brag. Henry: Well, good-bye and good riddance.* ☐ *Mary: How did things go at your meeting with the zoning board? Sally: I gave up. Can't fight city hall. Better things to do.*

(I've) got to be shoving off. Go to (I) have to shove off.

I've got to fly. and **I('ve) gotta fly.; (I've) got to fly.** *Fig. Inf.* I have to leave right now. ☐ *Time's up. I've got to fly.* ☐ *I've gotta fly. See you later.*

(I've) got to get moving. I have to leave right now. (See also (I) have to shove off for other possible variations.) ☐ *Tom: Time to go. Got to get moving. Sally: Bye, Tom.* ☐ *Mary: It's late and I've got to get moving. Sue: Well, if you must, okay. Come again sometime. Mary: Bye.*

(I've) got to go. a phrase announcing one's need to depart. (See also (I) have to shove off for other possible variations.) ☐ *Andy: Bye, I've got to go. Rachel: Bye, little brother. See you.* ☐ *Sally: Got to go. Sue: See ya! Take it easy.*

(I've) got to go home and get my beauty sleep. *Fig.* a phrase announcing one's need to depart because it is late. (See also (I) have to shove off for other possible variations.) ☐ *Sue: Leaving so early? John: I've got to go home and get my beauty sleep.* ☐ *Jane: I've got to go home and get my beauty sleep. Fred: Well, you look to me like you've had enough. Jane: Why, thank you.*

(I've) got to hit the road. Go to (It's) time to hit the road.

(I've) got to run. *Fig.* a phrase announcing one's need to depart. (See also (I) have to shove off for other possible variations.) ☐ *John: Got to run. It's late. Jane: Me too. See ya, bye-bye.* ☐ *Mary: Want to watch another movie? Bill: No, thanks. I've got to run.*

(I've) got to shove off. Go to (I) have to shove off.

(I've) got to split. *Inf. Fig.* I have to leave now. (See also (I) have to shove off for other possible variations.) ☐ *Jane: Look at the time! Got to split. Mary: See you later, Jane.* ☐ *Bill: It's getting late. I've got to split. Sue: Okay, see you tomorrow. Bill: Good night.*

(I've) got to take off. *Fig.* a phrase announcing one's need to depart. (See also (I) have to shove off for other possible variations.) ☐ *Mary: Got to take off. Bye. Bob: Leaving so soon? Mary: Yes. Time to go. Bob: Bye.* ☐ *"Look at the time. I've got to take off!" shrieked Alice.*

I've got work to do. 1. *Lit.* I'm too busy to stay here any longer. ☐ *Jane: Time to go. I've got work to do. John: Me too. See you.* ☐ *Bob: I have to leave now. Bill: So soon? Bob: Yes, I've got work to do.* **2.** *Fig.* Do not bother me. I'm busy. ☐ *Bill: Can I ask you a question? Jane: Not right now. I've got work to do.* ☐ *Mary: There are some things we have to get straightened out on this Wilson contract. John: I've got work to do. It will have to wait.*

I('ve) gotta fly. Go to I've got to fly.

I've had a lovely time. and **We've had a lovely time.** a polite expression said to a host or hostess on departure. ☐ *Bob: I've had a lovely time. Thanks for asking me. Fred: We're just delighted you could come. Good night. Bob: Good night.* ☐ *Sue: We've had a lovely time. Good night. Bill: Next time don't stay away so long. Good night.*

I've had enough of this! I will not take any more of this situation! ☐ *Sally: I've had enough of this! I'm leaving! Fred: Me too!* ☐ *John (glaring at Tom): I've had enough of this! Tom, you're fired! Tom: You can't fire me, I quit!*

I've had it up to here (with someone or something). I will not endure any more of someone or something. ☐ *Bill: I've had it up to here with your stupidity. Bob: Who's calling who stupid?* ☐ *John: I've had it up to here with Tom. Mary: Are you going to fire him? John: Yes.*

I've heard so much about you. a polite phrase said upon being introduced to someone you have heard about from a friend or the person's relatives. ☐ *Bill: This is my cousin Kate. Bob: Hello, Kate. I've heard so much about you.* ☐ *Sue: Hello, Bill. I've heard so much about you. Bill: Hello. Glad to meet you.*

(I've) never been better. and **(I've) never felt better.** a response to a greeting inquiry into one's health or state of being. ☐ *Mary: How are you, Sally? Sally: Never been better, Mary. How about you?* ☐ *Doctor: How are you, Jane? Jane: Never felt better. Doctor: Then why are you here?*

(I've) seen better. a noncommittal and not very positive judgment about something or someone. ☐ *Alice: How did you like the movie? John: I've seen better.* ☐ *Bill: What do you think about this weather? Bob: Seen better.*

I've seen better heads on nickel beers. *Rur.* This person is stupid. ☐ *Jim's good-looking, but I've seen better heads on nickel beers.* ☐ *My students this term aren't what you'd call bright. I've seen better heads on nickel beers.*

(I've) seen worse. a noncommittal and not totally negative judgment about something or someone. ☐ *Alice: How did you like the movie? John: I've seen worse.* ☐ *Bill: What do you think about this weather? Gladys: Seen worse.*

Jj

jab at someone or something to poke or punch at someone or something. ☐ *Tom jabbed at Fred.* ☐ *Don't jab at the cat!*

jab someone **in** something to poke someone in a particular location on the body. ☐ *Fred jabbed Tom in the side.* ☐ *He jabbed himself in the hand.*

jab someone **with** something to poke or stick someone with something. ☐ *He jabbed Henry with the rake handle on purpose.* ☐ *The mugger jabbed the victim with a knife.*

jab something **at** someone or something to poke someone or something with something. ☐ *Tom jabbed the stick at the dog.* ☐ *I jabbed my fist at Walter.*

jab something **into** something and **jab** something **in†** to stab something into something. ☐ *Billy jabbed his spoon into the gelatin.* ☐ *He jabbed in his spoon.* ☐ *He jabbed it in.*

jab something **out†** to thrust something out. ☐ *Molly jabbed her fist out suddenly.* ☐ *She jabbed out her fist.*

jabber about someone or something **1.** to talk or chat very informally about someone or something. ☐ *Who are they jabbering about?* ☐ *Those kids are jabbering about school again.* **2.** to talk unintelligibly about someone or something. ☐ *Is she jabbering about whatever comes to mind?* ☐ *She is jabbering about something, but we can't understand her.*

jack around and **jerk around** *Sl.* to waste time. ☐ *Stop jacking around and get some work done!* ☐ *The kids spend most of the day jerking around.*

jack of all trades someone who can do several different jobs instead of specializing in one. ☐ *John can do plumbing, carpentry, and roofing—a real jack of all trades. He isn't very good at any of them.* ☐ *Take your car to a certified engine mechanic, not a jack of all trades.*

a **jack of all trades is a master of none.** *Prov.* If you are able to do a lot of things fairly well, you will not have time to learn to do one thing extremely well. ☐ *Jill: I envy Bob; he can do so many things. He writes novels, paints pictures, makes sculptures, and even plays the dulcimer. Jane: It's true he does a lot of things, but he probably doesn't do them all terribly well. A jack of all trades is a master of none, you know.*

jack someone **around†** and **jerk** someone **around†** *Sl.* to give someone a difficult time; to harass someone. ☐ *Come on! Stop jacking me around!* ☐ *Max started jerking Lefty around, and it looked as if there was going to be trouble.* ☐ *You jack around everyone you know!*

jack someone **up† 1.** *Sl.* to excite or stimulate someone, possibly with drugs. ☐ *Tom jacked up his buddy by talking to him.* ☐ *Tom jacked up Fred with a lot of encouragement.* **2.** *Sl.* to motivate someone; to stimulate someone to do something. ☐ *The mail is late again today. We'll have to jack those people up at the post office.* ☐ *I guess I'll have to jack up the carpenter again to repair my stairs.*

jack something **up† 1.** *Lit.* to raise something up on a mechanical lifting device. ☐ *Now I have to jack the car up, so I can change the tire.* ☐ *Please jack up the car.* **2.** *Fig.* to raise the price of something. ☐ *The store keeps jacking prices up.* ☐ *The grocery store jacked up the prices again last night.*

jacked (out) *Sl.* angry; annoyed. ☐ *Boy was that old guy jacked out at you.* ☐ *Yup, he was jacked all right.*

a **jam session** an informal session where musicians play together. ☐ *Andy and Nick had a jam session last night and kept all the neighbors awake.*

jam someone or something **in((to)** something**)** and **jam** someone or something **in†** to force or compress someone or something into something or some place. ☐ *Sam jammed all his clothes into the canvas bag.* ☐ *The conductor jammed all the passengers into one car.* ☐ *Don't jam in everything!* ☐ *They had to jam themselves into the tiny room, because there was no other place to meet.*

jam someone or something **together** to pack people or things close together. ☐ *The usher jammed everybody together so more people could be seated.* ☐ *Don't just jam the boxes together! Sort them out first.*

jam something **together** to assemble something hastily or carelessly. ☐ *The fragile contents were just jammed together in one box and everything was broken.* ☐ *The thing was just jammed together with no care at all.*

jam something **up† 1.** to clog up something; to impede or block the movement of or through something. ☐ *Rachel jammed traffic up when her car stalled.* ☐ *All the leaves and branches jammed up the sewer.* **2.** *Fig.* to force something upwards in haste or anger. ☐ *Who jammed the window up?* ☐ *Wally jammed up the window and nearly broke it.*

jam something **up** something to thrust something up something. ☐ *She poked the broom handle up the chimney, hoping to force the bird to fly out.* ☐ *She jammed it up a few times, but it had no effect.*

jam something **(up†) with** something to clog something with something. ☐ *Time had jammed the pipe up with rust.* ☐ *Time had jammed up the pipe with rust.* ☐ *Jam the hole with a cloth so nothing else will leak out.*

jam the brakes on† to press down hard on a vehicle's brakes. ☐ *Alice jammed the brakes on and the car skidded all over the place.* ☐ *She jammed on the brakes.*

jam with someone to play music in an improvised band with someone. ☐ *Andy loves to jam with the other students.* ☐ *Let's set up a time when we can jam with the others.*

jangle on something **1.** *Fig.* to ring a bell incessantly. ☐ *Will you stop jangling on that doorbell!* ☐ *Who is jangling on that bell?* **2.** *Fig.* to irritate someone's nerves; to make someone nervous. ☐ *All that noise jangles on my nerves.* ☐ *Too much chattering jangles on Ken's nerves.*

jar against someone or something to bump against someone or something. ☐ *The guest jarred against the wall,*

knocking a picture askew. ☐ *Someone jarred against Fran, almost knocking her over.*

jar on someone or something to bother someone or someone's nerves. (Similar to **jangle on** something.) ☐ *Her voice really jars on me.* ☐ *My brash manner jars on her, I guess.*

jaw about someone or something *Fig.* to talk aimlessly about someone or something. ☐ *Do we have to keep jawing about Tom all day?* ☐ *Stop jawing about your problems and set about fixing them.*

jaw at someone *Fig.* to lecture at someone; to talk endlessly to someone. ☐ *Please stop jawing at me.* ☐ *You are jawing at me too much lately.*

jaw someone **down**† *Sl.* to talk someone down; to wear someone down talking. ☐ *We'll try to jaw him down. If that doesn't work, I don't know what we will do.* ☐ *We will jaw down the objectors.*

jazz someone or something **up**† to make someone or something more exciting or sexy; to make someone or something appeal more to contemporary tastes. ☐ *Let's jazz this room up a little bit.* ☐ *They jazzed up Donna till she looked like a rock star.*

jazzed (up) 1. alert; having a positive state of mind. ☐ *I am jazzed up and ready to face life.* ☐ *Those guys were jazzed and ready for the game.* **2.** intoxicated. ☐ *Dave was a bit jazzed up, but not terribly.* ☐ *Gert was jazzed out of her mind.* **3.** enhanced; with something added; made more enticing. ☐ *The third act was jazzed up with livelier music.* **4.** forged or altered. ☐ *Better not try to cash a jazzed check at this bank.*

jeer at someone or something to poke fun at someone; to make rude sounds at someone. ☐ *Please stop jeering at my cousin!* ☐ *The others just jeered at my idea.*

Jekyll and Hyde someone with both an evil and a good personality. (From the novel *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson.) ☐ *Bill thinks Mary is so soft and gentle, but she can be very cruel—she is a real Jekyll and Hyde.* ☐ *Jane doesn't know that Fred is a Jekyll and Hyde. She sees him only when he is being kind and generous, but he can be very cruel.*

jerk around Go to **jack around**.

jerk someone **around**† and **jerk** someone **over**† to hassle someone; to waste someone's time. ☐ *Stop jerking me around and give me my money back.* ☐ *They sure like to jerk around people in that music shop.*

jerk someone or something **out of** something and **jerk** someone or something **out**† to pull someone or something out of something sharply and quickly. ☐ *She jerked the baby out of the crib and ran from the burning room.* ☐ *I jerked the puppy out of the mud.* ☐ *She jerked out the puppy before it got soaked.*

jerk someone **over**† Go to **jerk** someone **around**†.

jerk something **away (from** someone, something, or an animal**)** to snatch something away or quickly pull something back from someone or an animal. ☐ *I jerked the bone away from the dog.* ☐ *Kelly jerked the ant poison away from the child.* ☐ *Mary jerked her hand away from the fire.*

jerk something **off**† Go to next.

jerk something **off (of)** someone or something and **jerk** something **off**† to snatch or quickly pull something off someone or something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Alice jerked the top off the box and poured out the contents.* ☐ *She jerked off the box top.*

jerk something **out of** someone or something and **jerk** something **out**† to pull something out of someone or something quickly. ☐ *The doctor jerked the arrow out of Bill's leg.* ☐ *He jerked out the arrow.*

jerk something **up**† **1.** to pull something up quickly. ☐ *He jerked his belt up tight.* ☐ *He jerked up the zipper to his jacket.* **2.** to lift up something, such as ears, quickly. ☐ *The dog jerked its ears up.* ☐ *The dog jerked up its ears when it heard the floor creak.* ☐ *The soldier jerked his binoculars up to try to see the sniper.*

jest about someone or something to make jokes about someone or something. ☐ *There is no need to jest about Lady Bracknell.* ☐ *I wish you would not jest about that.*

jest at someone or something to make fun of someone or something. ☐ *Please don't jest at my cousin.* ☐ *Is someone jesting at my hairdo?*

jest with someone to joke with someone; to try to fool someone. ☐ *Surely you are jesting with me.* ☐ *Don't jest with me!*

jet (from some place**) (to** some place**)** to travel from some place to some other place by jet airplane. ☐ *They jetted from here to there.* ☐ *They jetted to here from there.*

jet from something to spurt from something. ☐ *Water jetted from the broken pipe.* ☐ *A column of water jetted from the top of the fountain.*

jibe with something [for something] to agree with something. ☐ *Your story doesn't jibe with what we heard from the arresting officer.* ☐ *Her tale jibes with yours quite well.*

The **jig is up.** See The **game is up**.

jim-dandy excellent. ☐ *This is a jim-dandy knife. Where'd you get it?* ☐ *Tom: I'll meet you at six, OK? Charlie: That'll be jim-dandy.*

jimmy something **up**† pry something up. ☐ *See if you can jimmy this window up.* ☐ *Can you jimmy up this window?*

jockey around to move around as if trying to get into a special position. ☐ *I spent most of the movie jockeying around, trying to get comfortable.* ☐ *She always has to jockey around a bit when she is getting into a parking place.*

jockey for position 1. *Lit.* to work one's horse into a desired position in a horse race. ☐ *Three riders were jockeying for position in the race.* ☐ *Ken was behind, but jockeying for position.* **2.** *Fig.* to work oneself into a desired position. ☐ *The candidates were jockeying for position, trying to get the best television exposure.* ☐ *I was jockeying for position but running out of campaign money.*

jockey someone or something **into position** to manage to get someone or something into a desirable position. (See also **jockey for position**.) ☐ *The rider jockeyed his horse into position.* ☐ *Try to jockey your bicycle into position so you can pass the others.*

jockey something **around**† to maneuver something around; to manage something. ☐ *We had to jockey our bikes around a number of stalled cars.* ☐ *We jockeyed*

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around a few cars to make room for the bus in the parking lot.

jog along to trot or run along at a slow pace. ☐ *She was jogging along quite happily.* ☐ *I had been jogging along for a few minutes when my shoelaces broke.*

jog someone's **memory** *Fig.* to stimulate someone's memory to recall something. ☐ *Hearing the first part of the song I'd forgotten really jogged my memory.* ☐ *I tried to jog Bill's memory about our childhood antics.*

jog to the right and **jog to the left** [for a road, path, etc.] to turn to the right or left. ☐ *The road jogs to the right here. Don't run off.* ☐ *Keep going until the road jogs to the left. Our driveway is on the right side.*

join forces (with someone**)** *Fig.* to combine one's efforts with someone else's efforts. ☐ *The older boys joined forces with the younger ones to sing the school song.* ☐ *Let's join forces with the other faction and run our own slate of candidates.*

join hands [for people] to hold hands so that each person is holding the hands of two other people; [for two people] to hold each other's hands. ☐ *Let us join hands and pray together.* ☐ *The dancers joined hands and formed a circle that moved to the left.*

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join in (with someone**)** to join someone in doing something. ☐ *Do you mind if we join in with you?* ☐ *Please join in.*

join in ((with) something**)** to participate in doing something. ☐ *The older boys joined in with the singing.* ☐ *I'm glad they joined in. We needed basses.*

join someone **with** someone else and **join** something **with** something else to connect things or people. ☐ *I joined Fred with the others.* ☐ *We joined the older puppies with the full-grown dogs.*

join something **and** something else **together†** to connect or unite things. ☐ *We joined the pipe and the hose together.* ☐ *He joined together all the blue wires and the red ones.*

join something **to** something else to connect something to something else. ☐ *We joined our club to the other club.* ☐ *We joined our chorus to the other chorus, making a huge singing group.*

join something **with** something else Go to **join** someone **with** someone else.

Join the club! *Inf.* an expression indicating that the person spoken to is in the same, or a similar, unfortunate state as the speaker. ☐ *You don't have anyplace to stay? Join the club! Neither do we.* ☐ *Did you get fired too? Join the club!*

join the fray and **jump into the fray; enter the fray** *Fig.* to join the fight or argument. ☐ *After listening to the argument, Mary decided to jump into the fray.* ☐ *Tom joined the fray and immediately got knocked down.*

join up to join some organization. ☐ *The club has opened its membership rolls again. Are you going to join up?* ☐ *I can't afford to join up.*

join (up) with someone or something to bring oneself into association with someone or something. ☐ *I decided to join up with the other group.* ☐ *Our group joined with another similar group.*

join with someone Go to **with** someone.

joined at the hip *Sl.* closely connected; always together. ☐ *Those two are joined at the hip. They are always together.* ☐ *Sam and Martha are joined at the hip.*

The **joke is on** someone. **1.** Someone is the butt of the joke. ☐ *The joke is on Bob, so it's good that he is a good sport.* **2.** The joke has backfired on someone. ☐ *Ha, ha! The joke's on you after all.*

joke (with someone**) (about** someone or something**)** to quip with someone about someone or something; to make verbal fun with someone about someone or something. ☐ *I was joking with Tom about the performance.* ☐ *I joked about Andy with Fran.*

jolt someone **out of** something to startle someone out of inertness. ☐ *The cold water thrown in her face was what it took to jolt Mary out of her deep sleep.* ☐ *At the sound of the telephone, he jolted himself out of his stupor.*

jolt to a start and **jolt to a stop** to start or stop moving suddenly, causing a jolt. ☐ *The truck jolted to a stop at the stop sign.* ☐ *The little car jolted to a quick start and threw the passenger back in his seat.*

jolt to a stop See previous.

jostle someone **around†** to push or knock someone around. ☐ *Please don't jostle me around.* ☐ *Don't jostle around everyone!*

jostle someone **aside†** to push or nudge someone aside. ☐ *Poor little Timmy was jostled aside by the crowd every time he got near the entrance.* ☐ *The big kids jostled aside all the little ones.*

jostle with someone to struggle with someone. ☐ *Andy jostled with Fred for access to the door.* ☐ *Timmy and Bobby jostled with one another while they were waiting to get in.*

jot something **down†** to make a note of something. ☐ *This is important. Please jot this down.* ☐ *Jot down this note, please.*

judge between someone or something **and** someone or something else to decide between people or things, in any combination. ☐ *You can't expect me to judge between apples and oranges, can you?* ☐ *Can you judge between the prosecution and the defense?*

Judge not, lest ye be judged. and **Judge not, that ye be not judged.** *Prov.* If you condemn other people, then they will have the right to condemn you, so it is best not to condemn them. (Biblical.) ☐ *Jill: I'm sure Gloria is the one who's been stealing from petty cash. She's so sloppy, nasty, and ill-mannered. Don't you think she'd be capable of theft? Jane: Judge not, lest ye be judged.*

Judge not, that ye be not judged. Go to previous.

judge one **on** one's **own merits** to evaluate one on one's own good and bad points and no one else's. ☐ *Please judge Janet on her own merits.* ☐ *I was judged on my own merits.*

judge something **on its own merits** to evaluate something on its own good and bad points and nothing else. ☐ *You must judge this proposal on its own merits.* ☐ *The proposal has not been judged on its own merits.*

judging by something and **judging from** something to make a decision or judgment based on something. ☐ *Judging by the amount of food eaten, everyone must have been*

very hungry. ☐ *Judging from the mess that's left, the party must have been a good one.*

jugged (up) *Sl.* intoxicated. ☐ *I'm not jugged up. I'm not even tipsy.* ☐ *Fred was too jugged to drive home.*

juggle someone or something **around†** to alter the position or sequence of someone or something. ☐ *We will juggle everyone around so that the second round of interviews are in a different order.* ☐ *I think I can juggle my schedule around so I can have lunch with you.* ☐ *Please juggle around my appointments for this afternoon so I can have a late lunch.*

juice and cookies trivial and uninteresting snacks or refreshments. ☐ *The party was not much. Nothing but juice and cookies.* ☐ *After juice and cookies, we all went back into the meeting room for another hour of talk, talk, talk.*

juice something **back†** *Sl.* to drink all of something alcoholic, quickly. ☐ *He juiced a beer back.* ☐ *Max juiced back another beer.*

juice something **up† 1.** *Sl.* to make something more powerful. ☐ *How much did it cost to juice this thing up?* ☐ *Wally juiced up his car.* **2.** *Sl.* to turn on the electricity to something. ☐ *It's time to juice the stage lights up.* ☐ *Juice up the stage lights.*

juice up *Sl.* to drink one or more alcoholic drinks. ☐ *Hey, man, let's go out and juice up tonight.* ☐ *Stop juicing up every night.*

jumble someone or something **together** to mix people or things together randomly into a hodgepodge. ☐ *They just jumbled everything together and made a real mess.* ☐ *The army just jumbled everybody together, no matter what their skills and talents were.*

jumble something **together** to assemble something clumsily and hastily. ☐ *They just jumbled some holiday decorations together. It really wasn't very well done.* ☐ *I hope this airplane wasn't jumbled together as badly as this meal.*

jumble something **up†** to make a hodgepodge out of things. ☐ *Who jumbled my papers up?* ☐ *Who jumbled up all my papers?*

jump across something to leap over something that is broad rather than tall. ☐ *The frog jumped across the puddle.* ☐ *Timmy tried but failed to jump across the puddle.*

jump all over someone and **jump down** someone's **throat; jump on** someone *Fig.* to scold someone severely. ☐ *If I don't get home on time, my parents will jump all over me.* ☐ *Don't jump on me! I didn't do it!* ☐ *Please don't jump all over John. He wasn't the one who broke the window.* ☐ *Why are you jumping down my throat? I wasn't even in the house when it happened.*

jump at someone or something to jump in the direction of someone or something. ☐ *The frog jumped at me, but I dodged it.* ☐ *The cat jumped at the leaf as it fell from the tree.*

jump at something *Fig.* to seize the opportunity to do something. (See also leap at the opportunity (to do something).) ☐ *When I heard about John's chance to go to England, I knew he'd jump at it.* ☐ *If something you really want to do comes your way, jump at it.*

jump at the opportunity (to do something**)** Go to leap at the opportunity (to do something).

jump bail and **skip bail** *Fig.* to fail to appear in court for trial and forfeit one's bail bond. ☐ *Not only was Bob arrested for theft, he skipped bail and left town. He's in a lot of trouble.* ☐ *The judge issued a warrant for the arrest of the man who jumped bail.*

jump clear of something *Fig.* to get out of the way of something; to leap off something before it crashes. ☐ *I barely had time to jump clear of the oncoming truck.* ☐ *I jumped clear of the ball as it came my way.*

jump (down) (from something**)** to jump downward off something. ☐ *A small mouse jumped down from the shelf.* ☐ *A tiny mouse jumped from the shelf.*

jump down someone's **throat** Go to jump all over someone.

jump down something to leap downward into or through something. ☐ *The rats jumped down the manhole.* ☐ *Timmy jumped down the stairs on the morning of his birthday party.*

jump for joy Go to leap for joy.

jump from something **to** something to leap from one place to another. ☐ *A frog jumped from lily pad to lily pad.* ☐ *The child jumped from stone to stone.*

jump in with both feet Go to dive in with both feet.

jump in((to) something**)** to leap into something, such as water, a bed, a problem, etc. ☐ *She was so cold she just jumped into bed and pulled up the covers.* ☐ *I jumped in and had a refreshing swim.*

jump into the fray Go to join the fray.

jump off ((of) something**)** to leap off something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Rachel lost her balance and jumped off the diving board instead of diving.* ☐ *Better to jump off than to fall off.*

jump off the deep end Go to go off the deep end.

jump off the deep end (over someone or something**)** *Fig.* to get deeply involved with someone or something. (Often refers to romantic involvement.) ☐ *Jim is about to jump off the deep end over Jane.* ☐ *Jane is great, but there is no need for Jim to jump off the deep end.*

*the **jump on** someone a chance to do something before someone else. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Each reporter is trying to get the jump on the others with the story about the earthquake.* ☐ *Kelly finally got the jump on Sam.*

jump on someone Go to jump all over someone.

jump on someone or something to pounce on someone or something. ☐ *The cat jumped on the mouse.* ☐ *Max jumped on the unsuspecting tourist and robbed him.*

jump on the bandwagon Go to on the bandwagon.

jump on((to) something**) 1.** to get onto something. ☐ *The cat jumped onto the sofa and took a nap.* ☐ *I was sitting on the sofa and the cat jumped on it and scared me.* **2.** to get involved in something very quickly. ☐ *Jump onto that story now and get it done for tonight's edition.* ☐ *I'll jump on the story right now, boss.*

jump out of something to leap from something. ☐ *A mouse jumped out of the cupboard and scared me.* ☐ *I jumped out of bed and ran to answer the telephone.*

J

jump out of the frying pan into the fire Go to **out of the frying pan into the fire.**

jump over something to leap over or across something. ☐ *The fellow named Jack jumped over a candle placed on the floor.* ☐ *Puddles are to be jumped over, not waded through.*

jump over the broomstick *Rur.* to get married. ☐ *Jim and Jane have decided to jump over the broomstick.* ☐ *The happiest day of my life was when your mother said she'd jump over the broomstick with me.*

jump ship 1. *Lit.* to leave one's job on a ship and fail to be aboard it when it sails; [for a sailor] to go AWOL. ☐ *One of the deckhands jumped ship at the last port.* **2.** *Fig.* to leave any post or position; to quit or resign, especially when there is difficulty with the job. ☐ *None of the editors liked the new policies, so they all jumped ship as soon as other jobs opened up.*

jump the gun *Fig.* to start before the starting signal. (Originally used in sports contests that are started by firing a gun.) ☐ *We all had to start the race again because Jane jumped the gun.* ☐ *When we took the test, Tom jumped the gun and started early.*

J

jump the track 1. *Lit.* [for something] to fall or jump off the rails or guides. (Usually said about a train.) ☐ *The train jumped the track, causing many injuries to the passengers.* ☐ *The engine jumped the track, but the other cars stayed on.* **2.** *Fig.* to change suddenly from one thing, thought, plan, or activity to another. ☐ *The entire project jumped the track, and we finally had to give up.* ☐ *John's mind jumped the track while he was in the play, and he forgot his lines.*

jump through a hoop and **jump through hoops** *Fig.* to do everything possible to obey or please someone; to **bend over backwards (to** do something**).** (Trained circus animals jump through hoops.) ☐ *She expects us to jump through hoops for her.* ☐ *What do you want me to do—jump through a hoop?*

jump to conclusions and **leap to conclusions** *Fig.* to judge or decide something without having all the facts; to reach unwarranted conclusions. (See also **rush to conclusions.**) ☐ *Now don't jump to conclusions. Wait until you hear what I have to say.* ☐ *Please find out all the facts so you won't leap to conclusions.*

jump up (from something**)** to leap upward from something. ☐ *The dog jumped up from its resting place.* ☐ *The dog jumped up and ran to the door.*

jump up (on someone or something**)** to leap upward onto someone or something. ☐ *A spider jumped up on me and terrified me totally.* ☐ *The cat jumped up on the sofa.*

jump up (to something**)** to leap upward to the level of something. ☐ *The child jumped up to the next step.* ☐ *The dog couldn't reach the piece of meat on the edge of the table, so it jumped up and got it.*

jump with something *Fig.* to be very active with excitement or enthusiasm. ☐ *The crowd was jumping with enthusiasm.* ☐ *The bar was jumping with young people.*

jumping-off place Go to next.

jumping-off point and **jumping-off place** a point or place from which to begin something. ☐ *The local library is a good jumping-off point for your research.* ☐ *The office job in that company would be a good jumping-off place for a career in advertising.*

junk mail annoying, unsolicited mail, such as promotional letters, etc. ☐ *I am so incredibly tired of getting pound after pound of junk mail every day. I could just scream.*

The **jury is still out on** someone or something**.** *Fig.* a decision has not been reached on someone or something; the people making the decision on someone or something have not yet decided. ☐ *The jury is still out on Jane. We don't know what we are going to do about her.* ☐ *The jury is still out on the question of building a new parking lot.*

just a minute only a short time; [wait] a short period of time. ☐ *I'm almost done. I'll be there in just a minute!* ☐ *Could I have just a minute of your time?*

Just a minute (you)! Stop where you are! (Not very polite.) ☐ *Just a minute, you! Where are you going with my coat?*

(just) a stone's throw away (from something**)** Go to **within a stone's throw (of** something**).**

(just) a stone's throw (from something**)** Go to **within a stone's throw (of** something**).**

(just) as I expected I thought so; I knew it would be this way. ☐ *Just as I expected. The window was left open and it rained in.* ☐ *As I expected, he left work early again.*

just fell off the turnip truck *Rur.* ignorant; unsophisticated. ☐ *He stood there gawking at the buildings in town like he just fell off the turnip truck.* ☐ *My cousin acts like she just fell off the turnip truck.*

just in case in the event that (something happens). ☐ *All right. I'll take it just in case.* ☐ *I'll take along some aspirin, just in case.*

just in time at the last possible time. ☐ *He got to the meeting just in time. They had just started the topic he was supposed to talk about.*

just let me say Go to **let me (just) say.**

just like that in just the way it happened or was stated; without any [further] discussion or comment. ☐ *Sue: You can't walk out on me just like that. John: I can too. Just watch!* ☐ *Mary: And then she slapped him in the face, just like that! Sally: She can be so rude.*

just off the boat *Fig.* to be newly immigrated and perhaps gullible and naive. ☐ *I'm not just off the boat. I know what's going on.* ☐ *He may act like he's just off the boat, but he's very savvy.*

just one's **cup of tea** *Fig.* to be something that one prefers or desires. ☐ *This spy novel is just my cup of tea.* ☐ *Teaching children to read is just my cup of tea.*

just passing through just moving through an area and not stopping. ☐ *We didn't stop in Moose Jaw. We were just passing through.*

just so 1. in perfect order; neat and tidy. ☐ *Her hair is always just so.* ☐ *Their front yard is just so.* **2.** Precisely right!; Quite right! (Usually **Just so!**) ☐ *Bill: The letter should arrive tomorrow. Tom: Just so!* ☐ *Jane: We must always try our best. Martin: Just so!*

(just) taking care of business *Fig.* doing what I am supposed to do; an answer to the question "What are you doing lately?" (Also abbreviated **T.C.B.**) ☐ *Bill: Hey, man.*

What you been doing? Tom: Just taking care of business. ☐ *Andy: Look, officer, I'm just standing here, taking care of business, and this Tom guy comes up and tries to hit me for a loan. Tom: That's not true!*

just the same Go to all the same.

just the same (to someone**)** Go to all the same (to someone).

just the ticket *Fig.* to be just the perfect thing. ☐ *This soup is just the ticket for a quick lunch.* ☐ *A good, hot cup of coffee will be just the ticket.*

just what the doctor ordered *Fig.* exactly what is required, especially for health or comfort. ☐ *That meal was delicious, Bob. Just what the doctor ordered.* ☐ *Bob: Would you like something to drink? Mary: Yes, a cold glass of water would be just what the doctor ordered.*

Just (you) wait (and see)! Go to You (just) wait (and see)!

justify something **by** something to try to explain why something needs doing or why it is acceptable to do something. ☐ *You cannot justify violence by quoting proverbs.* ☐ *Your action was totally justified by the circumstances.*

justify something **to** someone to explain something to someone and show why it is necessary. ☐ *Please try to justify this to the voters.* ☐ *I can justify your action to no one.*

jut out (from something**)** to stick outward from something. ☐ *The flagpole juts out from the side of the building.* ☐ *His nose juts out sharply.*

jut out (into something**)** to stick outward into an area. ☐ *The back end of the truck jutted out into the street.* ☐ *The back end jutted out.*

jut out (over someone or something**)** to stick out over someone or something. ☐ *The roof of the house jutted out over the patio.* ☐ *I'm glad the roof jutted out and kept us dry during the brief storm.*

juxtapose someone or something **to** someone or something to place people or things next to each other, in any combination. (Also implies that the placing or arranging is done carefully.) ☐ *I went to the meeting room early so I could juxtapose myself to the head of the table.* ☐ *I juxtaposed the chair to the view out the window.*

Kk

a **kangaroo court** a bogus or illegal court. ☐ *Is this a staff meeting or a kangaroo court?* ☐ *You have turned this interview into a kangaroo court.*

Katie bar the door Prepare immediately for an advancing threat. ☐ *Katie bar the door, the grandchildren are here and they all look hungry.*

keel over [for a person] to fall over or fall down in a faint or in death. ☐ *It was so hot in the room that two people just keeled over.*

K

keel something **over**† *Rur.* to push something over. ☐ *He leaned on the flimsy wall and keeled it right over.* ☐ *The high wind keeled over that sorry old fence.*

keen about someone or something Go to **keen on** someone or something.

keen on doing something willing or eager to do something. ☐ *Dave isn't very keen on going to the opera.* ☐ *The children are keen on swimming this afternoon. Shall I take them?*

keen on someone or something and **keen about** someone or something to be enthusiastic about someone or something. ☐ *I'm not too keen on going to Denver.* ☐ *Sally is fairly keen about getting a new job.* ☐ *Mary isn't keen on her new boss.*

keep a civil tongue (in one's **head)** *Fig.* to speak decently and politely. ☐ *Please, John. Don't talk like that. Keep a civil tongue in your head.* ☐ *John seems unable to keep a civil tongue.*

keep a close rein on someone or something Go to **keep a tight rein on** someone or something.

keep a close watch on someone or something to watch someone or something very carefully. ☐ *Let's keep a close watch on Fred and his friends.* ☐ *I want to keep a close watch on the house across the street.*

keep a firm grip on someone or something and **keep a tight grip on** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to hold on to someone or something tightly. ☐ *As they approached the edge, Sally kept a firm grip on little Timmy.* ☐ *She kept a tight grip on him.* ☐ *Keep a firm grip on my hand as we cross the street.* **2.** *Fig.* to keep someone or something under firm control. ☐ *The manager keeps a firm grip on all the employees.* ☐ *I try to keep a firm grip on all the accounts.*

keep a lid on something Go to a **lid on** something.

keep a low profile Go to a **low profile**.

keep a promise and **keep** one's **promise** to make good on a promise; to fulfill one's promise. ☐ *If you can't keep your promises, you shouldn't make them in the first place.*

keep a secret to know a secret and not tell anyone. ☐ *Please keep our little secret private.* ☐ *Do you know how to keep a secret?*

Keep a stiff upper lip. *Prov.* Act as though you are not upset.; Do not let unpleasant things upset you. (English people are stereotypically supposed to be very good at keeping a stiff upper lip.) ☐ *Even though he was only three years old, Jonathan kept a stiff upper lip the whole time he was in the hospital recovering from his surgery.* ☐ *Jill: Sometimes this job frustrates me so much I could just break down in tears. Jane: Keep a stiff upper lip. Things are bound to improve.*

keep a straight face Go to a **straight face**.

Keep a thing seven years and you'll (always) find a use for it. *Prov.* If you keep a seemingly useless thing for seven years, you will supposedly have some occasion to use it during that time. ☐ *Jill: My mother sent me a four-foot-tall ceramic vase for my birthday. What can I possibly use it for? Jane: Keep it seven years and you'll find some use for it.*

keep a tight grip on someone or something Go to **keep a firm grip on** someone or something.

keep a tight rein on someone or something and **keep a close rein on** someone or something *Fig.* to watch and control someone or something diligently. (Alludes to controlling a horse by a tight grip on the reins.) ☐ *The office manager kept a tight rein on the staff.* ☐ *Mary keeps a close rein on her children.*

keep abreast of someone or something Go to **abreast of** someone or something.

keep after someone **(about** something**)** and **keep at** someone **(about** something**); keep on** someone **(about** something**); stay after** someone **(about** something**)** to remind or nag someone over and over to do something. ☐ *I'll keep after you until you do it!* ☐ *Mother stayed after Bill until he did the dishes.* ☐ *She kept at him until he dried them and put them away.* ☐ *We will have to keep on him about the report until he turns it in.*

keep ahead (of someone or something**)** Go to **ahead (of** someone or something**)**.

keep ahead of something Go to **ahead of** something.

keep ahead of the game Go to **ahead of the game**.

keep aloof from someone or something Go to **aloof from** someone or something.

keep an act up† and **keep** one's **act up**† to maintain behavior that is a false show; to continue with one's facade. (The *an* can be replaced with *the, this, that,* etc.) ☐ *How long do I have to keep this act up? I am tired of fooling people.* ☐ *I am weary of keeping up my act.*

keep an ear to the ground and **have an ear to the ground; keep** one's **ear to the ground; have** one's **ear to the ground** *Fig.* to devote attention to watching or listening for clues as to what is going to happen. ☐ *John had his ear to the ground, hoping to find out about new ideas in computers.* ☐ *His boss told him to keep his ear to the ground so that he'd be the first to know of a new idea.*

keep an eye on someone or something and **have an eye on** someone or something; **keep** one's **eye(s) on** someone or something; **have** one's **eye on** someone or something *Fig.* to watch someone or something; to monitor someone or something closely. ☐ *I have my eye on the apple tree. When the apples ripen, I'll harvest them.* ☐ *Please keep an eye on the baby.* ☐ *Will you please keep your eye on my house while I'm on vacation?*

keep an eye out (for someone or something**)** and **have an eye out (for** someone or something**); keep** one's **eye out (for** someone or something**); have** one's **eye out (for** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to watch for the arrival or appearance of someone or something. (See also keep one's eyes open (for someone or something).) ☐ *Please try to have an eye out for the bus.* ☐ *Keep an eye out for rain.* ☐ *Have your eye out for a raincoat on sale.*

keep an open mind Go to an open mind.

keep at arm's length from someone or something and **keep** someone or something **at arm's length** *Fig.* to retain a degree of physical or social remoteness from someone or something. ☐ *I try to keep at arm's length from Larry, since our disagreement.* ☐ *I keep Tom at arm's length because we don't get along.*

Keep at it! Keep doing what you are doing!; Keep trying! (Said as encouragement to keep working at something.) ☐ *The boss told me to keep at it every time he passed my desk.* ☐ *Keep at it, Tom! You can do it!*

keep at someone **(about** something**)** Go to keep after someone (about something).

keep at something to persist at doing something; to continue trying to do something. ☐ *John kept at his painting until the whole house was done.* ☐ *Keep at the job if you want to get it finished.*

keep away (from someone or something**)** Go to away (from someone or something).

keep banker's hours *Fig.* to work or be open for business for less than eight hours a day. ☐ *The advertising agency keeps banker's hours. They are only open until four.* ☐ *James doesn't really work full-time. He keeps banker's hours.*

keep body and soul together *Fig.* to manage to keep existing, especially when one has very little money. (Compare this with keep the wolf from the door.) ☐ *We hardly had enough to keep body and soul together.* ☐ *I don't earn enough money to keep body and soul together.*

keep clear of something Go to clear of something.

keep (close) watch (on someone or something**)** to monitor someone or something; to observe someone or something. ☐ *Keep close watch on Bill. I think he's loafing.* ☐ *Okay. I'll keep watch, but I think he's a good worker.*

keep (close) watch (over someone or something**)** to guard or care for someone or something. ☐ *I'm keeping watch over my children to make sure they have the things they need.* ☐ *I think that an angel is keeping close watch over her to make sure nothing bad happens to her.*

keep company (with someone**) 1.** *Lit.* to spend much time with someone; to associate with or consort with someone. ☐ *Bill has been keeping company with Ann for three months.* ☐ *Bob has been keeping company with a tough-looking bunch of boys.* **2.** *Fig.* to be courting someone. ☐ *Mary and Bill are keeping company.* ☐ *I heard that Joe is keeping company with Jim Brown's daughter.*

keep cool *Inf.* to stay calm and undisturbed. ☐ *Relax, man, keep cool!* ☐ *If Sally could just keep cool before a race, she could probably win.*

keep faith with someone to be loyal to someone. ☐ *I intend to keep faith with my people and all they stand for.* ☐ *We could not keep faith with them any longer.*

keep fit to keep in good physical condition. ☐ *I do everything I can to keep fit.*

keep from something to avoid doing something; to refrain from doing something. ☐ *How could I keep from crying? It was so sad!* ☐ *Try to keep from falling off the ladder.*

keep (going) on about someone or something to continue to talk excessively about someone or something. ☐ *I wish you would not keep going on about Tom and Jill.* ☐ *Don't keep on about my haircut. It's perfect!*

keep (going) on at someone or something to continue to complain about or scold someone or a group. ☐ *Don't keep going on at him. Give him the dickens and be done with it.* ☐ *Please don't keep on at the committee. They did the best they could.*

keep good time [for a watch or clock] to be accurate. ☐ *I have to return my watch to the store because it doesn't keep good time.* ☐ *Mine keeps good time.*

keep harping on something to continue to talk or complain about something; to keep raising a topic of conversation. (See also harp on something.) ☐ *Why do you keep harping on the same old complaint?* ☐ *You keep harping on my problems and ignore your own!*

keep house to manage a household. ☐ *I hate to keep house. I'd rather live in a tent than keep house.* ☐ *My grandmother kept house for nearly sixty years.*

keep in good condition Go to in good condition.

keep in good shape Go to in good shape.

keep in good with someone to remain in someone's favor. ☐ *I always try to keep in good with the boss's secretary.* ☐ *It's also good to keep in good with the boss.*

keep in step (with someone**)** Go to in step (with someone).

Keep in there! *Inf.* Keep trying! ☐ *Andy: Don't give up, Sally. Keep in there! Sally: I'm doing my best!* ☐ *John: I'm not very good, but I keep trying. Fred: Just keep in there, John.*

Keep in touch. Good-bye. (Sometimes a sarcastic way of saying good-bye to someone one doesn't care about.) ☐ *Nice talking to you. Keep in touch.* ☐ *Sorry, we can't use you anymore. Keep in touch.*

keep in touch (with someone**)** Go to in touch (with someone).

keep in touch (with someone or something**)** and **remain in touch (with** someone or something**); stay in touch (with** someone or something**)** to maintain communications with someone; to maintain up-to-date knowledge about someone or something. (See also get in touch (with someone).) ☐ *After my neighbor moved, we still remained in touch.* ☐ *I want to stay in touch with my office over the weekend.*

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keep in training to maintain oneself in good physical condition. ☐ *I try to keep in training so I will live longer.* ☐ *Try to keep in training.*

keep inside ((of) something) to remain inside of something, usually a shelter, house, etc. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Please keep inside of the house while it's raining.* ☐ *I want you to keep inside.*

keep it down (to a dull roar) *Fig.* to keep quiet or as quiet as possible. ☐ *Keep it down, you kids!* ☐ *Please try to keep it down to a dull roar, could you?*

keep (it) in mind that a statement emphasizing something that the speaker wants remembered. ☐ *Bill: When we get there I want to take a long hot shower. Father: Keep it in mind that we are guests, and we have to fit in with the routines of the household.* ☐ *Sally: Keep it in mind that you don't work here anymore, and you just can't go in and out of offices like that. Fred: I guess you're right.*

Keep it up! 1. Keep up the good work!; Keep on doing it.; Keep (on) trying. ☐ *Jane: I think I'm doing better in calculus. John: Keep it up!* ☐ *Sally: I can now jog for almost three miles. Fred: Great! Keep it up!* **2.** Just keep acting that way and see what happens to you. (Compare this with (Go ahead,) make my day!) ☐ *John: You're just not doing what is expected of you. Bill: Keep it up! Just keep it up, and I'll quit right when you need me most.* ☐ *"Your behavior is terrible, young man! You just keep it up and see what happens," warned Alice. "Just keep it up!"*

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keep late hours to stay up or stay out until very late at night. ☐ *I'm always tired because I keep late hours.* ☐ *If I didn't keep late hours, I wouldn't sleep so late in the morning.*

keep off (of) someone's back and **keep off (of) someone's case** *Inf. Fig.* to leave someone alone; to stop criticizing or scolding someone. ☐ *Keep off of my back! Leave me alone.* ☐ *Keep off my case!*

keep off (of) someone's case Go to previous.

keep off ((of) something) to remain off something; to stay off of something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Please keep off the grass.* ☐ *This is not a public thoroughfare! Keep off!* ☐ *You had better keep off of my property.*

keep on Go to keep on something.

keep on an even keel *Fig.* to remain cool and calm. (Originally nautical.) ☐ *If Jane can keep on an even keel and not panic, she will be all right.* ☐ *Try to keep on an even keel and not get upset so easily.*

keep on (doing something) to continue to do something. ☐ *Are you going to keep on singing all night?* ☐ *Yes, I'm going to keep on.*

keep on keeping on *Inf.* keep trying; keep doing what you are doing. ☐ *I do my best. I just keep on keeping on.*

keep on (one's) guard (against someone or something) Go to on (one's) guard (against someone or something).

keep on one's toes Go to on one's toes.

keep on someone (about something) Go to keep after someone (about something).

keep on someone's case Go to on someone's case.

keep on something 1. and **keep on** *Lit.* to work to remain mounted on something, such as a horse, bicycle, etc. ☐ *It's really hard for me to keep on a horse.* ☐ *It's hard to keep on when it's moving all over the place.* **2.** *Fig.* to pay close attention to something. (See also keep on top of someone or something.) ☐ *Keep on that story until everything is settled.* ☐ *This is a problem. Keep on it until it's settled.*

keep on the good side of someone Go to keep on the right side of someone.

keep on the left(-hand) side (of something) to stay on the left-hand side of something. ☐ *Please don't keep on the left side all the time when everyone else is on the right!* ☐ *In England you keep on the left-hand side.*

keep on the right side of someone and **keep on the good side of someone; stay on the good side of someone; stay on the right side of someone** *Fig.* to remain in someone's favor. (This has nothing to do with the right-hand side.) ☐ *You had better keep on the right side of Mr. Franklin. He's very particular.* ☐ *I will keep on the good side of him.*

keep on the right(-hand) side (of something) to stay on the right-hand side of something. ☐ *We always keep on the right side of the road in this country.* ☐ *Please keep on the right-hand side.*

keep on (the) track *Fig.* to stay on the path that one is on; to continue doing the things one is doing. ☐ *Keep on the track and you will end up where you want to be.* ☐ *I know I can keep on track.*

keep on top (of someone or something) to stay well-informed about the status of someone or something. ☐ *I need to keep on top of the president, because I am doing a report on him.* ☐ *News is easy to get these days, and I do what I can to keep on top.*

keep on trucking *Inf.* to continue to do well; to continue to try. ☐ *Just keep on trucking, man.* ☐ *All I can do is keep on trucking.*

Keep (on) trying. and **Don't quit trying.** *Fig.* a phrase encouraging continued efforts. ☐ *Jane: I think I'm doing better in calculus. John: Keep trying! You can get an A.* ☐ *Sue: I really want that promotion, but I keep getting turned down. Bill: Don't quit trying! You'll get it.*

keep on with something to continue with something. ☐ *Just keep on with your work. Don't pay any attention to me.* ☐ *Can I keep on with this while you are talking?*

keep one in one's place to make someone stay in the proper rank or station. ☐ *I guess you want to keep me in my place, is that right?* ☐ *I know enough to keep myself in my place.*

keep one on one's toes Go to on one's toes.

keep one's act up† Go to keep an act up†.

keep one's cards close to one's chest Go to play one's cards close to one's chest.

keep one's cards close to one's vest Go to keep one's cards close to one's chest.

keep one's chair and **keep one's seat** *Fig.* to stay seated; to remain in one's chair or place. ☐ *That's all right. Keep your chair. I'll find my own way out.* ☐ *Please keep your seats until after the question-and-answer period.*

keep one's **chin up** *Fig.* to keep one's spirits high; to act brave and confident. ☐ *Keep your chin up, John. Things will get better.* ☐ *Just keep your chin up and tell the judge exactly what happened.*

keep one's **cool** *Inf.* to remain calm and in control. ☐ *Relax, man! Just keep your cool.* ☐ *It's hard to keep your cool when you've been cheated.*

keep one's **distance (from** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to maintain a respectful or cautious distance from someone or something. ☐ *Keep your distance from John. He's in a bad mood.* ☐ *Keep your distance from the fire.*

keep one's **ear to the ground** Go to **keep an ear to the ground.**

keep one's **end of the bargain up†** Go to **hold** one's **end of the bargain up†.**

keep one's **end up† 1.** *Lit.* to hold one's end of a load so that the load is level. ☐ *Be sure to keep your end up while we go up the stairs.* ☐ *Try to keep up your end.* **2.** *Fig.* to carry through on one's part of a bargain. ☐ *You have to keep your end up like the rest of us.* ☐ *Don't worry, I'll keep up my end.*

keep one's **eye on** someone or something and **have** one's **eye on** someone or something *Fig.* to have one's attention directed to someone or something. ☐ *Please keep your eye on the children while I go to the store.* ☐ *Bill kept an eye on his expenses because he was spending too much money.*

keep one's **eye on the ball 1.** *Fig.* to watch or follow the ball carefully, especially when one is playing a ball game; to follow the details of a ball game very carefully. ☐ *John, if you can't keep your eye on the ball, I'll have to take you out of the game.* ☐ *"Keep your eye on the ball!" the coach roared at the players.* **2.** *Fig.* to remain alert to the events occurring around oneself. ☐ *If you want to get along in this office, you're going to have to keep your eye on the ball.* ☐ *Bill would do better in his classes if he would just keep his eye on the ball.*

keep one's **eyes open (for** someone or something**)** and **keep** one's **eyes peeled (for** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to remain alert and watchful for someone or something. (The entry with *peeled* is informal. *Peel* refers to moving the eyelids back. See also **keep an eye out (for** someone or something**)**.) ☐ *I'm keeping my eyes open for a sale on winter coats.* ☐ *Please keep your eyes peeled for Mary. She's due to arrive here any time.* ☐ *Okay. I'll keep my eyes open.*

keep one's **eye(s) out (for** someone or something**)** Go to **keep an eye out (for** someone or something**).**

keep one's **eyes peeled (for** someone or something**)** Go to **keep** one's **eyes open (for** someone or something**).**

keep one's **feet on the ground** and **have** one's **feet on the ground** *Fig.* to remain calm and stable. ☐ *You will do all right if you have your feet on the ground. Don't get carried away.* ☐ *Just keep your feet on the ground and you will do fine.*

keep one's **finger on the pulse of** something *Fig.* to monitor the current state of something frequently. ☐ *I have to keep my finger on the pulse of the city if I want to be a good reporter.* ☐ *It is hard to keep your finger on the pulse of Washington, D.C., but a U.S. senator must do it.*

keep one's **fingers crossed (for** someone or something**)** and **cross** one's **fingers** to wish for luck for someone or something, sometimes by actually crossing one's fingers; to hope for a good outcome for someone or something. ☐ *I hope you win the race Saturday. I'm keeping my fingers crossed for you.* ☐ *I'm trying out for a play. Keep your fingers crossed!*

keep one's **hand in (**something**)** *Fig.* to remain involved in something, perhaps only a token involvement. ☐ *I want to keep my hand in things even after I retire.* ☐ *I always have to keep my hand in so I will feel a part of things.*

keep one's **hands off (**something**)** to refrain from touching or handling something. ☐ *I'm going to put these cookies here. You keep your hands off them.* ☐ *Get your hands off my book, and keep them off.*

keep one's **hands to** oneself *Fig.* to refrain from touching anything or anyone; to refrain from punching or poking someone. ☐ *Won't you keep your hands to yourself?* ☐ *Keep your hands to yourself while we are in the toy store.* ☐ *I want you boys to stop fighting and keep your hands to yourselves.*

keep one's **head** *Fig.* to remain calm and sensible when in an awkward situation that might cause a person to panic or go out of control. ☐ *She was very angry. We had to calm her down and encourage her to keep her head.* ☐ *Always try to keep your head when others are panicking.*

keep one's **head above water 1.** *Lit.* to keep from drowning when swimming or floating. (See also **get** one's **head above water**.) ☐ *I was so tired I could hardly keep my head above water.* **2.** *Fig.* to manage to survive, especially financially. ☐ *We have so little money that we can hardly keep our heads above water.* ☐ *It's hard to keep your head above water on this much money.* **3.** *Fig.* to keep up with one's work. ☐ *It's all I can do to keep my head above water with the work I have. I can't take on any more.* ☐ *We have so many orders that we can hardly keep our heads above water.*

keep one's **mind on** someone or something to concentrate on someone or something. ☐ *He is keeping his mind on Jane instead of his work.* ☐ *I find it hard to keep my mind on my reading.*

keep one's **mouth shut (about** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to keep quiet about someone or something; to keep a secret about someone or something. ☐ *They told me to keep my mouth shut about the boss or I'd be in big trouble.* ☐ *I think I'll keep my mouth shut.*

keep one's **nose clean** *Fig.* to keep out of trouble, especially trouble with the law. ☐ *I'm trying to keep my nose clean by staying away from those rough guys.* ☐ *John, if you don't learn how to keep your nose clean, you're going to end up in jail.*

keep one's **nose out of** someone's **business** *Fig.* to refrain from interfering in someone else's business. (See also **keep** one's **nose out of** something.) ☐ *Let John have his privacy, and keep your nose out of my business, too!* ☐ *Keep your nose out of my business!*

keep one's **nose out of** something *Fig.* to stay out of something, such as someone else's business. (See also **keep** one's **nose out of** someone's **business**.) ☐ *Try to keep your nose out of stuff that doesn't concern you.* ☐ *Keep your nose out of my personal affairs.*

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keep one's **nose to the grindstone** *Fig.* to work hard and constantly. ☐ *Son: I'll never get good grades. I might as well not even study. Mother: Don't give up yet. I'm sure that if you just keep your nose to the grindstone, you'll get the results you want.* ☐ *Mary kept her nose to the grindstone while her friends were out enjoying themselves.*

keep one's **opinions to** oneself to stop mentioning one's own opinions, especially when they disagree with someone else's. ☐ *You ought to keep your opinions to yourself rather than upset our guests.* ☐ *Please keep your rude opinions to yourself!*

keep one's **own counsel** *Fig.* to keep one's thoughts and plans to oneself; to withhold from other people one's thoughts and plans. ☐ *Jane is very quiet. She tends to keep her own counsel.* ☐ *I advise you to keep your own counsel.*

keep one's **pants on** Go to keep one's shirt on.

keep one's **place** *Fig.* to exhibit only the behavior appropriate to one's position or status in life. ☐ *When I complained about the food, they told me to keep my place!* ☐ *I suggest you keep your place until you're in a position to change things.*

keep one's **promise** Go to keep a promise.

keep one's **seat** Go to keep one's chair.

keep one's **shirt on** and **keep** one's **pants on** *Fig.* to be patient. ☐ *Wait a minute! Keep your shirt on!* ☐ *Keep your pants on! I'll be with you in a minute.*

keep one's **shoulder to the wheel** Go to have one's shoulder to the wheel.

keep one's **side of the bargain** Go to live up to one's end of the bargain.

keep one's **temper** and **hold** one's **temper** to hold back an expression of anger. (The opposite of lose one's temper.) ☐ *She should have learned to keep her temper when she was a child.* ☐ *Sally got thrown off the team because she couldn't hold her temper.*

keep one's **weather eye open** *Fig.* to watch for something (to happen); to be on the alert (for something); to be on guard. ☐ *Some trouble is brewing. Keep your weather eye open.* ☐ *Try to be more alert. Learn to keep your weather eye open.*

keep one's **wits about** one *Fig.* to remain rational when threatened or under stress; to keep one's mind operating in a time of stress. ☐ *If Jane hadn't kept her wits about her during the fire, things would have been much worse.* ☐ *I could hardly keep my wits about me.*

keep one's **word** to uphold one's promise; to do as one says. (The opposite of break one's word.) ☐ *I told her I'd be there to pick her up, and I intend to keep my word.* ☐ *Keeping one's word is necessary in the legal profession.*

keep one **step ahead of** someone or something and **stay** one **step ahead of** someone or something *Fig.* to be or stay slightly in advance of someone or something. ☐ *Al kept one step ahead of Detective Rogers.* ☐ *Try to keep one step ahead of the investigators.*

keep oneself **above suspicion** Go to above suspicion.

keep oneself **to** oneself to remain aloof. ☐ *He does tend to keep himself to himself.* ☐ *Keep yourself to yourself, and you'll be all right there.*

keep out from under someone's **feet** *Fig.* to stay out of someone's way. ☐ *Please keep out from under my feet. I'm very busy.* ☐ *Try to keep out from under Tom's feet while he is working.*

Keep out of my way. and **Stay out of my way. 1.** *Lit.* Don't get in my pathway. ☐ *John: Keep out of my way! I'm carrying a heavy load. Bill: Sorry.* ☐ *"Keep out of my way!" shouted the piano mover.* **2.** *Fig.* Don't cause me any trouble. ☐ *Henry: I'm going to get even no matter what. Keep out of my way. Andy: Keep it up! You'll really get in trouble.* ☐ *John: I intend to work my way to the top in this business. Mary: So do I, so just keep out of my way.*

keep out of sight Go to out of sight.

keep out (of something**) 1.** *Lit.* to remain outside something or some place. ☐ *You should keep out of the darkroom when the door is closed.* ☐ *The door is closed. Keep out!* **2.** *Fig.* to remain uninvolved with something. ☐ *Keep out of this! It's my affair.* ☐ *It's not your affair. Keep out!*

Keep out of this! and **Stay out of this!** This is not your business, so do not try to get involved. ☐ *John: Now you listen to me, Fred! Mary: That's no way to talk to Fred! John: Keep out of this, Mary! Mind your own business! Fred: Stay out of this, Mary! Mary: It's just as much my business as it is yours.*

keep pace (with someone or something**) 1.** *Lit.* to move at the same speed as someone, something, or an animal; to match someone or some creature pace for pace. ☐ *The black horse was having a hard time keeping pace with the brown one.* ☐ *Tom runs very fast and I couldn't keep pace with him.* **2.** *Fig.* to manage to move, learn, change, etc., at the same rate as someone or something. ☐ *Bill can't keep pace with the geometry class.* ☐ *You've just got to keep pace.*

keep people **straight (in** one's **mind)** *Fig.* to correctly distinguish one person from other people. ☐ *The twins look exactly alike. Not even their mother can keep them straight.*

keep quiet (about someone or something**)** and **keep still (about** someone or something**)** to refrain from talking about someone or something; to keep a secret about someone or something. ☐ *Please keep quiet about the missing money.* ☐ *Please keep still about it.* ☐ *All right. I'll keep still.*

keep sight of someone or something to keep someone or something in view. ☐ *Try to keep sight of the skier.* ☐ *I want to keep sight of the children at all times.*

Keep smiling. a good-bye phrase encouraging someone to have good spirits. ☐ *John: Things are really getting tough. Sue: Well, just keep smiling. Things will get better.* ☐ *Bill: What a day! I'm exhausted and depressed. Bob: Not to worry. Keep smiling. Things will calm down.*

keep someone **at** something to make sure someone continues to work at something. ☐ *Please keep Walter at his chores.* ☐ *I was so sick I couldn't keep myself at my work.*

keep someone **back** and **hold** someone **back 1.** *Lit.* to restrain people from moving forward or getting in the way. ☐ *The police were ordered to keep people back so they wouldn't interfere with the paramedics.* **2.** *Fig.* to keep a child in the same grade for an extra year. ☐ *We asked them to keep John back a year.* ☐ *John was kept back a year in school.* **3.** *Fig.* to keep someone from advancing in life. ☐

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I think that your limited vocabulary is keeping you back. ☐ *Her lack of computer skills kept her back in her career.*

keep someone **company** to sit or stay with someone, especially someone who is lonely. ☐ *I kept my uncle company for a few hours.* ☐ *He was very grateful for someone to keep him company. He gets very lonely.*

keep someone **down** to prevent someone from advancing or succeeding. ☐ *His lack of a degree will keep him down.* ☐ *I don't think that this problem will keep her down.*

keep someone **from** doing something to prevent someone from doing something. ☐ *I kept the child from falling in the lake by grabbing his collar.* ☐ *I try to keep myself from overeating, but I seem to fail frequently.*

keep someone **from** someone or something to hold someone away from someone or something; to prevent someone from getting at someone or something. ☐ *You must keep the child from her mother until the mother is infection-free.* ☐ *It is hard to keep a child from the playground, even a sick child.* ☐ *I could hardly keep myself from the dessert table.*

keep someone **honest** to manage to make someone behave honestly and fairly and tell the truth. ☐ *I love to tell about our vacations, and my wife is usually with me to keep me honest.*

keep someone **in (a state of) suspense** to make someone wait anxiously for something. ☐ *Tell us what happened. Don't keep us in a state of suspense.* ☐ *Don't keep me in suspense!*

keep someone **in ignorance (about** someone or something**)** to prevent someone from learning specific information about someone or something. ☐ *I think we had better keep them all in ignorance about the money for a while.* ☐ *I don't know about her. I have kept myself in ignorance on purpose.*

keep someone **in sight** to make sure that a person is visible at all times. ☐ *He looks suspicious. Keep him in sight at all times.* ☐ *I cannot keep him in sight day and night.*

keep someone **in stitches** *Fig.* to cause someone to laugh loud and hard, for a period of time. ☐ *The comedian kept us in stitches for nearly an hour.* ☐ *The teacher kept the class in stitches, but the students didn't learn anything.*

keep someone **in the dark (about** someone or something**)** Go to in the dark (about someone or something).

keep someone **in the picture** Go to in the picture.

keep someone **on** *Fig.* to retain someone in employment longer than is required or was planned. ☐ *She worked out so well that we decided to keep her on.* ☐ *Liz was kept on as a consultant.*

keep someone **on a string** Go to on a string.

keep someone **on (**something**)** **1.** *Lit.* to make or help someone stay mounted on something, such as a horse, bicycle, etc. ☐ *Her father kept her on the bicycle as she was learning to ride it.* ☐ *I couldn't keep myself on the horse.* **2.** *Fig.* to retain someone as an employee. ☐ *We can't keep you on the payroll any longer.* ☐ *Ken could not be kept on any longer.*

keep someone **on tenterhooks** *Fig.* to keep someone in suspense. ☐ *Don't keep me on tenterhooks! Tell me your news!* ☐ *We were all kept on tenterhooks waiting to find out what happened.*

keep someone or an animal **in**† to make someone or an animal stay inside. ☐ *I will have to keep Billy in until his cold is better.* ☐ *Keep the dog in. It's too cold for her to go out.* ☐ *Keep in the children and the animals until it warms up.*

keep someone or an animal **in line** *Fig.* to make certain that someone behaves properly. ☐ *It's very hard to keep Bill in line. He's sort of rowdy.* ☐ *The teacher had to struggle to keep the class in line.*

keep someone or some creature **out in the cold** Go to out in the cold.

keep someone or something **about** and **keep** someone or something **around** to have someone or something nearby habitually. ☐ *Try to keep some spare parts about.* ☐ *He doesn't work very hard, but we keep him around anyway.*

keep someone or something **apart** to keep someone away from someone else; to keep something away from something else. ☐ *Try to keep the dogs and cats apart.* ☐ *Can you keep Bill and Bob apart?*

keep someone or something **around** Go to keep someone or something about.

keep someone or something **at a distance** to retain some amount of physical distance from someone or something. ☐ *Please try to keep Tom at a distance. He just gets in the way.* ☐ *I wanted to keep the smelly plant at a distance.*

keep someone or something **at arm's length** Go to keep at arm's length from someone or something.

keep someone or something **at bay** Go to at bay.

keep someone or something **away (from** someone or something**)** to maintain a physical distance between someone or something and someone or something, in any combination. ☐ *I will try to keep the smokers away from you.* ☐ *Try to keep the dog away from the roast.*

keep someone or something **back**† to hold someone or something in reserve. ☐ *Keep back some of the food for an emergency.* ☐ *We are keeping Karen back until the other players have exhausted themselves.*

keep someone or something **by** someone to make someone or something stay next to someone. ☐ *Try to keep the twins by you until we have taken a few more pictures.* ☐ *Please keep this package by you until we are ready to present it.*

keep someone or something **down** to hold someone or something in a hidden or protected position. ☐ *Try to keep Sam down where no one can see him.* ☐ *Please keep the noise down so Fred won't know it's a party when he comes in.*

keep someone or something **for** someone **1.** to retain and care for someone or something. ☐ *I would be happy to keep Rover for you while you are away.* ☐ *Would you keep my dog for me?* **2.** to keep someone or something in reserve for someone. ☐ *John wanted to return to the accounting department, but I will keep him here for you for last-minute changes.* ☐ *I am keeping some birthday cake here for you, since you will miss the party.*

keep someone or something **from** doing something to prevent someone or something from doing something. ☐ *Would you please keep your dog from digging in my garden?* ☐ *Her lack of a degree kept her from advancing.*

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keep someone or something **going** to sustain someone or something. ☐ *I try to eat just enough food to keep me going. Enjoying food is just not an issue any more.*

keep someone or something **hanging (in midair)** Go to **leave** someone or something **hanging (in midair)**.

keep someone or something **in check** and **hold** someone or something **in check** to keep someone or something under control; to restrain someone or something. ☐ *Hang on to this rope to keep the dog in check.* ☐ *I was so angry I could hardly hold myself in check.*

keep someone or something **in mind** and **bear** someone or something **in mind** to remember and think about someone or something. ☐ *When you're driving a car, you must bear this in mind at all times: Keep your eyes on the road.* ☐ *As you leave home, keep your family in mind.*

keep someone or something **in mind (for** someone or something**)** to remember to bring up someone or something in regard to someone or something. ☐ *Would you keep me in mind for the vice president job?* ☐ *I will keep a position in mind for John, since he is graduating soon.*

keep someone or something **in order** to keep people or things in the proper sequence. ☐ *Please try to keep the children in order until their turn to perform comes.* ☐ *Can you keep these books in order for me?*

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keep someone or something **in reserve** Go to **hold** someone or something **in reserve**.

keep someone or something **in** some place to house or maintain someone or something in some place. ☐ *We keep the boys in an apartment just off campus. It's cheaper than three dormitory rooms.* ☐ *We can keep your dog in the garage until you return.*

keep someone or something **in with** someone or something to locate people or things together, in any combination. ☐ *I will keep Tom in with me until he gets his own room.* ☐ *We will keep the cat in with Tom until there is room elsewhere.*

keep someone or something **off**† Go to **hold** someone or something **off**†.

keep someone or something **off ((of)** someone or something**)** to make sure that someone or something remains off someone or something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Keep that woman off of me! She's obsessed with me!* ☐ *Please keep Timmy off the couch.* ☐ *Keep him off!*

keep someone or something **on (the) (right) track** *Fig.* to make sure that someone or some process continues to progress properly. ☐ *You have to watch him and keep him on the right track.* ☐ *I will do what I can to keep the process on the track.*

keep someone or something **on track** Go to **on track**.

keep someone or something **out (of** something**)** **1.** to prevent someone or something from getting into something or some place. ☐ *Keep your kids out of my yard.* ☐ *She just couldn't keep herself out of the cookie jar.* **2.** to keep the subject of someone or something out of a discussion. ☐ *Keep the kids out of this! I don't want to talk about them.* ☐ *They kept Dorothy out of the discussion.*

keep someone or something **out of the way** to prevent someone or something from getting in the way. ☐ *Please keep your children out of the way.*

keep someone or something **quiet** Go to next.

keep someone or something **still 1.** *Lit.* and **keep** someone or something **quiet** to make someone or something silent or less noisy. ☐ *Can you please keep the baby still?* ☐ *Keep that stereo quiet!* **2.** Go to **keep** something **quiet**. **3.** and **hold** someone or something **still** *Fig.* to restrain or control someone or something so that the person or thing cannot move. ☐ *Please keep your foot still. It makes me nervous when you wiggle it.* ☐ *You have to hold the nail still if you want to hit it.*

keep someone or something **together** to keep things or a group of people together; to keep something, including a group of people, from falling apart. ☐ *I hope we can keep our club together for a few more years.* ☐ *We will keep it together for a while longer.* ☐ *Keep your toys together. Don't scatter them all over the house.*

keep someone or something **under (close) scrutiny** Go to **under (close) scrutiny**.

keep someone or something **under control** Go to **under control**.

keep someone or something **under** something to store, hide, or cache someone or something beneath something. ☐ *Keep Max under the packing crate until the police go away.* ☐ *I keep a box of extra sweaters under the bed.*

keep (someone or something**) within bounds** *Fig.* to cause someone or something to remain constrained or be reasonable; to cause someone to act or something to be in good taste. ☐ *I know you want artistic freedom, but if you want an audience, you are going to have to keep within bounds.* ☐ *Try to keep the children within bounds.* ☐ *Do keep your behavior within bounds.*

keep someone **posted** *Fig.* to keep someone informed (of what is happening); to keep someone up to date. ☐ *If the price of corn goes up, I need to know. Please keep me posted.* ☐ *Keep her posted about the patient's status.*

keep someone, something, or an animal **back (from** someone or something**)** to make someone, something, or an animal stay in a position away from someone or something. ☐ *Keep everyone back from the injured lady.* ☐ *Please keep the dogs back from the turtle.*

keep someone **under** someone's **thumb** Go to **under** someone's **thumb**.

keep someone **up 1.** *Lit.* to hold someone upright. ☐ *Try to keep him up until I can get his bed made.* ☐ *Keep her up for a few minutes longer.* **2.** *Fig.* to prevent someone from going to bed or going to sleep. ☐ *I'm sorry, was my trumpet keeping you up?* ☐ *The noise kept us up.*

keep someone **young at heart** Go to **young at heart**.

keep something **by** to keep something handy; to keep something in reserve, ready to be used. ☐ *Keep this extra glue by in case you need it.* ☐ *This money had been kept by for just such an emergency.*

keep something **down 1.** *Lit.* to make the level of noise lower and keep it lower. ☐ *Please keep it down. You are just too noisy.* ☐ *Keep the noise down, or I will call the police.* **2.** *Fig.* to retain food in one's stomach rather than throwing it up. ☐ *I've got the flu and I can't keep any food down.* ☐ *She couldn't keep the milk down.* **3.** *Fig.* to keep spending under control. ☐ *I work hard to keep expenses down.* ☐ *Please try to keep the cost of the new project down.*

keep something **for a rainy day** Go to **save (**something**) for a rainy day.**

keep something **for another occasion** Go to **leave** something **for another occasion.**

keep something **from** someone not to tell something to someone. ☐ *Why did you keep the news from me? I needed to know.* ☐ *This matter shouldn't have been kept from me.*

keep something **in**† Go to **hold** something **in**†**.**

keep something **in the back of** someone's **mind** Go to **in the back of** someone's **mind.**

keep something **inside ((of)** one(self)**)** Go to **hold** something **in**†**.**

keep something **of** someone's or something's to retain something that belongs to or is associated with someone or something. ☐ *I would love to keep this handkerchief of yours.* ☐ *I want to keep a memento of the occasion.*

keep something **on**† to continue to wear an article of clothing. ☐ *I'm going to keep my coat on. It's a little chilly in here.* ☐ *I'll keep on my coat, thanks.*

keep something **on an even keel** *Fig.* to keep something in a steady and untroubled state. ☐ *The manager cannot keep the firm on an even keel any longer.* ☐ *When the workers are unhappy, it is difficult to keep the factory on an even keel.*

keep something **on its feet** *Fig.* to keep something stable and viable. ☐ *It takes a lot of effort to keep this old firm on its feet. We may have to go out of business.* ☐ *Can we keep this business on its feet another year?*

keep something **quiet** and **keep** something **still** *Fig.* to keep something a secret. ☐ *I'm quitting my job, but my boss doesn't know yet. Please keep it quiet.* ☐ *Okay. I'll keep it still.*

keep something **still** Go to previous.

keep something **to a minimum** to make something as small, few, or little as possible. ☐ *Do what you can to keep construction dust to a minimum.* ☐ *The dust should be kept to a minimum.*

keep something **to** oneself to keep something a secret. ☐ *I want you to keep this news to yourself.* ☐ *This should be kept to yourself.*

keep something **under** one's **hat** *Fig.* to keep something a secret; to keep something in one's mind (only). (If the secret stays under your hat, it stays in your mind. Note the use of *but* in the examples.) ☐ *Keep this under your hat, but I'm getting married.* ☐ *I'm getting married, but keep it under your hat.*

keep something **under wraps** *Fig.* to keep something concealed (until some future time). ☐ *We kept the plan under wraps until after the election.* ☐ *The automobile company kept the new model under wraps until most of the old models had been sold.*

keep something **until** some time to retain something until a certain time. ☐ *Can you keep this box until I call for it next week?* ☐ *The package will be kept until Monday.*

keep something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to hold or prop something up. ☐ *Keep your side of the trunk up. Don't let it sag.* ☐ *Keep up your side of the trunk.* **2.** *Fig.* to continue doing something. ☐ *I love your singing. Don't stop. Keep it up.* ☐ *Please keep up your singing.* **3.** *Fig.* to maintain something in good order. ☐ *I'm glad you keep the exterior of your house up.* ☐ *You keep up your house nicely.*

keep something **with** someone to leave something in the care of someone. ☐ *Can I keep my bicycle with you while I am gone?* ☐ *I can keep your bicycle with me.*

Keep still. 1. and **Hold still.** Do not move. ☐ *Quit wiggling. Keep still!* ☐ *"Hold still. I can't examine your ear if you're moving," said the doctor.* **2.** Go to **keep quiet (about** someone or something**).**

keep still (for someone or something**)** Go to **hold still (for** someone or something**).**

keep tab(s) (on someone or something**)** and **keep track (of** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to monitor someone or something; to follow the activities of someone or something. ☐ *I'm supposed to keep track of my books.* ☐ *Try to keep tabs on everyone who works for you.* ☐ *It's hard to keep tabs when you have a lot of other work to do.* ☐ *I can't keep track of the money I earn. Maybe someone else is spending it.*

keep the ball rolling 1. *Lit.* to keep a rolling ball moving. ☐ *You have to throw hard enough to keep the ball rolling all the way to the bowling pins.* **2.** *Fig.* to cause something that is in progress to continue. ☐ *Tom started the project, and we kept the ball rolling.* ☐ *Who will keep the ball rolling now that she is gone?*

keep the home fires burning *Fig.* to keep things going at one's home or other central location. (From a World War I song.) ☐ *My uncle kept the home fires burning when my sister and I went to school.* ☐ *The manager stays at the office and keeps the home fires burning while I'm out selling our products.*

keep the stork busy Go to next.

keep the stork flying and **keep the stork busy** *Rur.* to have lots of children. ☐ *Sally's pregnant again, with their sixth. They sure do keep the stork flying!* ☐ *Grandma and grandpa kept the stork flying. I've got ten aunts and uncles.*

keep the wolf from the door *Fig.* to maintain oneself at a minimal level; to keep from starving, freezing, etc. ☐ *I don't make a lot of money, just enough to keep the wolf from the door.* ☐ *We have a small amount of money saved, hardly enough to keep the wolf from the door.*

keep things **straight (in** one's **mind)** *Fig.* to correctly distinguish one thing from other things. ☐ *These two bottles look so much alike. It's hard to keep them straight.*

Keep this to yourself. a phrase introducing something that is meant to be a secret. ☐ *Andy: Keep this to yourself, but I'm going to Bora Bora on my vacation. Henry: Sounds great. Can I go too?* ☐ *John: Keep this to yourself. Mary and I are breaking up. Sue: I won't tell a soul.*

keep time 1. *Lit.* to maintain a musical rhythm. ☐ *Bob had to drop out of the band because he couldn't keep time.* ☐ *Since he can't keep time, he can't march, and he can't play the drums.* **2.** *Fig.* to keep watch over the time in a game or an athletic contest. ☐ *Ann kept time at all the basketball games.* ☐ *Whoever keeps time has to watch the referee very carefully.* **3.** *Fig.* [for a clock or a watch] to keep track of time accurately. ☐ *This watch doesn't keep time.* ☐ *My other watch kept time better.*

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keep to oneself to be solitary; to stay away from other people. ☐ *Ann tends to keep to herself. She doesn't have many friends.* ☐ *I try to keep to myself each morning so I can get some work done.*

keep to something to adhere to an agreement; to follow a plan; to keep a promise. ☐ *Please keep to the agreed-upon plan.* ☐ *Can you keep to what we agreed on?*

keep to the straight and narrow *Fig.* to behave properly and correctly; to stay out of trouble. ☐ *If you keep to the straight and narrow, you can't help but win in the end.* ☐ *I always keep to the straight and narrow.*

keep together to remain as a group. ☐ *We will keep together to the very end.* ☐ *Our group decided to keep together.*

keep track (of someone or something**)** Go to keep tab(s) (on someone or something).

keep under something to remain beneath something. ☐ *Keep under the packing crate, Max.* ☐ *I ordered the dog to keep under the table.*

keep under wraps Go to under wraps.

keep up an act and **keep up** one's **act** *Fig.* to maintain a false front; to act in a special way that is different from one's natural behavior. ☐ *Most of the time John kept up an act. He was really not a friendly person.* ☐ *He works hard to keep up his act.*

keep up appearances to make things look all right whether they are or not. ☐ *We must keep up appearances even if it means little sacrifices here and there.* ☐ *Things may be unpleasant, but we will keep up appearances.*

keep up one's **act** Go to keep up an act.

Keep up the good work. Please keep doing the good things that you are doing now. (A general phrase of encouragement.) ☐ *Father: Your grades are fine, Bill. Keep up the good work. Bill: Thanks, Dad.* ☐ *"Nice play," said the coach. "Keep up the good work!"*

keep up (with someone or something**) 1.** *Lit.* to advance at the same rate as someone or something; to be just as productive as someone or something. ☐ *Don't work so fast. I can't keep up with you.* ☐ *You're running so fast that I cannot keep up with you.* ☐ *I don't make enough money to keep up with your spending.* **2.** *Fig.* to pay attention to the news about someone or something. ☐ *I don't see the Smiths a lot since they moved, but I keep up with them by phone.* ☐ *I try to keep up with current events.*

keep up with the Joneses *Fig.* to try to match the lifestyle of one's neighbors. ☐ *I am tired of trying to keep up with the Joneses. Let's just move if we can't afford to live here.* ☐ *We never try to keep up with the Joneses.*

keep up with the times *Fig.* to work to appear contemporary and fashionable. ☐ *I am too old-fashioned. I have to keep up with the times better.* ☐ *I don't care about keeping up with the times.*

keep watch on someone or something to monitor someone or something. ☐ *Keep watch on the lady in the big coat. She may be a shoplifter.* ☐ *Try to keep watch on the committee's work.*

keep watch over someone or something to supervise someone or something; to take care of someone or something. ☐ *Please keep watch over the project.* ☐ *Will you keep watch over Timmy for a minute?*

keep within something to remain within a thing or within the boundaries of something. ☐ *If you keep within the tourist area, you will be safe.* ☐ *Please keep within the yard.*

Keep your chin up. *Fig.* an expression of encouragement to someone who has to bear some emotional burdens. (Fixed order.) ☐ *Fred: I really can't take much more of this. Jane: Keep your chin up. Things will get better.* ☐ *John: Smile, Fred. Keep your chin up. Fred: I guess you're right. I just get so depressed when I think of this mess I'm in.*

Keep your head down. *Fig.* Lie low, try not to be noticed. ☐ *My advice to you is to keep your head down for the moment.* ☐ *Keep your head down. It'll blow over.*

Keep your mouth shut (about someone or something**).** *Fig.* Do not tell anyone about someone or something. ☐ *Bob: Are you going to see the doctor? Mary: Yes, but keep your mouth shut about it.* ☐ *Bob: Isn't Tom's uncle in tax trouble? Jane: Yes, but keep your mouth shut about him.*

Keep your nose out of my business. Go to Mind your own business.

Keep your opinions to yourself! *Fig.* I do not want to hear your opinions! ☐ *Jane: I think this room looks drab. Sue: Keep your opinions to yourself! I like it this way!* ☐ *Sally: You really ought to do something about your hair. It looks like it was in a hurricane. John: Keep your opinions to yourself. This is the latest style where I come from.*

Keep your pants on! Go to Keep your shirt on!

Keep your powder dry. Go to Put your trust in God, and keep your powder dry.

Keep your shirt on! and **Keep your pants on!** *Inf.* Just wait a minute! ☐ *I'll be right with you. Keep your shirt on!* ☐ *Keep your pants on! You're next.*

Keep your shop and your shop will keep you. *Prov.* If you work hard at running your business, then your business will always make enough of a profit to support you. ☐ *When Grandpa turned his hardware store over to me, he said, "It's hard work, but it's a good living. Keep the shop and the shop will keep you."*

key someone **up**† to cause someone to be anxious or excited. ☐ *The excitement of the moment really keyed me up.* ☐ *Thoughts of their vacation keyed up the children so much they couldn't sleep.*

the **key to success** *Fig.* the secret to someone's success. ☐ *Bob said that the key to his success is working hard, being on time, and being extremely lucky.*

***keyed up (about** something**)** and ***keyed up (over** something**)** to be excited or anxious. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Why are you so keyed up about nothing?* ☐ *She is keyed up over her son's health.*

kick a habit and **kick the habit; shake the habit; shake a habit** to break a habit. ☐ *It's hard to kick a habit, but it can be done. I stopped biting my nails.* ☐ *I used to drink coffee every morning, but I kicked the habit.*

kick about someone or something *Fig.* to complain about someone or something. ☐ *Why are you kicking about your cousin? What has he done now?* ☐ *They kicked about our regulations, but they finally accepted them.*

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kick against someone or something to give someone or something a blow with the foot. ☐ *I kicked against the side of the television set, and it came on.* ☐ *He kicked against the giant of a man, but it had no effect.*

kick around Go to knock around.

kick ass and **kick butt** *Sl.* to actively motivate people to do something. ☐ *It looks like I'm going to have to kick ass to get people moving around here.*

kick at someone or something to make kicking motions toward someone or something. ☐ *The horse kicked at me, but I knew it was just a threat.* ☐ *The boys kicked at the can aimlessly.*

kick back 1. *Inf.* to relax; to lean back and relax. (See also lie back.) ☐ *I really like to kick back and relax.* ☐ *It's time to kick back and enjoy life.* **2.** *Inf.* [for an addict] to return to an addiction or a habit, after having "kicked the habit." ☐ *Lefty kicked back after only a few days of being clean.* ☐ *A lot of addicts kick back very soon.*

kick back (at someone or something**)** to kick at someone or something in revenge. ☐ *She kicked at me, so I kicked back at her.* ☐ *If you kick me, I'll kick back.*

kick butt Go to kick ass.

kick in (on something**) (for** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to contribute to something for someone or something. ☐ *Would you like to kick in on a gift for Joel?* ☐ *I'll be happy to kick in on a gift.* ☐ *Sure, I would like to kick in for the gift.*

a **kick in the ass** Go to a kick in the (seat of the) pants.

a **kick in the butt** Go to a kick in the (seat of the) pants.

a **kick in the guts** *Sl.* a severe blow to one's body or spirit. ☐ *The news was a kick in the guts, and I haven't recovered yet.* ☐ *I didn't need a kick in the guts like that.*

a **kick in the (seat of the) pants** and a **kick in the ass;** a **kick in the butt;** a **kick in the teeth** *Fig. Inf.* a strong message of encouragement or demand. (Use *ass* and *butt* with discretion.) ☐ *All he needs is a kick in the seat of the pants to get him going.* ☐ *A kick in the butt will get her moving.*

a **kick in the teeth** Go to previous.

kick like a mule and **kick like a steer** to kick very hard. ☐ *They say that ostriches will kick like a mule if you bother them.* ☐ *Stay away from the back end of Tom's horse. It will kick like a steer when a stranger comes up.*

kick like a steer Go to previous.

kick off 1. *Lit.* to start play in a football game by kicking the ball. ☐ *Tom kicked off in the last game. Now it's my turn.* ☐ *John tripped when he was kicking off.* **2.** and **kick the bucket** *Fig.* to die. ☐ *Don't say that George Washington "kicked off." Say that he "passed away."* ☐ *My cat kicked off last night. She was tough as a lion.* ☐ *When I kick the bucket, I want a huge funeral with lots of flowers and crying.*

kick one's **heels up**† *Fig.* to act frisky; to be lively and have fun. (Somewhat literal when said of hoofed animals.) ☐ *I like to go to an old-fashioned square dance and really kick up my heels.* ☐ *For an old man, your uncle is really kicking his heels up.*

kick oneself **(for** doing something**)** *Fig.* to regret doing something. ☐ *I could just kick myself for going off and not locking the car door. Now the car has been stolen.* ☐ *Don't kick yourself. It's insured.*

kick out (at someone or something**)** to thrust one's foot outward at something. ☐ *The ostrich kicked out at the men trying to catch her.* ☐ *The mule kicked out and just missed me.*

kick over Go to turn over.

kick over the traces *Fig.* to do what one is meant not to do; to rebel against authority. (Alludes to a horse that steps on the wrong side of the straps that link it to whatever it is pulling.) ☐ *At the age of sixty, Walter kicked over the traces and ran away to Brazil.* ☐ *All these young kids seem to want to kick over the traces.*

kick some ass (around) *Sl.* to take over and start giving orders; to raise hell. (Potentially offensive. Use only with discretion.) ☐ *Do I have to come over there and kick some ass around?* ☐ *Willie is just the one to kick some ass over there.*

kick someone or an animal **out**† Go to boot someone or an animal out†.

kick someone or something **around 1.** *Lit.* to strike someone, something, or some animal with the foot repeatedly. ☐ *Billy is out in the alley kicking a can around.* ☐ *Stop kicking that dog around!* **2.** *Fig.* to treat someone or something badly. ☐ *I finally quit my job. My boss wouldn't stop kicking me around.* ☐ *Stop kicking my car around. It does everything I need a car to do.*

kick someone or something **aside**† **1.** *Lit.* to get someone or something out of the way by kicking. ☐ *The bully kicked Timmy aside and grabbed our cake.* ☐ *I kicked aside the cats and came into the room.* **2.** *Fig.* to get rid of someone or something. ☐ *He simply kicked aside his wife and took up with some young chick.* ☐ *I kicked the old laptop aside and got a new one.*

kick someone or something **away**† to force someone or something away by kicking. ☐ *Fred kicked the intruder away from the gun he had dropped on the floor.* ☐ *Then he kicked away the gun.* ☐ *The kickboxer kicked the mugger away.*

kick something **around**† **1.** *Lit.* to move something around by kicking it, as in play. ☐ *Kick the ball around awhile and then try to make a goal.* ☐ *The boys kicked a can around, making a lot of noise.* ☐ *Don't kick around all the dirt. You'll make a mess.* **2.** *Fig.* to discuss something; to chat about an idea. ☐ *We got together and kicked her idea around.* ☐ *Fred and Bob kicked around some plots for a new movie.*

kick something **back (to** someone or something**)** to move something back to someone, something, or some place by kicking. ☐ *I kicked the ball back to Walter.* ☐ *He kicked it to me, and I kicked it back.*

kick something **down**† to break down something by kicking. ☐ *I was afraid they were going to kick the door down.* ☐ *Don't kick down the door!*

kick something **in**† **1.** to break through something by kicking. ☐ *Tommy kicked the door in and broke the new lamp.* ☐ *He kicked in the door by accident.* **2.** Go to next.

kick something **in**† **(on** something**) (for** someone or something**)** to contribute something, such as money, on some-

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thing for someone or something. ☐ *I will kick a few bucks in on some flowers for the receptionist.* ☐ *I will kick in a few bucks on the gift for Marge.*

kick something **off**† *Fig.* to begin something; to hold a party or ceremony to mark the start of something. (Alludes to starting a football game by *kicking off* the ball for the first play.) ☐ *The city kicked the centennial celebration off with a parade.* ☐ *They kicked off the celebration with a parade.*

kick something **off (of)** someone or something and **kick** something **off**† to knock something off someone or something by kicking. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *The baby must have kicked her covers off of herself in the night.* ☐ *She kicked off her covers in the night.*

kick something **out of** something and **kick** something **out**† to move something out of something or some place by kicking. ☐ *The soccer player kicked the ball out of the tangle of legs.* ☐ *She got into the fracas and kicked out the ball.*

kick the bucket Go to kick off.

kick the habit Go to kick a habit.

kick the (natural) stuffing out of someone and **beat the (natural) stuffing out of** someone**; take the stuffing out of** someone**; knock the starch out of** someone**; knock the stuffing out of** someone *Rur.* to kick or beat someone severely. ☐ *Last time I was in a fight with Joe, he kicked the natural stuffing out of me.* ☐ *You do that again and I'll kick the stuffing out of you.* ☐ *Bill threatened to beat the natural stuffing out of any no-'count rascal who laid a hand on his sister.*

kick up to cause trouble or discomfort. ☐ *The ignition in my car is kicking up again. I will have to have it looked into.* ☐ *Aunt Jane's arthritis is kicking up. She needs to see the doctor again.*

kick up a fuss and **kick up a row; kick up a storm** *Fig.* to become a nuisance; to misbehave and disturb (someone). (*Row* rhymes with *cow.* Note the variations in the examples.) ☐ *The customer kicked up such a fuss about the food that the manager came to apologize.* ☐ *I kicked up such a row that they told me to leave.* ☐ *Oh, what pain! My arthritis is kicking up a storm.*

kick up a row Go to previous.

kick up a storm Go to kick up a fuss.

kid around (with someone**)** to tease and joke with someone. ☐ *I like to kid around with John. We are great friends.* ☐ *Yes, John and I used to kid around a lot.*

kid's stuff a very easy task. ☐ *Climbing that hill is kid's stuff.* ☐ *Driving an automatic car is kid's stuff.*

kid someone **about** someone or something to tease someone about someone or something. ☐ *You wouldn't kid me about Jody, would you?* ☐ *Please don't kid me about my long hair!*

kill for something *Sl.* to be willing to go to extremes to get something that one really wants or needs. (An exaggeration.) ☐ *I could kill for a cold beer.*

kill someone or an animal **off**† to kill all of a group of people or creatures. ☐ *Lefty set out to kill Max and his boys off.* ☐ *Something killed off all the dinosaurs.*

kill someone **with kindness** *Fig.* to be enormously kind to someone. ☐ *You are just killing me with kindness. Why?* ☐ *Don't kill them with kindness.*

kill the fatted calf *Fig.* to prepare an elaborate banquet (in someone's honor). (From the biblical story recounting the return of the prodigal son.) ☐ *When Bob got back from college, his parents killed the fatted calf and threw a great party.* ☐ *Sorry this meal isn't much, John. We didn't have time to kill the fatted calf.*

Kill the goose that lays the golden egg(s). *Prov.* To destroy something that is profitable to you. ☐ *Fred's wife knew he wasn't happy in his job, even though it paid well; still, she felt that advising him to leave it would be killing the goose that laid the golden eggs.*

kill time *Fig.* to use something up, especially time. ☐ *I killed time reading a novel.* ☐ *The employees were not encouraged to kill time.*

kill two birds with one stone *Fig.* to solve two problems at one time with a single action. ☐ *John learned the words to his part in the play while peeling potatoes. He was killing two birds with one stone.* ☐ *I have to cash a check and make a payment on my bank loan. I'll kill two birds with one stone by doing them both in one trip to the bank.*

killed outright killed immediately. ☐ *The driver was killed outright in the accident.* ☐ *Twenty people were killed outright in the explosion.*

killer instinct *Cliché* an inborn desire or ability to be ruthless. ☐ *Fred has a real killer instinct. He's a difficult boss to work for.*

Kind of. Go to Sort of.

a **kind of** something a variety of something that is fairly close to the real thing, even though it is not exactly the real thing. (See also kind of something.) ☐ *I used a folded newspaper as a kind of hat to keep the rain off.* ☐ *Bill is serving as a kind of helper or assistant on this project.*

kind of something Go to sort of something.

*a **king's ransom** *Fig.* a great deal of money. (To pay an amount as large as one might have to pay to get back a king held for ransom. *Typically: **cost ~; pay ~; spend ~**.) ☐ *I would like to buy a nice watch, but I don't want to pay a king's ransom for it.* ☐ *It's a lovely house. I bet it cost a king's ransom.*

Kings have long arms. and **Governments have long arms.** *Prov.* Those who are in power can always catch and punish people who have opposed them, no matter how far away those opponents may go. ☐ *After his attempt to assassinate the king, the prince sailed to a distant country, although his wife warned him it would be to no avail. "Kings have long arms," she reminded him.*

kink up [for something] to develop kinks or tangles. ☐ *The leather parts tend to shrink and kink up in the damp weather.* ☐ *My hair kinks up in this weather.*

kiss and make up 1. *Lit.* [for two people who have been arguing] to kiss each other and apologize. ☐ *John apologized to his wife for disagreeing with her, and they finally kissed and made up.* **2.** *Fig.* to forgive someone and be friends again. ☐ *They were very angry, but in the end they kissed and made up.* ☐ *I'm sorry. Let's kiss and make up.*

kiss and tell *Fig.* to participate in something secret and private, and then tell other people about it. (In actual use, it usually refers to a person of the opposite sex even when it does not refer to actual kissing.) ☐ *The project was supposed to be a secret between Jane and me, but she spread it*

all around. I didn't think she was the type to kiss and tell. ☐ *I am willing to discuss it with you, but only if you promise not to kiss and tell.*

the **kiss of death** *Fig.* an act that puts an end to someone or something. ☐ *The mayor's veto was the kiss of death for the new law.* ☐ *Fainting on stage was the kiss of death for my acting career.*

kiss off 1. *Sl.* to die. ☐ *The cat is going to have to kiss off one of these days soon.* ☐ *The cat kissed off after eighteen years of joy and devotion.* **2.** *Sl.* death. (Usually **kiss-off**.) ☐ *When the time comes for the kiss-off, I hope I'm asleep.* ☐ *The kiss-off came wrapped in lead, and it was instant.* **3.** *Sl.* the dismissal of someone or something. (Usually **kiss-off**.) ☐ *The kiss-off was when I lost the Wilson contract.* ☐ *Pete got the kiss-off and is now looking for a new job.*

kiss someone **off**† *Sl.* to kill someone. ☐ *Max kissed Lefty off with a small gun he carried in his boot.* ☐ *He kissed off Lefty with a small gun.*

kiss someone **on** something to kiss someone on a particular place. ☐ *He kissed her right on the tip of her nose.* ☐ *She was kissed on the tip of her nose.*

kiss someone or something **off**† *Fig.* to dismiss someone or something lightly; to abandon or write off someone or something. ☐ *I kissed off about $200 on that last deal.* ☐ *They kissed me off and that was the end of that job.*

kiss someone's **ass** *Sl.* to fawn over someone; to flatter and curry favor with someone. (Potentially offensive. Use **ass** with discretion.) ☐ *What does he expect me to do? Kiss his ass?* ☐ *I won't kiss your ass for anything.*

kiss something **away**† **(from** something**)** to kiss something and make something bad go away, such as tears, grief, pain, etc. ☐ *She kissed the tears of pain and disappointment away from her son's face.* ☐ *She kissed away his tears.* ☐ *She kissed the tears away.*

kiss something **good-bye** to anticipate or experience the loss of something. ☐ *If you leave your camera on a park bench, you can kiss it good-bye.* ☐ *You kissed your wallet good-bye when you left it in the store.*

kiss the dust *Sl.* to fall to the earth, because of death or because of being struck. ☐ *I'll see that you kiss the dust before sunset, cowboy!* ☐ *You'll kiss the dust before I will, Sheriff.*

kiss up to someone *Sl.* to flatter someone; to curry favor with someone. ☐ *Edgar is in kissing up to the boss again.* ☐ *Stop kissing up to me.*

kissing cousins relatives who know one another well enough to kiss when they meet. ☐ *Joe and I are kissing cousins, though we ain't seen one another since we was kids.* ☐ *Technically, we're second cousins once removed, but I just say we're kissing cousins.*

kith and kin friends and relatives; people known to someone. ☐ *I was delighted to find all my kith and kin waiting for me at the airport to welcome me home.* ☐ *I sent cards to my kith and kin, telling them of my arrival.*

klutz around *Inf.* to go about acting stupidly or clumsily. ☐ *Stop klutzing around and get your act together.* ☐ *Why are you klutzing around so much?*

***knee-deep in** something **1.** *Fig.* heavily involved in something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Right now, we are knee-deep in trouble.* **2.** *Fig.* having plenty of something. (*Typically: **be ~; stand ~**.) ☐ *We are knee-deep in orders and loving it.*

***knee-high by the 4th of July** *Fig.* grown as tall as it should. (Corn seedlings are proverbially supposed to be as high as someone's knee by July 4th.) (*Typically: **be ~; become ~; grow ~**.) ☐ *What with this drought, I don't think the crop will be knee-high by the 4th of July.* ☐ *It's gonna be a good year. Knee-high by the 4th of July.*

knee-high to a grasshopper Go to next.

***knee-high to a jackrabbit** and ***knee-high to a grasshopper** *Rur.* very small or short. (Usually used to describe children. *Typically: **be ~; since** someone **was ~**.) ☐ *I've known you since you were knee-high to a jackrabbit.* ☐ *My, how you've grown! The last time I saw you, you were knee-high to a grasshopper!*

a **knee-jerk reaction** *Fig.* an automatic or reflex reaction; an immediate reaction made without examining causes or facts. ☐ *With one of his typical knee-jerk reactions, he said no immediately, citing some moral argument that no one understood.*

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kneel down to get down on one's knees. ☐ *Please kneel down and fold your hands.* ☐ *You should at least kneel down and be quiet.*

kneel down (before someone or something**)** to show respect by getting down on one's knees in the presence of someone or something. ☐ *We were told to kneel down in front of the altar.* ☐ *Kneel down when the queen enters!*

knew it was coming and **(had) known it was coming** to have expected in advance that something was to happen. ☐ *I shouldn't act surprised. I knew it was coming.* ☐ *It's his own fault. He should have known it was coming.*

knit one's **brow** to cause one's brow to wrinkle. ☐ *Bob knitted his brow when he was confused.* ☐ *Jane knitted her brow because she was angry.*

knit something **together**† to join things together by knitting. ☐ *Terry knitted the parts of the sweater together.* ☐ *Sally knitted together the two parts of the glove.*

knit together [for broken bones] to join or grow together. ☐ *The bones are knitting together exactly as expected.* ☐ *If the bones don't knit together properly, we will have to do something a little more drastic.*

knock about (some place**) (with** someone**)** and **knock around (**some place**) (with** someone**)** to hang around some place with someone; to wander idly about some place with someone. ☐ *Sally was knocking about France with her friends.* ☐ *I knocked around town with Ken for a while.*

knock about (somewhere**)** to travel around; to act as a vagabond. ☐ *I'd like to take off a year and knock about Europe.* ☐ *If you're going to knock about, you should do it when you're young.*

knock against someone or something to bump against someone or something. ☐ *Mickey knocked against Mary and said he was sorry.* ☐ *I didn't mean to knock against your sore knee.*

knock around 1. to waste time. ☐ *Stop knocking around and get to work!* ☐ *I need a couple of days a week just for knocking around.* **2.** and **kick around** to wander around; to **bum around**. ☐ *I think I'll knock around a few months before looking for another job.* ☐ *We're just knocking around and keeping out of trouble.*

knock around (some place**) (with** someone**)** Go to **knock about (**some place**) (with** someone**).**

knock at something to knock [on something] at a particular location. ☐ *I could hear someone knocking at the door next to mine.* ☐ *Who is knocking at the door?*

knock away (at something**)** to continue to knock at something. ☐ *The loose shutter kept knocking away at the side of the house.* ☐ *It knocked away all night, keeping me awake.*

knock back a drink and **knock one back; knock one over** *Sl.* to swallow a drink of an alcoholic beverage. ☐ *Todd knocked back one drink, and then had another.* ☐ *Kelly knocked one back.* ☐ *She knocked one over and left the bar.*

Knock it off! *Inf.* **Be quiet!;** Stop that noise! Stop doing that! ☐ *John: Hey, you guys! Knock it off! Bob: Sorry. Bill: Sorry. I guess we got a little carried away.* ☐ *Sue: All right. Knock it off! Bill: Yeah. Let's get down to business.*

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knock off (doing something**)** to stop doing something. (See also **knock off work**.) ☐ *Knock off shoveling snow now, and come in for a hot drink.* ☐ *I wish he would knock off practicing for a while.*

knock off (work) to quit work, for the day or for a break. ☐ *What time do you knock off work?* ☐ *I knock off about five-thirty.*

knock on something to rap or tap, often with the knuckles, on something. (See also **knock on wood**.) ☐ *She knocked on the door several times.* ☐ *Knock on it again. Maybe she didn't hear you.*

knock on wood to rap on something made of wood. (Said as a wish for good luck. Usually a phrase attached to another statement. Sometime said while knocking or rapping on real wood.) ☐ *I think I am well at last—knock on wood.* ☐ *I knock on wood when I wish something were true.*

knock one back Go to **knock back a drink**.

knock one **off** one's **feet** Go to **sweep** one **off** one's **feet**.

knock one over Go to **knock back a drink**.

knock one's **head (up) against a brick wall** *Fig.* to be totally frustrated. ☐ *Trying to get a raise around here is like knocking your head up against a brick wall.* ☐ *No need to knock your head against a brick wall over this problem.*

knock one's **knees together** *Fig.* [for one's knees] to shake together from fright. ☐ *I stood there freezing for ten minutes, knocking my knees together in the cold.* ☐ *It takes a lot of energy to knock your knees together.*

knock oneself **out (to** do something**) (for** someone or something**)** to make a great effort to do something for someone or some group. (As if one had worked oneself into unconsciousness.) ☐ *I knocked myself out to plan this party for you!* ☐ *She knocked herself out for us.* ☐ *I don't know why I knock myself out to do these things for you. You are not at all appreciative.* ☐ *He knocked himself out to get there on time.*

knock over something **1.** *Sl.* to steal something. (The *over* is usually before the object in this expression.) ☐ *The gang knocked over an armored car.* ☐ *Some cheap crook knocked over a load of television sets.* **2.** *Sl.* to rob a place. (The *over* is usually before the object in this expression.) ☐ *Max knocked over two banks in one week.* ☐ *He was the kind of punk who would try to knock over a filling station.*

knock some heads together *Fig.* to scold some people; to get some people to do what they are supposed to be doing. ☐ *If you kids don't quiet down and go to sleep, I'm going to come up there and knock some heads together.* ☐ *The government is in a mess. We need to go to Washington and knock some heads together.*

knock some sense into someone and **knock some sense in†** to strike one, making one smarter, or at least obedient. ☐ *I think his father finally knocked some sense into him.* ☐ *The accident finally knocked in some sense.* ☐ *I thought that last week's experience would knock some sense in.*

knock someone **back (an** amount of money**)** to cost an amount of money. ☐ *That trip to Spain knocked me back almost $3,500.* ☐ *How much did that new furniture knock us back?*

knock someone **cold 1.** *Fig.* to render someone unconscious by a violent blow. ☐ *One swipe, and he knocked him cold.* ☐ *If you touch her again, I'll knock you cold.* **2.** and **knock** someone **dead** *Fig.* to put on a stunning performance or display for someone. (*Someone* is often replaced by *'em* from *them.*) ☐ *This band is going to do great tonight. We're going to knock them dead.* ☐ *"See how your sister is all dressed up!" said Bill. "She's going to knock 'em cold."*

knock someone **dead** Go to previous.

knock someone **down a peg (or two)** Go to **take** someone **down a peg (or two)**.

knock someone **down to size** Go to **beat** someone **down to size**.

knock someone **for a loop 1.** *Fig.* to strike someone hard. ☐ *You really knocked me for a loop. I hope that was an accident.* ☐ *I was really knocked for a loop by the falling branch.* **2.** and **throw** someone **for a loop** *Fig.* to confuse or shock someone. (This is more severe and upsetting than **throw** someone **a curve**.) ☐ *When Bill heard the news, it threw him for a loop.* ☐ *The manager knocked Bob for a loop by firing him on the spot.*

knock someone **into** something to strike one, sending one into something. ☐ *The blow knocked him into the wall.* ☐ *Max knocked Lefty into a lamp post.*

knock someone **off†** Go to **bump** someone **off†**.

knock someone or something **about** and **knock** someone or something **around 1.** to jostle someone or something. ☐ *The bumpy road was knocking everyone in the truck about.* ☐ *The bumpy road knocked the old truck around a lot.* ☐ *Don't knock the grocery bags around. You'll break the eggs.* **2.** to strike someone or something; to beat on someone or something. ☐ *Max knocked his brother about.* ☐ *Stop knocking me around.*

knock someone or something **down†** to thrust someone or something to the ground by hitting. ☐ *The force of the blast knocked us down.* ☐ *It knocked down everyone in the room.*

knock someone or something **over**† to push or strike someone or something, causing the person or the thing to fall. (See also **knock over** something; **knock** someone **over (with a feather)**; **knock** something **over**.) ☐ *I am sorry. I didn't mean to knock you over. Are you hurt?* ☐ *Who knocked over this vase?*

knock someone **out**† **1.** *Lit.* to knock someone unconscious. (*Someone* includes *oneself*.) ☐ *Fred knocked Mike out and left him there in the gutter.* ☐ *Fred knocked out Mike.* **2.** *Fig.* to make someone unconsciousness. ☐ *The drug knocked her out quickly.* ☐ *The powerful medicine knocked out the patient.* **3.** *Fig.* to surprise or please someone. ☐ *I have some news that will really knock you out.* **4.** *Fig.* to wear someone out; to exhaust someone. ☐ *All that exercise really knocked me out.* ☐ *The day's activities knocked the kids out and they went right to bed.*

knock someone **over (with a feather)** *Fig.* to leave someone stunned or surprised by something extraordinary. (Fixed order.) ☐ *I was so surprised that you could have knocked me over with a feather.* ☐ *Todd could have knocked me over with a feather when he told me his news.*

knock someone's **block off** *Sl.* to hit someone hard in the head. ☐ *Wilbur almost knocked Tom's block off by accident.* ☐ *He threatened to knock my block off if I didn't do as I was told.*

knock someone's **socks off** and **knock the socks off (of)** someone *Sl.* to surprise someone thoroughly. (Fixed order. *Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *The exciting news just knocked my socks off!* ☐ *The news knocked the socks off of everyone in the office.*

knock someone **some skin** *Sl.* to slap hands with someone, a sign of friendship. ☐ *Hey, man, knock me some skin!* ☐ *Pete knocked Sam some skin, and they left the building together.*

knock someone **up**† *Inf.* to make a woman pregnant. (See also **knocked up**.) ☐ *They say it was Willie who knocked her up.* ☐ *He did not knock up Sue. I did.*

knock something **against** something to strike something against something. ☐ *He knocked a chair against the table and tipped both pieces of furniture over.* ☐ *A chair was knocked against the table, upsetting a vase.*

knock something **back**† *Sl.* to drink down a drink of something, especially something alcoholic. (See also **knock back a drink**.) ☐ *I don't see how he can knock that stuff back.* ☐ *John knocked back two beers in ten minutes.*

knock something **down**† **1.** *Sl.* to drink a portion of liquor. ☐ *Here, knock this down and let's go.* ☐ *He knocked down a bottle of beer and called for another.* **2.** *Sl.* to earn a certain amount of money. ☐ *I'm lucky to knock down twenty thousand.* ☐ *She must knock down about twenty thou a year.*

knock something **into a cocked hat** *Fig.* to demolish a plan, a story, etc. ☐ *I knocked his plans into a cocked hat.* ☐ *This bad weather has knocked everything into a cocked hat.*

knock something **off**† **1.** to manufacture or make something, especially in haste. ☐ *I'll see if I can knock another one off before lunch.* ☐ *They knocked off four window frames in an hour.* **2. to knock off some amount from the price of something, lowering its price.** ☐ *The store manager knocked 30 percent off the price of the coat.* ☐ *Can't you knock something off on this damaged item?* **3.** to copy or reproduce a product. ☐ *The manufacturer knocked off a famous designer's coat.* ☐ *They are well known for knocking off cheap versions of expensive watches.* **4.** Go to **knock** something **off (of)** someone or something.

knock something **off kilter** Go to **out of kilter.**

knock something **off (of)** someone or something and **knock** something **off**† to remove something from someone or something by striking. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *I knocked the hard hat off of Wally when I hit him accidentally with the ladder.* ☐ *My elbow knocked off the book.*

knock something **out**† **1.** to create something hastily. ☐ *He knocked a few out as samples.* ☐ *He knocked out a few of them quickly, just so we could see what they were going to look like.* **2.** *Fig.* to put something out of order; to make something inoperable. ☐ *The storm knocked the telephone system out.* ☐ *The high winds will probably knock out electrical service all over town.*

knock something **out of kilter** Go to **out of kilter.**

knock something **out of place** Go to **out of place.**

knock something **out of** someone to beat someone until something emerges or dissipates. ☐ *Max knocked the truth out of the spy.* ☐ *Lefty knocked the story out of Max.*

knock something **out of** something to beat or knock on something until something comes out. ☐ *Timmy knocked the stuffing out of his pillow.* ☐ *Someone knocked the coins out of my piggy bank.*

knock something **over**† to tip something over. (See also **knock over something**.) ☐ *Someone knocked the chair over.* ☐ *Who knocked over the flower pot?*

knock something **to** someone to hit something, such as a ball, to someone. ☐ *The coach knocked the ball to each player in turn.* ☐ *The ball was knocked to the guy out in center field.*

knock something **together**† to assemble something hastily. ☐ *I knocked this model together so you could get a general idea of what I had in mind.* ☐ *See if you can knock together a quick snack.* ☐ *This thing has just been knocked together!*

knock the bejeebers out of someone or something *Inf.* to beat someone or something severely. ☐ *If I catch you doing that again, I'll knock the bejeebers out of you.* ☐ *He grabbed the poor dog and just knocked the bejeebers out of it.*

knock the bottom out (of something**) 1.** and **knock the bottom out**† *Lit.* to break the bottom of a container. ☐ *I knocked the bottom out of the barrel and used it to store compost.* ☐ *Knock out the bottom and set it right on the soil.* **2.** *Fig.* [for something] to go down so low as to knock out the bottom. ☐ *The bad news knocked the bottom out of the stock market.* ☐ *The recession knocked the bottom out of our profits.*

knock the habit to stop using drugs; to break a drug addiction. ☐ *I just can't knock the habit.* ☐ *He tried to knock the habit by drinking lots of booze.*

knock the hell out of someone or something *Inf.* to strike someone or something very hard. (Use *hell* with discre-

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tion.) ☐ *The bully knocked the hell out of Sam.* ☐ *You really knocked the hell out of my front bumper.*

knock the (living) daylights out of someone *Fig. Inf.* to beat someone severely. ☐ *If you do that again, I will knock the living daylights out of you.* ☐ *Fred wants to knock the living daylights out of his enemy, Mike "Fingers" Moran.*

knock the props out from under someone *Fig.* to destroy someone's emotional, financial, or moral underpinnings; to destroy someone's confidence. ☐ *When you told Sally that she was due to be fired, you really knocked the props out from under her.*

knock the stuffing out of someone Go to **kick the (natural) stuffing out of** someone.

knock the wind out of someone's **sails 1.** *Lit.* to bring someone to an abrupt halt by a heavy blow to the body, presumably knocking the person's wind out. (Alludes to a ship being slowed by positioning another ship to block off the wind from the first ship's sails.) ☐ *Fred hit Mike and really knocked the wind out of his sails.* ☐ *Fred ran into the side of the garage and knocked the wind out of his sails.* **2.** *Fig.* to humiliate someone. ☐ *The sharp rebuke from the boss knocked the wind out of his sails.* ☐ *That scolding really knocked the wind out of her sails.*

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knock through something to break through something. ☐ *They knocked through the wall and put in a doorway.* ☐ *The wall had to be knocked through before we could install a doorway.*

knock (up) against someone or something to bump against someone or something. ☐ *The loose shutter knocked up against the side of the house.* ☐ *The large branch knocked against the garage in the storm.*

knock-down, drag-out fight a serious fight; a serious argument. ☐ *Boy, they really had a knock-down, drag-out fight.* ☐ *Stop calling each other names, or you're going to end up with a real knock-down, drag-out fight.*

knocked in *Sl.* arrested. (Underworld.) ☐ *Would you believe that Larry has never been knocked in?* ☐ *When Lefty was knocked in, they found his heat on him.*

knocked out 1. *Lit.* unconscious. ☐ *The losing boxer lay on the canvas, knocked out.* **2.** *Fig.* exhausted. ☐ *We were all knocked out at the end of the day.* ☐ *I'm knocked out after just a little bit of work.* **3.** *Fig.* overwhelmed. ☐ *We were just knocked out when we heard your news.* ☐ *Were we surprised? We were knocked out—elated!* **4.** *Fig.* intoxicated. ☐ *They were all knocked out by midnight.* ☐ *Gary was knocked out when we dropped by, so we tried to sober him up.*

knocked up 1. *Lit.* battered; beaten. ☐ *Sally was a little knocked up by the accident.* ☐ *This book is a little knocked up, so I'll lower the price.* **2.** *Sl.* intoxicated. ☐ *Bill was knocked up and didn't want to drive.* ☐ *Wow, was that guy knocked up!* **3.** *Inf.* pregnant; made pregnant. ☐ *Sue got knocked up but won't say who the father is.*

knot something **together†** to tie something together in a knot. ☐ *Knot these strings together and trim the strings off the knot.* ☐ *Are the ropes knotted together properly?* ☐ *Quickly knot together the two loose ends!*

know a thing or two (about someone or something**)** Go to a **thing or two (about** someone or something**)**.

know a trick or two to know some special way of dealing with a problem. ☐ *I think I can handle all of this with no trouble. I know a trick or two.* ☐ *I may be a senior citizen, but I still know a trick or two. I think I can help you with this.*

know about someone or something to have information or expertise about someone or something. ☐ *I know about John and what he does.* ☐ *I know about cars, but I can't fix this one!*

know all the angles to know all the tricks and artifices of dealing with someone or something. ☐ *Ask my accountant about taxes. He knows all the angles.* ☐ *Larry knows all the angles. That's how he keeps out of the slammer.*

know as much about something **as a hog knows about Sunday** *Rur.* to have no knowledge of something. ☐ *Don't let Jim make dessert for the picnic. He knows as much about pies as a hog knows about Sunday.* ☐ *I had quite a time changing the tire, since I know as much about cars as a hog knows about Sunday.*

know at a glance that... to know [something] without much evidence; to know or understand something without a lot of observation. ☐ *I knew at a glance that Bobbie was severely injured and had to be gotten to a hospital as soon as possible.*

know better (than to do something**)** to be wise enough, experienced enough, or well trained enough not to have done something wrong. ☐ *Mary should have known better than to accept a lift from a stranger.* ☐ *Children should know better than to play in the road.*

know from something to know about something. (Used on the eastern seaboard.) ☐ *Do you know from thermostats?* ☐ *You don't know from anything!*

know no more about something **than a frog knows about bedsheets** *Rur.* to have no knowledge of something. ☐ *Don't let Bill fix your car. He knows no more about cars than a frog knows about bedsheets.* ☐ *When I first started studying French literature, I knew no more about it than a frog knows about bedsheets.*

know of someone or something to be aware of the existence of someone or something. ☐ *I think I know of someone who can help you.* ☐ *I didn't know of Wally's arrival.*

know one **for what** one **is** to recognize someone as some type of person or thing. ☐ *I know you for what you are, you devil.* ☐ *We know him for the thief he is.*

know one's **ABCs** *Fig.* to know the alphabet; to know the most basic things (about something). ☐ *Bill can't do it. He doesn't even know his ABCs.* ☐ *You can't expect to write a letter when you don't even know your ABCs.*

know one's **onions** Go to **know** one's **stuff**.

know one's **place** to know the behavior appropriate to one's position or status in life. ☐ *I know my place. I won't speak unless spoken to.* ☐ *People around here are expected to know their place. You have to follow all the rules.*

know one's **stuff** and **know** one's **onions** to know what one is expected to know. ☐ *I know my stuff. I can do my job.* ☐ *She can't handle the assignment. She doesn't know her onions.*

know one's **way about** Go to next.

know one's **way around 1.** and **know** one's **way about** *Lit.* to know how to get from place to place. ☐ *I can find my way. I know my way around.* ☐ *I don't know my way around this city yet.* **2.** *Fig.* to know how to deal with people and situations; to have had much experience at living. ☐ *I can get along in the world. I know my way around.* ☐ *Do you think I don't know my way around?*

know shit from Shinola and **tell shit from Shinola** *Fig. Inf.* to know what's what; to be intelligent and aware. (Always in the negative. Shinola is a brand of shoe polish. A person who doesn't **know shit from Shinola** is very stupid.) ☐ *Poor Tom doesn't know shit from Shinola.* ☐ *Fred can't tell shit from Shinola, and he's been made my boss.*

know someone **as** someone to know someone by a different name. ☐ *I know her as Candy La Tour.* ☐ *She has been known as Mary Rogers since her marriage.*

know someone **by sight** to recognize a person's face, but not know the name. ☐ *I'm afraid I don't know her by sight.* ☐ *I know all my employees by sight.*

know someone **from** someone to tell the difference between one person and another. ☐ *I don't know Fred from his twin brother.* ☐ *I know Bill from Bob, but I can't tell most identical twins apart.*

know someone or something **as** something to recognize someone or something as something. ☐ *I know Mr. Franklin as a fine man.* ☐ *I know this name as a very fine brand.*

know someone or something **by name** to recognize the name but not the appearance of someone or something. ☐ *I only know her by name. I have no idea what she looks like.* ☐ *I know this brand of sausage by name, but I have never tasted it.*

know someone or something **by** something to recognize someone or something by a certain characteristic. ☐ *I know her by her perfume.* ☐ *I know this committee only by its reputation, which is not good, by the way.*

know someone or something **like the back of** one's **hand** Go to next.

know someone or something **like the palm of** one's **hand** and **know** someone or something **like the back of** one's **hand; know** someone or something **like a book** to know someone or something very well. ☐ *Of course I know John. I know him like the back of my hand.* ☐ *I know him like a book.*

know something **backwards and forwards** and **know** something **forwards and backwards** *Fig.* to know something very well; to know a passage of language so well that one could recite it backwards as well as forwards. ☐ *Of course I've memorized my speech. I know it backwards and forwards.*

know something **by heart** *Fig.* to know something perfectly; to have memorized something perfectly. ☐ *I know my speech by heart.* ☐ *I went over and over it until I knew it by heart.*

know something **forwards and backwards** Go to **know** something **backwards and forwards.**

know something **from memory** to have memorized something so that one does not have to consult a written version; to know something well from seeing it very often. (Almost the same as **know** something **by heart.**) ☐ *Mary didn't need the script because she knew the play from memory.* ☐ *The conductor went through the entire concert without sheet music. He knew it from memory.*

know something **from** something to tell the difference between one thing and another. (Often with a negative.) ☐ *You don't know a smoked herring from a squid!* ☐ *She didn't know a raven from a crow, and who does?*

know something **in** one's **bones** Go to **feel** something **in** one's **bones.**

know something **inside out** to know something thoroughly; to know about something thoroughly. ☐ *I know my geometry inside out.* ☐ *I studied and studied for my driver's test until I knew the rules inside out.*

know something **only too well** to know something very well; to know something from unpleasant experience. (Note the variation in the examples.) ☐ *I know the problem only too well.* ☐ *I know only too well the kind of problem you must face.*

know something **through and through** to know something very well. ☐ *I want you to know this project through and through before the staff meeting.* ☐ *I know my part in the play through and through.*

know the big picture Go to the **big picture.**

know the ropes Go to the **ropes.**

K

know the score and **know what's what** *Fig.* to know the facts; to know the facts about life and its difficulties. ☐ *Bob is so naive. He sure doesn't know the score.* ☐ *I know what you're trying to do. Oh, yes, I know what's what.*

Know thyself. *Prov.* Be aware of your own limitations; know what you are capable of doing. (This was the motto inscribed on the temple of Apollo at Delphi.) ☐ *The motto of the ballet corps was "Know thyself"; every dancer was expected to know how far she could stretch, and not hurt herself by trying to exceed her limits.* ☐ *"Know thyself," the high school guidance counselor admonished us, "and try to find a career that makes the most of your abilities."*

know the tricks of the trade Go to the **tricks of the trade.**

Know what? Go to **(Do you) know what?**

know what's what Go to **know the score.**

know when one **is not wanted** to sense when one's presence is not welcome; to know when one is not among friends. (Usually said when someone feels hurt by being ignored by people.) ☐ *I'm leaving this place! I know when I'm not wanted!* ☐ *She doesn't know when she's not wanted. Can't she tell she's out of place?*

know where all the bodies are buried *Fig.* to know all the secrets and intrigue from the past; to know all the relevant and perhaps hidden details. ☐ *He is a good choice for president because he knows where all the bodies are buried.* ☐ *Since he knows where all the bodies are buried, he is the only one who can advise us.*

know where it's at to be alert and know how the world—or some part of it—really works. ☐ *Man, you just don't know where it's at!* ☐ *I don't know where cool jazz is at.*

know where one **is coming from** to understand someone's motivation; to understand and relate to someone's position. ☐ *I know where you're coming from. I've been*

there. ☐ *We all know where he's coming from. That's why we are so worried.*

know where someone **stands (on** someone or something**)** to know what someone thinks or feels about something. ☐ *I don't know where John stands on this issue.* ☐ *I don't even know where I stand.*

know where something **is at** to know where something is located. (Without *at,* this sense is standard English. See also know where it's at.) ☐ *Do you know where the hammer is at?* ☐ *I don't know where my glasses are at.*

know whereof one **speaks** to know well the subject that one is speaking about. ☐ *You are wrong! You do not know whereof you speak.* ☐ *He simply doesn't know whereof he speaks.*

know which is which and **tell which is which** to be able to distinguish one person or thing from another person or thing. ☐ *I have an old one and a new one, but I don't know which is which.* ☐ *I know that Bill and Bob are twins, but I can't tell which is which.*

know which side one's **bread is buttered on** *Prov.* to be aware of where your money comes from; to be loyal to the person or thing that will benefit you the most. ☐ *Wife: Please be sure not to upset Grandma. You know we can't do without the money she sends us every month. Husband: Don't worry. I know which side my bread is buttered on.*

Knowledge is power. *Prov.* The more you know, the more you can control. ☐ *Child: How come I have to study history? I don't care what all those dead people did hundreds of years ago. Mother: Knowledge is power. If you know something about the past, it may help you to anticipate the future.*

known fact something that is generally recognized as a fact. ☐ *That grass is green is a known fact.* ☐ *It is a known fact that John was in Chicago on the night of the murder.*

known quantity someone whose character, personality, and behavior are recognized and understood. ☐ *We need not worry about how John will behave. He is a known quantity.* ☐ *Lisa is a known quantity and I am sure she will not surprise us by voting with the opposition.*

knuckle down (to something**)** *Fig.* to get busy doing something. ☐ *I want you to knuckle down to your work and stop worrying about the past.* ☐ *Come on. Knuckle down. Get busy.*

*****a **knuckle sandwich** *Inf.* a punch. (*Typically: **ask for ~; get ~; give** someone **~; want ~**.) ☐ *A: Nyah! Your mother smokes cigars! B: You want a knuckle sandwich?*

knuckle under (to someone or something**)** to submit to someone or something; to yield or give in to someone or something. ☐ *You have to knuckle under to your boss if you expect to keep your job.* ☐ *I'm too stubborn to knuckle under.*

kowtow to someone or something to grovel to someone or something. ☐ *I won't kowtow to anyone!* ☐ *You don't expect me to go in there and kowtow to that committee, do you?*

Ll

label someone or something **as** something to designate someone or something as something. □ *She labeled him as an uncouth person.* □ *We labeled the committee as a worthless organization.*

label someone or something **with** something to mark or identify someone or something with something. □ *They labeled each person who had paid the admission fee with a symbol stamped on the hand.* □ *I labeled each book with my name.*

labor at something to work hard at something. □ *He is laboring at his gardening and won't be back in the house until dinnertime.* □ *What are you laboring at so intensely?*

labor for someone or something to work on behalf of someone or something. □ *I labored for them all day, and they didn't even thank me.* □ *I have labored for this cause for many years.*

labor for something to work in order to get something, such as money. □ *I was laboring for a pittance, so I decided to get another job.* □ *I labor for the love of it.*

a **labor of love** *Fig.* a task that is either unpaid or badly paid and that one does simply for one's own satisfaction or pleasure or to please someone whom one likes or loves. □ *Jane made no money out of the biography she wrote. She was writing about the life of a friend and the book was a labor of love.* □ *Mary hates knitting, but she made a sweater for her boyfriend. What a labor of love.*

labor over someone or something to work hard on someone or something. □ *The surgeon labored over the patient for four hours.* □ *I labored over this painting for months before I got it the way I wanted it.*

labor under an assumption *Fig.* to function or operate believing something; to go about living while assuming something [that may not be so]. □ *I was laboring under the idea that we were going to share the profits equally.* □ *Are you laboring under the notion that you are going to be promoted?*

lace into someone or something and **light into** someone or something *Fig.* to attack, devour, or scold someone or something. □ *We laced into a big meal of pork and beans.* □ *The bully punched John once, and then John really laced into him.* □ *John lit into him with both fists.*

lace someone **into** something to tighten the laces of something someone is wearing. □ *Sally helped Billy lace himself into his boots.* □ *The maid laced Gloria into her corset.*

lace someone **up**† to tie someone's laces; to help someone get dressed in a garment having laces. □ *Would you please lace me up? I can't reach the ties in the back.* □ *I laced up Sally, as she requested.*

lace something **up**† to tie the laces of something. □ *Lace your shoes up, Tommy.* □ *Lace up your shoes.*

lace something **with** something to adulterate something with something, often with something alcoholic. □ *Someone laced the punch with strong whiskey.* □ *Who laced my coffee with brandy?*

lack for something to lack something. □ *We don't lack for new ideas.* □ *We lack for nothing, thank you.*

Ladies first. an expression of courtesy indicating that women should go first, as in going through a doorway. □ *Bob stepped back and made a motion with his hand indicating that Mary should go first. "Ladies first," smiled Bob.*

a **ladies' man** *Fig.* a man who likes the company of women and whose company is liked by women, the suggestion being that he likes to flirt with them. □ *John is a real ladies' man. He hates all-male parties.* □ *The new boss is always flirting with the women in the office. He's a bit of a ladies' man.*

ladle something **out of** something and **ladle** something **out**† to scoop something out of something with a spoon or ladle. □ *Marie ladled the last of the gravy out of the gravy boat and went to the kitchen for more.* □ *She ladled out the soup.*

ladle something **up**† to scoop something up in a ladle. □ *Jerry ladled a cool dipper of water up and quenched his thirst.* □ *Please ladle up the soup and serve it.*

lady of the evening *Euph.* a prostitute. □ *I saw several ladies of the evening down on Main Street.* □ *He was approached by a lady of the evening.*

lag behind in something to fall behind in something. □ *I am lagging behind in my car payments.* □ *She is lagging behind in her homework assignments.*

lag behind (someone or something**)** to linger behind someone or something; to fall behind someone or something. □ *Come on up here. Don't lag behind us or you'll get lost.* □ *Please don't lag behind the donkeys. Come up here with the rest of the hikers.*

laid back 1. calm and relaxed. □ *Willie is not what I would call laid back.* □ *You are really one laid-back guy!* **2.** intoxicated. □ *He's a little laid back and can't come to the phone.* □ *How can those guys work when they are laid back by noon?*

laid out 1. intoxicated. □ *Man, you got yourself laid out!* □ *I'm too laid out to go to work today.* **2.** well-dressed. □ *Look at those silks! Man are you laid out!* □ *She is all laid out in her Sunday best.*

laid up [of people or things] immobilized for recuperation or repairs. □ *I was laid up for two weeks after my accident.* □ *My car is laid up for repairs.* □ *I was laid up with the flu for a week.*

lam into someone or an animal *Fig.* to attack someone or an animal. □ *Paul was so angry that he lammed into his friend and struck him in the side.* □ *The angry coachman lammed into the poor horses.*

lame duck 1. *Fig.* someone who is in the last period of a term in an elective office and cannot run for reelection. ☐ *You can't expect much from a lame duck.* ☐ *As a lame duck, there's not a lot I can do.* **2.** *Fig.* having to do with someone in the last period of a term in an elective office. (Used as an adjective; sometimes *lame-duck*.) ☐ *You don't expect much from a lame-duck president.* ☐ *Lame-duck Congresses tend to do things they wouldn't dare do otherwise.*

lament over someone or something and **lament (for)** someone or something to sorrow over someone or something. ☐ *There is no need to lament over Sam. There is nothing that crying will do for him now.* ☐ *She is still lamenting for her cat.*

land a blow 1. *Lit.* to strike someone. ☐ *He kept moving, and I found it almost impossible to land a blow.* ☐ *The boxer landed a blow to the face of his opponent.* **2.** *Fig.* to make a point. ☐ *I think I really landed a blow with that remark about extortion.* ☐ *The point about justice landed a blow.*

land a job to find a job and be hired. ☐ *As soon as I land a job and start to bring in some money, I'm going to get a stereo.* ☐ *I managed to land a job at a factory.*

land at some place **1.** [for a ship] to come to port at a place. ☐ *The ship landed at the wharf and the passengers got off.* ☐ *We landed at the island's main city and waited for customs to clear us.* **2.** [for an airplane] to return to earth at an airport. ☐ *We landed at O'Hare at noon.* ☐ *We were to land at Denver, but there was bad weather.*

land in something **1.** *Lit.* [for an airplane] to return to earth in or near a particular city. ☐ *We landed in Chicago on time.* ☐ *They could not land in San Francisco, so they flew on to Sacramento.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to end up in something, such as a mess, jail, trouble, etc. ☐ *If you don't mend your ways, you're going to land in jail!* ☐ *Andy is going to land in hot water if he doesn't start paying his bills.* **3.** [for an airplane] to make a landing in something, such as bad weather, darkness, daylight, fog, etc. ☐ *You can't land this plane in fog like this.* ☐ *The novice pilot is not capable of landing in the dark.*

Land o' Goshen! *Rur.* My goodness gracious! (A mild oath. Goshen was an agricultural region in Egypt occupied by the Israelites before the Exodus.) ☐ *Land o' Goshen, it's sure good to see you.* ☐ *Land o' Goshen! Look at that rain come down!*

the **land of Nod** a state of sleep. (Humorous. From the fact that people sometimes nod when they are falling asleep.) ☐ *The baby is in the land of Nod.* ☐ *Look at the clock! It's time we were all in the land of Nod.*

land so poor it wouldn't even raise a fuss and **land too poor to raise a racket on** *Rur.* land where nothing will grow. ☐ *I inherited two hundred acres from my uncle, but it's land so poor it wouldn't even raise a fuss.* ☐ *The soil's exhausted. That land is so poor it wouldn't even raise a fuss.* ☐ *Jill can grow a garden anywhere, even on land too poor to raise a racket on.*

land someone **in** something to cause someone to end up in something. ☐ *His criminal activity finally landed him in jail.* ☐ *You really landed yourself in a fine mess!*

land something **at** some place to bring a boat, ship, or airplane to rest or to port at or near a place. ☐ *The captain landed the boat at a small island in hopes of finding a place to make repairs.* ☐ *They had to land the plane at a small town because of a medical emergency.*

land too poor to raise a racket on Go to land so poor it wouldn't even raise a fuss.

land up somehow *Fig.* to end up in some way. ☐ *If you keep eating all those sweets, you'll land up sick.* ☐ *Do you want to land up without a job?*

land up somehow or somewhere to finish somehow or somewhere; to come to be in a certain state or place at the end. ☐ *We set out for Denver but landed up in Salt Lake City.* ☐ *He's so extravagant that he landed up in debt.*

land (up)on both feet and **land (up)on** one's **feet 1.** *Lit.* to end up on both feet after a jump, dive, etc. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *She jumped over the bicycle and landed upon both feet.* ☐ *Donna made the enormous leap and landed on her feet.* **2.** *Fig.* to come out of something well; to survive something satisfactorily. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *It was a rough period in his life, but when it was over he landed on both feet.* ☐ *At least, after it was over I landed on my feet.*

land (up)on one's **feet** Go to previous.

land (up)on someone or something to light on someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *A bee landed upon her and frightened her.* ☐ *The spoon I dropped landed on the cake and ruined the icing.*

land-office business *Fig.* a large amount of business done in a short period of time. ☐ *We always do a land-office business at this time of year.* ☐ *We keep going. Never do land-office business—just enough to make out.*

Land(s) sakes (alive)! and **Sakes alive!** *Rur.* My goodness! (A mild oath.) ☐ *Lands sakes! I sure am glad to get home!* ☐ *Sakes alive! Can't you even set the table without making a fuss?*

a **landslide victory** a victory by a large margin; a very substantial victory, particularly in an election. ☐ *The mayor won a landslide victory in the election.* ☐ *The younger candidate won a landslide victory in the presidential election.*

language that would fry bacon *Rur.* profanity; swearing; curse words. ("Hot" language.) ☐ *He carried on in language that would fry bacon.* ☐ *I was shocked when I heard that sweet little girl use language that would fry bacon.*

languish in some place **1.** to become dispirited in some place; to weaken and fade away in some place. ☐ *Claire languished in prison for her crime.* ☐ *I spent over three days languishing in a stuffy hotel room.* ☐ *We languished in the airport waiting room while they refueled the plane.* **2.** to suffer neglect in a place. ☐ *The bill languished in the Senate for months on end.* ☐ *The children languished in the squalid conditions until the court intervened.*

languish over someone or something to pine over someone or something. ☐ *There is no point in languishing over Tim. He'll never come back.* ☐ *She wasted half her life languishing over her lost opportunities.*

the **lap of luxury** *Fig.* a luxurious situation. ☐ *I rather enjoy living in the lap of luxury.* ☐ *You call this pigpen the lap of luxury?*

lap over (something**)** [for something] to extend or project over the edge or boundary of something. ☐ *The lid lapped over the edge of the barrel, forming a little table.* ☐ *The blanket did not lap over enough to keep me warm.*

lap something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* [for an animal] to lick something up. ☐ *The dog lapped the ice cream up off the floor.* ☐ *The dog lapped up the ice cream.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to accept or believe something with enthusiasm. ☐ *Of course, they believed it. They just lapped it up.* ☐ *They lapped up the lies without questioning anything.*

lap (up) against something [for waves] to splash gently against something. ☐ *The waves lapped up against the shore softly.* ☐ *The waves lapped against the side of the boat all night long, and I couldn't sleep.*

lapse from grace 1. *Lit.* to fall out of favor with God. ☐ *The child was told that if he ever smoked even one cigarette, he would lapse from grace for certain.* ☐ *It is easy, these days, to lapse from grace.* **2.** *Fig.* to fall out of favor. ☐ *Ted lapsed from grace when he left the lobby door unlocked all weekend.* ☐ *I have to be there on time every day or I will lapse from grace for sure.*

lapse into something to weaken or slip into something, especially a coma. ☐ *The survivor of the crash lapsed into a coma.* ☐ *Aunt Mary lapsed into unconsciousness and died.*

***large as life** *Fig.* in person; actually, and sometimes surprisingly, present at a place. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *I thought Jack was away, but there he was as large as life.* ☐ *Jean was not expected to appear, but she turned up large as life.*

large as life (and twice as ugly) Go to big as life (and twice as ugly).

larger than life *Fig.* [of someone] having an aura of greatness, perhaps not supported by the real person. ☐ *Perry seemed larger than life to those who had only read about him. To the rest of us, he was a boor.* ☐ *To the children, the star athlete who spoke at the school assembly seemed larger than life.*

lash against something [for something, such as wind or water] to beat or whip heavily against something. ☐ *The angry waves lashed against the hull of the boat, frightening the people huddled inside.* ☐ *The wind lashed against the house and kept us awake all night.*

lash at someone or something to thrash or beat someone or something violently. ☐ *The rain lashed at the windows.* ☐ *The mule driver lashed at his beasts with his whip.*

lash back (at someone or something**)** to strike or fight back against someone or something—physically or verbally. ☐ *Randy lashed back at his attackers and drove them away.* ☐ *If you threaten Fred, he'll lash back.*

lash down on someone or something [for rain] to beat down on someone or something. ☐ *The wind and rain lashed down on us.* ☐ *The rain lashed down on the young plants and pounded them into the soil.*

lash into someone or an animal to attack someone or an animal—physically or verbally. ☐ *Dad lashed into my brother, who had smashed up the car again.* ☐ *Walter lashed into the cat for tearing the upholstery.*

lash into something to begin to eat something with vigor. ☐ *Mary lashed into the huge ice cream sundae, and ate almost the whole thing.* ☐ *The workers lashed into their lunches and did not say a word until they had finished.*

lash out (at someone or something**)** and **lash out (against** someone or something**)** to strike out in defense or attack—physically or verbally. ☐ *Amy was angry with Ed and lashed out at him just to show who was boss.* ☐ *She was so angry with him that she just lashed out against him.* ☐ *Gretchen was fed up with the cat and lashed out savagely in her anger.*

lash someone or something **down**† to tie someone or something down. ☐ *The villain lashed Nell down to the railroad tracks.* ☐ *He lashed down the innocent victim.* ☐ *Lash that cask down so it doesn't wash overboard.*

lash someone or something **to** something to tie someone or something to something. ☐ *The boys lashed one of their number to a tree and danced around him like savages.* ☐ *Abe lashed the cask to the deck.* ☐ *Frank lashed himself to the mast.*

lash something **about** to whip or fling something about violently. ☐ *The big cat lashed its tail threateningly.* ☐ *The strong wind lashed the tall grass about.*

lash something **together** to tie something or things together. ☐ *Let's lash these logs together and make a raft.* ☐ *Lash two or three of the poles together to make them stronger.*

last but not least *Cliché* last in sequence, but not last in importance. (Often said when introducing people.) ☐ *The speaker said, "And now, last but not least, I'd like to present Bill Smith, who will give us some final words."* ☐ *And last but not least, here is the final graduate.*

last call (for something**)** and **last chance (for** something**)** *Fig.* the last opportunity for doing, getting, or having something. ☐ *This is the last call for ice cream and cake. It's almost all gone.*

last chance (for something**)** Go to previous.

last for something **1.** to exist for a period of time; to serve or function for a period of time. ☐ *This condition has lasted for some time.* ☐ *Enjoy it while you can. It won't last forever.* **2.** to hold out or survive for a period of time. ☐ *It's so hot in here. I don't think I can last for another minute.* ☐ *Can you last for another few minutes while I get this window open?*

last (from something**) until** something to endure from one point in time to another. ☐ *The meeting lasted from noon until midnight.* ☐ *The party lasted until the food ran out.*

the **last hurrah** *Fig.* a final appearance, as at the end of one's career; the last time for doing something. ☐ *Tom is retiring, and we are having a little party as his last hurrah right now. He won't be here the next time you visit our offices.*

*****the **last laugh (on** someone**)** *Fig.* laughter or ridicule at someone who has laughed at or ridiculed you. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *John laughed when I got a D on the final exam. I got the last laugh, though. He failed the course.* ☐ *Mr. Smith said I was foolish when I bought an old building. I had the last laugh when I sold it a month later for twice what I paid for it.*

last out to hold out; to endure. ☐ *How long can you last out?* ☐ *I don't think we can last out much longer without food and water.*

the **last roundup** *Fig.* death. (Old West.) ☐ *To everyone's surprise, he clutched the wound and faced the last roundup*

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with a smile. ☐ *When I know I'm headed for the last roundup, I'll write a will.*

last something **out†** to endure until the end of something. ☐ *Ed said that he didn't think he could last the opera out and left.* ☐ *He couldn't last out the first act.*

the **last straw** and the **straw that broke the camel's back** the final difficulty in a series; the last little burden or problem that causes everything to collapse. (From the image of a camel being loaded down with much weight. Finally, at some point, one more straw will be too much and the camel's back will break.) ☐ *When our best player came down sick, that was the straw that broke the camel's back. We hoped to make the playoffs, but lost all the rest of our games.* ☐ *When she showed up late a third time, that was the straw that broke the camel's back. We had to fire her.*

last will and testament a will; the last edition of someone's will. ☐ *The lawyer read Uncle Charles's last will and testament to a group of expectant relatives.* ☐ *Fred dictated his last will and testament on his deathbed.*

*the **last word** and *the **final word;** *the **final say** *Fig.* the final point (in an argument); the final decision (in some matter). (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *The boss gets the last word in hiring.* ☐ *Why do you always have to have the final word in an argument?*

***last-ditch effort** *Fig.* a final effort; the last possible attempt. (*Typically: **be ~; have ~; make ~**.) ☐ *I made one last-ditch effort to get her to stay.* ☐ *It was a last-ditch effort. I didn't expect it to work.*

latch on(to someone**)** to get hold of someone. ☐ *I don't know where Jane is. Let me try to latch onto her.*

latch onto something **1.** *Fig.* to obtain something. (See also latch on(to someone or something).) ☐ *I have to latch onto a hundred bucks by Friday night.* ☐ *I latched onto a good book about repairing plumbing.* **2.** *Fig.* to begin to understand something. ☐ *When Fred finally latched onto the principles of algebra, he began to get better grades.* ☐ *Sue doesn't quite latch onto the proper stance in golf.*

The **latch string is always out.** *Fig.* You are always welcome. ☐ *Come by anytime. The latch string is always out.* ☐ *No need to call before you come over. For you folks, the latch string is always out.*

a **late bloomer 1.** *Lit.* a plant that blooms later than similar plants or that blooms late in the season. ☐ *There are a few late bloomers in the garden, but by fall, we don't care much anymore about flowers.* **2.** *Fig.* a person who finally develops a useful or superior skill or talents later than expected or desired. ☐ *Joseph was a late bloomer, but turned out to be a formidable scholar in the long run.*

late in life *Fig.* when one is old. ☐ *Grandma injured her hip running. She's exercising rather late in life.* ☐ *Isn't it sort of late in life for your grandparents to buy a house?*

late in the day *Fig.* far along in a project or activity; too late in a project or activity for action, decisions, etc., to be taken. ☐ *It was a bit late in the day for him to apologize.* ☐ *It's late in the day to try to change the plans.*

the **late unpleasantness** *Euph.* the U.S. Civil War. (Old.) ☐ *The town courthouse was burned in the late unpleasantness.* ☐ *Many of my ancestors lost their lives in the late unpleasantness.*

Later, alligator. Go to See you later, alligator.

lather something **up†** to apply thick soapsuds to something, such as part of the body or all of it. ☐ *He lathered his face up in preparation for shaving.* ☐ *He lathered up his face.*

lather up 1. [for a horse] to develop a foam of sweat from working very hard. ☐ *The horses lathered up heavily during the race.* ☐ *Don't let your horse lather up!* **2.** [for soap] to develop thick suds when rubbed in water. ☐ *This soap won't lather up, even when I rub it hard.* ☐ *When the soap lathers up, spread the lather on your face and rub.* **3.** and **lather** oneself **up** [for one] to apply soap lather to one's body. ☐ *He will spend a few minutes lathering himself up before he rinses.* ☐ *He lathered up and then shaved.*

laugh about someone or something to chuckle or giggle loudly about someone or something. ☐ *Please don't laugh about Sue. It's not funny.* ☐ *They were laughing about my haircut.*

laugh all the way to the bank *Fig.* to be very happy about money that has been earned by doing something that other people might think is unfair or that they criticized. ☐ *He may not be in the nicest business, but he is doing well and can laugh all the way to the bank.* ☐ *She makes tons of money doing what no one else will do and laughs all the way to the bank.*

Laugh and the world laughs with you; weep and you weep alone. *Prov.* When you are happy, people will want to be around you and share your happiness, but when you are sad, people will avoid you. ☐ *Nancy: When Harry and I were dating, all our friends invited us places and called to say hello. Now that we've broken up, they treat me as if I don't exist. Jane: Laugh and the world laughs with you; weep and you weep alone.*

laugh at someone or something to chuckle or giggle loudly at someone or something, perhaps in ridicule. ☐ *Thank goodness, the audience laughed at all my jokes.* ☐ *Don't laugh at me! I'm doing my best!* ☐ *Everyone laughed at the love scene because it was so badly done.*

laugh away at someone or something to continue to laugh at someone or something. ☐ *They laughed away at Sue until she fled the room in embarrassment.* ☐ *All the children at the party laughed away at the magician.*

laugh in someone's **face** to laugh in derision directly to someone's face; to show displeasure or ridicule at something one has said by laughing directly into one's face. ☐ *It is very impolite to laugh in someone's face!* ☐ *After I heard what she had to say, I just laughed in her face.*

laugh one's **head off** *Fig.* to laugh very hard and loudly, as if one's head might come off. (See also cough one's head off. Fixed order.) ☐ *The movie was so funny I almost laughed my head off.* ☐ *I laughed my head off at Mary's joke.*

laugh oneself **out of** something to lose out on something because one has made light of it or laughed at it. ☐ *While you were howling with laughter about my hat, you laughed yourself out of a ride to town. The bus just pulled away.* ☐ *You laugh too much. You just laughed yourself out of a job.*

laugh oneself **silly** *Fig.* to laugh very, very hard. ☐ *I laughed myself silly when I heard that Steven was really going to give the graduation address.*

laugh out of the other side of one's **face** and **laugh out of the other side of** one's **mouth** *Fig.* to be forced to take a different or opposite view of something humbly; to sing a different tune. □ *When you get the kind of punishment you deserve, you'll laugh out of the other side of your face.* □ *Phil played a dirty trick on me, but he'll be laughing out of the other side of his mouth when I get through with him.*

laugh out of the other side of one's **mouth** Go to previous.

laugh someone **off the stage** *Fig.* to laugh rudely, forcing a person to leave a stage. □ *The rude audience laughed the politician off the stage.* □ *The children laughed the soprano off the stage. She really wasn't very good, you know.*

laugh someone or something **down†** to cause someone to quit or cause something to end by laughing in ridicule. □ *Her singing career was destroyed when the audience laughed her down as an amateur.* □ *The cruel audience laughed down the amateur singer.* □ *They laughed down the magic act also.*

laugh someone **out of** something to force someone to leave a place by laughing in ridicule. □ *The citizens laughed the speaker out of the hall.* □ *We laughed the city council out of the auditorium.*

laugh something **away† 1.** to spend an amount of time laughing. □ *We laughed the hour away listening to the comedian.* □ *We laughed away the evening.* **2.** to get rid of something negative by laughing. □ *Kelly knows how to laugh her problems away, and it cheers up the rest of us too.* □ *She laughed away her problems.*

laugh something **off†** to treat a serious problem lightly by laughing at it. □ *Although his feelings were hurt, he just laughed the incident off as if nothing had happened.* □ *He laughed off the incident.*

laugh something **out of court** to dismiss something presented in earnest as ridiculous. □ *The committee laughed the suggestion out of court.* □ *Bob's request for a large salary increase was laughed out of court.*

laugh up one's **sleeve** to laugh secretly; to laugh quietly to oneself. □ *Jane looked very serious, but I knew she was laughing up her sleeve.* □ *I told Sally that her dress was darling, but I was laughing up my sleeve because her dress was too small.*

laugh with something to laugh in a particular manner. □ *Everyone was laughing with glee at the antics of the clown.* □ *Max laughed with malice as he saw his plan beginning to work.*

laughingstock someone or something that is the target of ridicule. □ *After he passed out at the president's dinner, he became the laughingstock of all his colleagues.*

launch forth on something Go to set forth on something.

launch forth ((up)on something**)** to set out on something; to begin on something, such as a journey or a long lecture or sermon. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) □ *We launched forth on our trip before dawn.* □ *What time shall we launch forth tomorrow morning?*

launch into something to start in doing something. □ *Now, don't launch into lecturing me about manners again!* □ *Tim's mother launched into a sermon about how to behave at the dinner table.*

launch (one's **lunch)** *Sl.* to empty one's stomach; to vomit. □ *When I saw that mess, I almost launched my lunch.* □ *Watch out! She's going to launch!*

launch out on something to start out to do something or go somewhere. □ *When are you going to launch out on your expedition?* □ *Ted and Bill launched out on their trip through the mountains.*

launch something **against** someone or something to set something going against someone or something. □ *The general launched an attack against the town.* □ *Claire launched a gossip attack against James.*

lavish something **(up)on** someone to give something freely to someone; to squander something on someone. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) □ *The manager lavished all sorts of favors upon the new employee.* □ *Susan lavished compliments on the cook.*

***a law unto** oneself *Fig.* one who ignores laws or rules; one who sets one's own standards of behavior. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) □ *You can't get Bill to follow the rules. He's a law unto himself.* □ *Jane is a law unto herself. She's totally unwilling to cooperate.*

lay a finger on someone or something to touch someone or something, even slightly, as with only a finger. □ *Don't you dare lay a finger on my pencil. Go get your own!* □ *If you lay a finger on me, I'll scream.*

lay a guilt trip on someone Go to next.

lay a (heavy) trip on someone **1.** *Inf.* to criticize someone. □ *There's no need to lay a trip on me. I agree with you.* □ *When he finally does get there, I'm going to lay a heavy trip on him like he'll never forget.* **2.** *Inf.* to confuse or astonish someone. □ *After he laid a heavy trip on me about how the company is almost broke, I cleaned out my desk and left.* □ *After Mary laid a trip on John about leaving him, all he could do was cry.* **3.** and **lay a guilt trip on** someone *Inf.* to attempt to make someone feel very guilty. □ *Why do you have to lay a guilt trip on me? Why don't you go to a shrink?* □ *Of course, she just had to lay a trip on him about being bossy, self-centered, and aloof.* **4.** *Inf.* to reveal serious or devastating information to someone. □ *That's a powerful story. I didn't know you were going to lay a heavy trip like that on me.* □ *Man, you really laid a trip on me.*

lay about Go to lay around.

lay alongside something [for a ship] to rest afloat next to something. □ *The ship lay alongside a lovely island while a shore party searched for fresh water.* □ *Our ship lay alongside the narrow wooden pier.*

lay an egg 1. *Lit.* [for a hen, etc.] to deposit an egg. □ *Old Red stopped laying eggs, so we stewed her for Sunday dinner.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to do something bad or poorly; to perform poorly on stage. □ *I guess I really laid an egg, huh?* □ *The cast laid an egg in both performances.*

lay around and **lay about** to lie around. (Common errors for lie about, lie around.) □ *Don't just lay around all day!* □ *I need to lay around for a few days.*

lay claim to something to place a claim on something. □ *Do you really think you can lay claim to that money after all these years?* □ *Someone came by and laid claim to the wallet you found.*

L

lay down to give up. ☐ *Do you expect me to just lay down?* ☐ *You really think I should just lay down and let them walk all over me?*

lay down on the job Go to **lie down on the job.**

lay down one's **arms** *Fig.* to put one's gun, sword, club, etc., down; to stop fighting; to surrender. ☐ *The prisoners were instructed to lay down their arms.* ☐ *The soldiers laid down their arms and surrendered.*

lay down one's **life (for** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to sacrifice one's life for someone or something. ☐ *Would you lay down your life for your country?* ☐ *There aren't many things for which I'd lay down my life.*

lay down the law (to someone**) (about** something**)** *Fig.* to scold someone; to make something very clear to someone in a very stern manner. ☐ *Wow, was she mad at Ed. She really laid down the law about drinking to him.* ☐ *She laid down the law to Ed.* ☐ *She laid down the law about drinking.*

lay emphasis on something and **lay stress on** something to place emphasis on something; to emphasize something. ☐ *When you present this explanation, lay emphasis on the matter of personal responsibility.* ☐ *I'm afraid I laid too much stress on the notion of good attendance. If you are really sick, stay home!*

lay eyes on someone or something Go to **set eyes on** someone or something.

L

lay for someone or something to lie in wait for someone or something. ☐ *The sheriff was laying for the outlaw.* ☐ *Bill was laying for me when I came out of the saloon.*

lay hold of someone or something to grasp someone or something with the hands. ☐ *Just wait till I lay hold of Bill!* ☐ *I can't wait to lay hold of that fishing pole. I'm ready to catch a huge fish.*

lay in ruins Go to **in ruins.**

lay into someone or something to attack, consume, or scold someone or something. ☐ *Bob laid into the big plate of fried chicken.* ☐ *The bear laid into the hunter.* ☐ *My father really laid into me when I got home.*

lay it on the line and **put it on the line** *Fig.* to make something very clear; to be very definite about something. ☐ *I am going to lay it on the line and you had better listen to me. If you eat any of these mushrooms, you will die.* ☐ *I've said it before, but this time I'm going to put it on the line. Don't eat the mushrooms!*

lay it on thick and **lay it on with a trowel; pour it on thick; spread it on thick** *Fig.* to exaggerate or overstate praise, excuses, or blame. ☐ *Sally was laying it on thick when she said that Tom was the best singer she had ever heard.* ☐ *After Bob finished making his excuses, Sally said that he was pouring it on thick.* ☐ *Bob always spreads it on thick.*

lay it on with a trowel Go to previous.

lay low Go to **lie low.**

lay low and sing small *Rur.* to hide; to make oneself inconspicuous. ☐ *After he robbed the bank, the outlaw decided to lay low and sing small awhile.* ☐ *Jane is looking for you, and she sure is angry. You'd best lay low and sing small.*

the **lay of the land 1.** *Lit.* the arrangement of features on an area of land. (Also with *lie*, especially British English.) ☐ *The surveyor mapped the lay of the land.* ☐ *The geologist studied the lay of the land, trying to determine if there was oil below.* **2.** *Fig.* the arrangement or organization of something other than land. ☐ *As soon as I get the lay of the land in my new job, things will go better.* ☐ *The company's corporate structure was complex, so understanding the lay of the land took time.*

lay off ((from) something**)** to cease doing something. ☐ *Lay off from your hammering for a minute, will you?* ☐ *That's enough! Please lay off.*

lay off ((of) someone or something**)** to stop doing something to someone or something; to stop bothering someone or something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Lay off of me! You've said enough.* ☐ *Please lay off the chicken. I cooked it as best I could.*

lay off (someone or something**)** to leave someone or something alone. ☐ *Lay off the booze for a while, why don't ya?* ☐ *Lay off me! I didn't do anything!*

lay one on Go to **tie one on.**

lay one's **cards on the table** and **put** one's **cards on the table** *Fig.* to be very candid about one's position on some issue. (Alludes to laying playing cards on the table, face up, showing the cards.) ☐ *All right. Let's lay our cards on the table and speak very candidly about this matter.* ☐ *It's time we put our cards on the table and spoke honestly.*

lay one's **hands on** someone, something, or an animal Go to **put** one's **hands on** someone, something, or an animal.

lay (oneself**) down** to lie down. ☐ *Just lay yourself down there and try to sleep.* ☐ *I'll lay myself down here for just a few minutes.*

lay over (some place**)** to pause some place during one's journey. ☐ *I had to lay over in San Antonio for a few hours before my plane left.* ☐ *I want a bus that goes straight through. I don't want to lay over.*

lay (some) rubber *Sl.* to spin one's car tires when accelerating, leaving black marks on the street. ☐ *At that age all they want to do is get in the car and lay some rubber.* ☐ *You wanna know how well I can lay some rubber in this thing?*

lay some sweet lines on someone and **put some sweet lines on** someone *Sl.* to speak kindly to someone; to **soft-soap** someone. ☐ *I just laid some sweet lines on her, and she let me use her car.* ☐ *If you put some sweet lines on him, maybe he won't ground you.*

lay someone **away**† *Euph.* to bury someone. ☐ *Yes, he has passed. We laid him away last week.* ☐ *He laid away his uncle in a simple ceremony.*

lay someone **down** to ease someone into a reclining position; to ease someone into bed. ☐ *The baby woke up when I tried to lay him down.* ☐ *The nurse laid the disturbed patient down time and time again.*

lay someone **off**† **(from** something**)** to put an end to someone's employment at something. ☐ *The automobile factory laid five hundred people off from work.* ☐ *They laid off a lot of people.* ☐ *We knew they were going to lay a lot of people off.*

lay someone or something **in(to)** something to place someone or something in something. ☐ *The women laid the king into the coffin and the funeral procession assembled.* ☐ *The cook laid the salmon in the poaching liquid.*

lay someone **out**† **1.** *Sl.* to knock someone down with a punch; to knock someone unconscious. ☐ *Tom laid out Bill with one punch to the chin.* ☐ *The policeman laid the thief out.* **2.** to prepare a corpse for burial or for a wake. ☐ *They laid out their uncle for the wake.* ☐ *The women of the community used to lay their dead out.* **3.** *Sl.* to scold someone severely. ☐ *Don't lay me out! I didn't do it!* ☐ *She really laid out the guy but good. What did he do, rob a bank?*

lay someone **out in lavender** *Fig.* to scold someone severely. ☐ *She was really mad. She laid him out in lavender and really put him in his place.* ☐ *If you ever feel like you need to lay me out in lavender again, just forget it.*

lay someone **to rest** *Euph.* to bury a dead person. ☐ *They laid her to rest by her mother and father, out in the old churchyard.* ☐ *We gather together today to lay our beloved son to rest.*

lay someone **up**† to cause someone to be ill in bed. ☐ *A broken leg laid me up for two months.* ☐ *Flu laid up everyone at work for a week or more.*

lay something **against** something to lean or place something against something. ☐ *They laid the Christmas tree against the house where they could get to it easily when the time came.* ☐ *Lay this hot cloth against the sore and hold it there.*

lay something **alongside ((of)** something**)** to place something next to something else, lengthwise. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Please lay the spoon alongside the knife.* ☐ *Find the knife and lay the spoon alongside.*

lay something **aside**† to set something aside; to place something to one side, out of the way. ☐ *He laid his papers aside and went out to welcome the visitor.* ☐ *He laid aside his papers.*

lay something **aside**† **for** someone or something to put something aside, in reserve, for someone or something. ☐ *I laid some cake aside for Tom, but someone else got it.* ☐ *I laid aside some cake for Tom.*

lay something **at** someone's **door** and **put** something **at** someone's **door 1.** *Fig.* to blame a problem on someone; to hold someone responsible for something. (Alludes to someone laying incriminating evidence at the door of a guilty person, perhaps in the night.) ☐ *I'm laying responsibility for this mess at your door!* ☐ *Don't put this at my door!* **2.** *Fig.* to give or assign a problem to someone for solving. ☐ *I am going to lay this problem right at your door. You are the one who can settle it.* ☐ *I will put this business at your door and hope you can do something about it.*

lay something **at** someone's **feet** and **put** something **at** someone's **feet 1.** *Lit.* to place something on the ground in front of someone. ☐ *The cat came up to me and laid a mouse at my feet.* ☐ *The dog put a rabbit at my feet.* **2.** *Fig.* to hold someone responsible for something. ☐ *I am going to lay this matter at your feet. You are clearly to blame.* ☐ *I will put this matter at your feet. It is your fault.*

lay something **away**† **(for** someone**)** to put something in storage for someone to receive at a later time. (Often said of a purchase that is held until it is paid for.) ☐ *Please lay this away for me. I'll pay for it when I have the money.* ☐ *Please lay away this coat until I can get the money together.*

lay something **before** someone **1.** *Lit.* to present something to someone. ☐ *The cat laid the mouse before her mistress.* ☐ *Dave laid the present before her as a peace offering.* **2.** *Fig.* to present something for someone to judge. ☐ *All you can do is lay the matter before the teacher and hope for a favorable response.* ☐ *I want to lay this before you and let you decide.*

lay something **by** Go to **put** something **by.**

lay something **down**† **(on** something**)** to place something down on something. ☐ *Lay the plates down on the table gently.* ☐ *Please lay down your book and listen to me.*

lay something **for** someone or something to prepare something (for a meal) for the benefit of someone or a group. ☐ *She laid a lovely picnic for the two of them.* ☐ *Would you lay the table for dinner for our guests?*

lay something **in**† to get something and store it for future use. ☐ *They laid a lot of food in for the holidays.* ☐ *We always lay in a large supply of firewood each November.*

lay something **on**† to supply something in abundance. ☐ *Look at him lay that butter on! What do you suppose the insides of his arteries look like?* ☐ *They laid on a beautiful buffet lunch.*

lay something **on** someone **1.** *Sl.* to present a plan or an idea to someone. ☐ *Here is this century's greatest idea. Let me lay it on you.* ☐ *I'm going to lay a great idea on you.* **2.** *Sl.* to attempt to make someone feel guilty about something. ☐ *Don't lay that stuff on me. Face your own problem.* ☐ *Every week she calls up to lay a guilt trip on me about something or other.* **3.** Go to **lay** something **on** someone or something.

L

lay something **on** someone or something to place something on someone or something; to cover someone or something with something. ☐ *As soon as he breathed his last, the nurse laid a cloth on him.* ☐ *Ken laid the bundle of flowers on the coffee table.*

lay something **out**† **1.** *Lit.* to spread something out. ☐ *The nurse laid the instruments out for the operation.* ☐ *The valet laid out the clothing for his employer.* **2.** *Fig.* to explain a plan of action or a sequence of events. ☐ *Let me lay it out for you.* ☐ *Lay out the plan very carefully, and don't skip anything.* **3.** *Fig.* to spend some amount of money. ☐ *I can't lay that kind of money out every day!* ☐ *She laid out about $24,000 for that car.*

lay something **out**† **on** someone or something and **lay** something **out**† **for** someone or something *Fig.* to spend an amount of money on someone or something. ☐ *We laid out nearly ten thousand dollars on that car.* ☐ *We laid a fortune out on the children.*

lay something **over** someone or something to cover someone or something with something. ☐ *Here, lay this blanket over the baby.* ☐ *Please lay a napkin over the bread before you take it to the table.*

lay something **to rest** Go to **put** something **to rest.**

lay something **to** something to attribute something to something. ☐ *I lay all our problems to the inadequacy of our training.* ☐ *Mary laid her success to a good upbringing.*

lay something **to waste** and **lay waste to** something *Fig.* to destroy something; to ruin or mess up something. ☐ *The invaders laid the village to waste.* ☐ *The kids came in and laid waste to my clean house.*

lay something **together** to lay things side by side. ☐ *Lay all the logs together and stack them as high as you can.* ☐ *Lay the red ones together and put all the others over there in a pile.*

lay something **under** something to place something beneath something. ☐ *Please lay a cloth under your workbench to catch the sawdust.* ☐ *Would you mind laying a sheet of plastic over the table?*

lay something **up**† **1.** to acquire and store something. ☐ *Try to lay as much of it up as you can.* ☐ *I am trying to lay up some firewood for the winter.* **2.** [for something] to disable something. ☐ *The accident laid up the ship for repairs.* ☐ *A wreck laid the bus up for months.*

lay stress on something Go to lay emphasis on something.

lay the blame (for something**) on** someone *Fig.* to place the blame for something on someone. ☐ *We could not possibly lay the blame for the accident on you.* ☐ *Don't try to lay the blame on me!*

lay the blame on someone or something Go to put the blame on someone or something.

L

lay the finger on someone Go to put the finger on someone.

lay to to begin doing something, such as fighting or eating. ☐ *All right, you guys. Lay to. The stuff will get cold if you don't eat it.* ☐ *Lay to! Let's get on with it.*

lay waste to something Go to lay something to waste.

laze something **away**† to spend a period of time being lazy. ☐ *I just love to sit here and laze the day away.* ☐ *I will laze away the entire day.*

leach away [for something] to erode or wash away gradually by leaching. ☐ *The soft sandstone leached away under the constant rains.* ☐ *The flowerpots sat out in the rain, where all the nutrients in the soil leached away.*

leach in(to something**)** [for a substance] to seep or penetrate into something. ☐ *The salt leached into the soil and ruined it.* ☐ *A tremendous amount of salt leached in.*

leach out of something [for a substance] to seep or drain out of something. ☐ *All the nutrients leached out of the soil and nothing would grow.* ☐ *The phosphorus leached out of the soil after a few years.*

leach something **away**† **(from** something**)** and **leach** something **out (of** something**); leach** something **out**†**; leach** something **away**† to remove something from something by leaching. ☐ *The heavy rains leached nutrients away from the soil.* ☐ *The rains leached away the nutrients.*

lead a dog's life and **live a dog's life** *Fig.* to lead a drab or boring life. ☐ *Poor Jane really leads a dog's life.* ☐ *I've been working so hard. I'm tired of living a dog's life.*

lead back (to some place**)** [for a pathway] to return to a place. ☐ *This path leads back to the camp.* ☐ *I hope it leads back. It seems to be going the wrong way.*

lead down to something [for a pathway or other trail] to run downward to something. ☐ *The trail led down to a spring at the bottom of the hill.* ☐ *These stairs lead down to the furnace room.*

lead forth [for someone] to go on ahead; to precede someone. ☐ *You lead forth, and I will follow.* ☐ *Wallace led forth, but no one came after him.*

lead in(to something**) 1.** to begin something; to work into something. ☐ *Let me lead into the first number with a little talk about the composer.* ☐ *I'll lead in, then you pick up the melody.* **2.** to make a transition into something; to segue into something. ☐ *Now, we will lead into the second scene with a little soft orchestral music.* ☐ *The soft music will lead in, then the curtains will open.*

lead off to be the first one to go or leave. ☐ *You lead off. I'll follow.* ☐ *Mary led off and the others followed closely behind.*

lead off (with someone or something**)** [for a person, process, or performance] to begin with someone or something. ☐ *The musical revue led off with a bassoon trio.* ☐ *Sharon, the singer, will lead off tonight.*

lead on to continue to lead onward. ☐ *The guide led on and we followed.* ☐ *Lead on, my friend. We are right behind you!*

lead someone **astray** to direct or guide someone in the wrong direction. ☐ *I am afraid that this young man has been leading you astray. I think you had better stop seeing him.* ☐ *No one can lead me astray. I know what I am doing.*

lead someone **by** something to guide someone by grasping a part and moving. ☐ *Do you expect me to lead you around by the hand, showing you everything to do in your job?* ☐ *The cop grabbed Max and led him around by the collar.*

lead someone **by the nose 1.** *Fig.* to force someone to go somewhere (with you); to lead someone by coercion. ☐ *John had to lead Tom by the nose to get him to the opera.* ☐ *I'll go, but you'll have to lead me by the nose.* **2.** *Fig.* to guide someone very carefully and slowly. (As if the person were not very smart.) ☐ *He will never find his way through the tax form unless you lead him by the nose.* ☐ *Don't lead me by the nose! I'm coming!*

lead someone **down (**something**)** to help someone down something, such as stairs, a steep path, a ladder, etc. ☐ *The usher led the couple down the aisle and seated them at the front.* ☐ *I am going to the cellar myself. Let me lead you down.*

lead someone **down the garden path** and **lead** someone **up the garden path** to deceive someone. ☐ *Now, be honest with me. Don't lead me down the garden path.* ☐ *That cheater really led her up the garden path.*

lead someone **down to** something to guide someone downward to something. ☐ *She led us down to a little room in the cellar, where the old trunk had been kept for all these years.* ☐ *Would you please lead me down to the wine cellar?*

lead someone **into** something and **lead** someone **in**† to guide someone into something or some place. ☐ *The usher led us into the darkened theater and showed us our seats.* ☐ *She led in the children.* ☐ *We led them in.*

lead someone **on 1.** to guide someone onward. ☐ *We led him on so he could see more of the gardens.* ☐ *Please lead Mary on. There is lots more to see here.* **2.** and **lead** someone **on**† to tease someone; to encourage someone's roman-

tic or sexual interest without sincerity. ☐ *You are just leading me on!* ☐ *It's not fair to continue leading him on.* ☐ *It's easy to lead on teenage boys.*

lead someone **on a merry chase** *Fig.* to lead someone in a purposeless pursuit. ☐ *What a waste of time. You really led me on a merry chase.* ☐ *Jane led Bill on a merry chase trying to find an antique lamp.*

lead someone or an animal **out of** something and **lead** someone or an animal **out**† to guide someone or an animal out of something or some place. ☐ *Someone finally led the hiker out of the valley or he would still be there now.* ☐ *She led out the striking workers.*

lead someone or an animal **to** something to guide someone or an animal to something or some place. ☐ *Would you lead Paul to the place where the trunks are kept?* ☐ *The cat is so old that we had to lead her to her food.*

lead someone or something **against** someone or something to manage someone or a group in an attack on someone or something. ☐ *The general led the entire company against the troops holding the city.* ☐ *They led two platoons against the enemy position.*

lead someone or something **(away†) (from** someone or something**)** to direct or guide someone or something away from someone or something. ☐ *The officer led the victim's wife away from the accident.* ☐ *The trainer led away the dog from the other animals.* ☐ *We led them away.*

lead someone or something **back† (to** someone or something**)** to guide someone or something back to someone or something. ☐ *Someone will have to lead me back to camp. I just know I'll get lost if I go by myself.* ☐ *The park ranger led back the hikers to their tent.* ☐ *I will lead them back.*

lead someone or something **forth**† to bring or usher someone or something forward. ☐ *The captain led the soldiers forth to the parade ground.* ☐ *They led forth the army into battle.*

lead someone or something **off**† to guide someone or something away. ☐ *The guide led the hikers off on the adventure of their lives.* ☐ *The dog owners led off their animals and they awaited the decision of the judges.*

lead someone **to believe** something *Fig.* to imply something to someone; to cause someone to believe something untrue. ☐ *But you led me to believe that this watch was guaranteed!* ☐ *Did you lead her to believe that she was hired as a clerk?*

lead someone **to** do something *Fig.* to cause someone to do something. ☐ *This agent led me to purchase a worthless piece of land.* ☐ *My illness led me to quit my job.*

lead someone **up** something to guide someone upward along some route. ☐ *Would you please lead Tom up the path so he can leave his things at the cabin on the hill?* ☐ *Mary led the visitors up the stairs to the loft, which she had recently redecorated.*

lead someone **up the garden path** Go to lead someone down the garden path.

lead the life of Riley and **live the life of Riley** *Fig.* to live in luxury. (No one knows who Riley alludes to.) ☐ *If I had a million dollars, I could live the life of Riley.* ☐ *The treasurer took our money to Mexico, where he lived the life of Riley until the police caught him.*

lead the way to lead (someone) along the proper pathway. ☐ *You lead the way, and we'll follow.* ☐ *I feel better when you're leading the way. I get lost easily.*

lead up to something **1.** *Lit.* to aim at or route movement to something. ☐ *A narrow path led up to the door of the cottage.* ☐ *This road leads up to the house at the top of the hill.* **2.** *Fig.* to prepare to say something; to lay the groundwork for making a point. (Typically with the present participle.) ☐ *I was just leading up to telling you what happened when you interrupted.* ☐ *I knew she was leading up to something, the way she was talking.*

lead with someone or something to start out with someone or something. ☐ *The coach led with Walter as pitcher and Sam on first base.* ☐ *We will lead with our best players.*

lead with something to tend to strike first with a particular fist—the right, the left, the best, etc. (Boxing.) ☐ *Watch that guy, Champ, he always leads with his right.* ☐ *Get in there and lead with your left.*

leading question a question that suggests the kind of answer that the person who asks it wants to hear. ☐ *The mayor was angered by the reporter's leading questions.* ☐ *"Don't you think that the police are failing to stop crime?" is an example of a leading question.*

a **lead-pipe cinch** *Fig.* something very easy to do; something entirely certain to happen. ☐ *I knew it was a lead-pie cinch that I would be selected to head the publication committee.*

leaf out [for a plant] to open its leaf buds. ☐ *Most of the bushes leaf out in mid-April.* ☐ *The trees leafed out early this year.*

leaf through something Go to thumb through something.

leak in(to something**)** [for a fluid] to work its way into something. ☐ *Some of the soapy water leaked into the soil.* ☐ *The rainwater is leaking in!*

leak out [for information] to become known unofficially. ☐ *I hope that news of the new building does not leak out before the contract is signed.* ☐ *When the story leaked out, my telephone would not stop ringing.*

leak out (of something**)** [for a fluid] to seep out of something or some place. ☐ *Some of the brake fluid leaked out of the car and made a spot on the driveway.* ☐ *Look under the car. Something's leaking out.*

leak something **(out)** and **let** something **(get) out** *Fig.* to disclose special information to the press so that the resulting publicity will accomplish something. (Usually said of government disclosures. Also used for accidental disclosures.) ☐ *Don't leak that information out.* ☐ *I don't want to be the one to leak it.*

leak something **to** someone *Fig.* to tell [otherwise secret] information to someone. ☐ *The government leaked a phony story to the press just to see how far it would travel.* ☐ *The government leaks things to the press occasionally, just to see the reaction.*

leak through something [for a fluid] to seep through something. ☐ *Rainwater leaked through the roof.* ☐ *I was afraid that the crushed orange would leak through the paper bag.*

lean across someone or something to incline oneself across someone or something. ☐ *She leaned across me to reach*

the telephone and spilled my wine. ☐ *Laura leaned across the table and knocked my coffee over.*

lean against someone or something to prop oneself against someone or something. ☐ *The child leaned against her sister to keep warm.* ☐ *I leaned against the back of the chair and went right to sleep.*

lean and mean *Fig.* fit and ready for hard, efficient work. ☐ *Dave got himself lean and mean and is ready to play in Saturday's game.* ☐ *The management is lean and mean and looks to turn a profit next year.*

lean back [for someone] to recline backwards, usually in a chair. ☐ *Lean back and make yourself comfortable.* ☐ *Let's lean back and be comfortable.*

lean back (against someone or something**)** to recline backwards, putting weight on someone or something. ☐ *Just lean back against me. I will prevent you from falling.* ☐ *Relax and lean back. Nothing bad is going to happen.*

lean back (on someone or something**)** to recline backwards, pressing on someone or something. ☐ *Don't lean back on me! I'm not a chair!* ☐ *Lean back on the couch and tell me what you are thinking.*

lean down to bend over. ☐ *Lean down and tie your shoe before you trip.* ☐ *He leaned down and picked something up from the floor.*

lean forward to bend forward. ☐ *Lean forward a minute so I can put a cushion behind your back.* ☐ *When Betsy leaned forward, she lost her balance and fell.*

lean in(to something**)** to incline or press into something. ☐ *You have to lean into the wind when you walk or you will be blown over.* ☐ *As you walk into the wind, lean in a little bit.* ☐ *The north wall of the barn leans in a little. Is it going to fall?*

lean on someone *Fig.* to try to make someone do something; to coerce someone to do something. (From **lean on** someone or something.) ☐ *If she refuses to do it, lean on her a bit.* ☐ *Don't lean on me! I don't have to do it if I don't want to.*

lean on someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to incline or press on someone or something. ☐ *Don't lean on me. I'm not strong enough to support both of us.* ☐ *Lean on the wall and rest a little while.* **2.** *Fig.* to depend on someone or something. ☐ *You lean on your parents too much. You must be more independent.* ☐ *You can't lean on the government forever.*

lean out of something to hang or bend out of something or some place. ☐ *She leaned out of the window so she could watch what was going on.* ☐ *Don't lean out of the car window. You will fall.*

lean over 1. to bend over. ☐ *Lean over and pick the pencil up yourself! I'm not your servant!* ☐ *As Kelly leaned over to tie her shoes, her chair slipped out from under her.* **2.** to tilt over. ☐ *The fence leaned over and almost fell.* ☐ *As the wind blew, the tree leaned over farther and farther.*

lean over backwards (to do something**)** Go to **fall over backwards (to** do something**)**.

lean something **against** someone or something to prop something against someone or something. ☐ *She leaned her spade against the house and wiped the sweat from her brow.* ☐ *Bill leaned the mirror against his leg while he screwed the hook into the wall.*

lean something **forward** to tilt or bend something forward. ☐ *Lean the board forward a little bit, please.* ☐ *Someone leaned this panel forward a little too much.*

***lean times (ahead)** *Fig.* a future period of lowered income or revenue; a future period when there will be shortages of goods and suffering. (*Typically: **be ~; cause ~; have ~; mean ~**.) ☐ *The economy is going sour which means lean times ahead.*

lean toward doing something to tend toward doing something; to favor doing something. ☐ *The union is leaning toward accepting the proposal.* ☐ *My friends leaned toward swimming instead of shopping.*

lean toward someone or something **1.** to incline toward someone or something. ☐ *Tom is leaning toward Randy. I think he is going to fall on him.* ☐ *The tree is leaning toward the edge of the cliff. It will fall eventually.* **2.** to tend to favor [choosing] someone or something. ☐ *I am leaning toward Sarah as the new committee head.* ☐ *I'm leaning toward a new committee.*

leap at someone or something **1.** to jump toward someone or something. ☐ *The grasshopper leapt at me and scared me to death.* ☐ *The cat leapt at the mouse and caught it.* **2.** to accept or choose someone or something eagerly. ☐ *We leapt at Carl when his department offered him to us.* ☐ *When we had the chance to hire Carl, we leapt at it.*

leap at the chance (to do something**)** Go to next.

leap at the opportunity (to do something**)** and **leap at the chance (to** do something**); jump at the chance (to** do something**); jump at the opportunity (to** do something**)** *Fig.* to accept an opportunity eagerly. ☐ *Frank leapt at the opportunity to become a commercial artist.* ☐ *It was a great idea and we leapt at the opportunity.* ☐ *I would leap at the chance to go to Moscow.* ☐ *His company proposed to send him to England, and John jumped at the chance.*

leap down (from something**)** to hop down from something or some place. ☐ *The performer leapt down from the stage and ran up the aisle.* ☐ *She leapt down and ran away.*

leap for joy and **jump for joy** *Fig.* to jump up because one is happy; to be very happy. ☐ *Tommy leapt for joy because he had won the race.* ☐ *We all leapt for joy when we heard the news.*

leap forward to jump or hop forward. ☐ *The little creature leapt forward and looked carefully at us.* ☐ *As the frog leapt forward, the kitten jumped straight up and fled.*

*a **leap of faith** *Fig.* acceptance of an idea or conclusion largely on faith. (*Typically: **be ~; make ~; require ~**.) ☐ *We had to make quite a leap of faith to accept his promise after the last time he let us down.*

leap out (of something**)** to jump outward from something. ☐ *A mouse leapt out of the cereal box and frightened everyone.* ☐ *I opened the box and a mouse leapt out.*

leap over something to jump over something. ☐ *The dog leapt over the hedge and chased the rabbit around the corner of the house.* ☐ *Please don't leap over my roses. You'll damage them.*

leap to conclusions Go to **jump to conclusions**.

leap up to jump upwards. ☐ *The dog leapt up and licked my cheek.* ☐ *I leapt up so I could see over the wall for just a second.*

learn a thing or two (about someone or something**)** Go to a **thing or two (about** someone or something**)**.

learn about someone or something to find out about someone or something. ☐ *What have you learned about Mr. Franklin and his business dealings?* ☐ *I learned about what causes rain.*

learn by something to learn [something] from some kind of actual experience. ☐ *The best way to learn is to learn by doing.* ☐ *The best way to learn to sail is to learn by sailing.*

learn from someone or something to learn [something] from the experience of someone or something. ☐ *Pay attention to what Sarah does. I think you can learn from her.* ☐ *This was quite an experience, and we all can learn from it.*

learn of someone or something to find out about someone or something. ☐ *I'm not in the telephone book. How did you learn of me?* ☐ *How did you learn of our company?*

learn something **by heart** *Fig.* to learn something so well that it can be written or recited without thinking; to memorize something. ☐ *The director told me to learn my speech by heart.* ☐ *I had to go over it many times before I learned it by heart.*

learn something **by rote** *Fig.* to learn something by memorizing without giving any thought to what is being learned. ☐ *I learned history by rote; then I couldn't pass the test that required me to think.* ☐ *If you learn things by rote, you'll never understand them.*

learn something **from** someone or something to find out something from someone or something. ☐ *I don't know when the children are due to arrive. See what you can learn from Walter.* ☐ *I am sure we can learn something from this experience.*

learn something **from the bottom up** *Fig.* to learn something thoroughly, from the very basics; to learn all aspects of something, even the least important ones. ☐ *I learned my business from the bottom up.* ☐ *I started out sweeping the floors and learned everything from the bottom up.*

learn (something**) the hard way** and **find (**something**) out the hard way** to learn something by experience, especially by an unpleasant experience. (As opposed to learning in school, from reading, etc.) ☐ *She learned how to make investments the hard way.* ☐ *I wish I didn't have to learn things the hard way.* ☐ *I found out the hard way that it's difficult to work and go to school at the same time.*

learn the ropes Go to the **ropes**.

learn to live with something *Fig.* to learn to adapt to something unpleasant or painful. ☐ *Finally the doctor told Marion that she was going to have to learn to live with her arthritis.* ☐ *The floor plan of the house we bought is not as spacious as we had thought, but we will learn to live with it.*

learn the tricks of the trade Go to the **tricks of the trade**.

a **learning experience** Go to a **growth experience**.

lease something **back**† to sell something, then rent it from the buyer. ☐ *We sold the building to a real estate firm and then leased it back. There was some tax saving involved.* ☐ *We leased back the building.*

lease something **from** someone to rent something from someone. ☐ *We decided to lease the building from the owner rather than buying it.* ☐ *The company always leases its cars from the dealership.*

lease something **(out**†**) to** someone to rent something to someone. ☐ *The company leases cars out to its customers.* ☐ *Can you lease this building to me for two years?* ☐ *Lease out only the first two floors.*

the **least little thing** the smallest possible thing. ☐ *He gets upset over the least little thing.* ☐ *When she was a girl, she would throw a tantrum over the least little thing.*

least of all the thing of smallest importance. (Compare this with **most of all**.) ☐ *There were many things wrong with the new house. Least of all, the water faucets leaked.* ☐ *What a bad day. Many things went wrong, but least of all, I tore my shirt.*

leave a bad taste in someone's **mouth** [for something] to leave a bad feeling or memory with someone. ☐ *The whole business about the missing money left a bad taste in his mouth.* ☐ *It was a very nice hotel, but something about it left a bad taste in my mouth.*

leave a lot to be desired *Cliché* to be lacking something important; to be inadequate. (A polite way of saying that something is bad.) ☐ *This report leaves a lot to be desired.* ☐ *I'm sorry to have to fire you, Mary, but your work leaves a lot to be desired.*

leave a paper trail Go to a **paper trail**.

leave a sinking ship Go to **desert a sinking ship**.

leave ahead of time Go to **ahead of time**.

leave an impression (on someone**)** and **leave** someone **with an impression** *Fig.* to provide a lasting memory for someone after one has left. (Akin to **make an impression on** someone.) ☐ *Her performance was less than stunning. She didn't leave a very good impression on us.*

leave for some place to depart for some place. ☐ *We will leave for Denver at dawn.* ☐ *When do we leave for Grandmother's house?*

leave go of someone or something *Inf.* to let go of someone or something. (Usually considered nonstandard.) ☐ *Leave go of me!* ☐ *Leave go of my hand!*

leave in a body Go to **in a body**.

leave it at that to leave a situation as it is. ☐ *This is the best we can do. We'll have to leave it at that.* ☐ *I can do no more. I will have to leave it at that.*

leave it to someone to depend on someone to behave in a certain way. ☐ *Leave it to Harry to mess things up.* ☐ *She did it wrong again. Leave it to Janet!* ☐ *Jane: Will you do this as soon as possible? Mary: Leave it to me.*

Leave me alone! Stop harassing me!; Don't bother me! ☐ *John: You did it. You're the one who always does it. Bill: Leave me alone! I never did it.* ☐ *Fred: Let's give Bill a dunk in the pool. Bill: Leave me alone!*

leave no stone unturned *Fig.* to search in all possible places. (As if one might search under every rock.) ☐ *Don't worry. We'll find your stolen car. We'll leave no stone*

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unturned. ☐ *In searching for a nice place to live, we left no stone unturned.*

a **leave of absence** a period of time away from one's job, with the employer's permission. ☐ *Mr. Takaguchi is on leave of absence because he is going back to school.* ☐ *His leave of absence is expected to end next month.*

leave off something to quit something. ☐ *I have to leave off working for a while so I can eat.* ☐ *I left off reading and went downstairs for supper.*

leave one's **mark on** someone *Fig.* [for someone like a teacher] to affect the behavior and performance of another person. ☐ *The wise professor left her mark on her students.* ☐ *My father left his mark on me, and I will always remember all his good advice.*

leave one **to** one's **fate** to abandon someone to whatever may happen—possibly death or some other unpleasant event. ☐ *We couldn't rescue the miners and were forced to leave them to their fate.* ☐ *Please don't try to help. Just go away and leave me to my fate.*

leave one **to** one's **own devices** and **leave** one **to** one's **own resources** *Fig.* to make one rely on oneself. ☐ *I am sure that she will manage if we leave her to her own devices.* ☐ *I will leave her to her own resources and everything will turn out fine.*

leave one **to** one's **own resources** Go to previous.

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leave oneself **wide open for** something and **leave** oneself **wide open to** something *Fig.* to invite criticism or joking about oneself; to fail to protect oneself from criticism or ridicule. ☐ *Yes, that was a harsh remark, Jane, but you left yourself wide open to it.* ☐ *I can't complain about your joke. I left myself wide open for it.*

leave some loose ends Go to some loose ends.

leave someone **at loose ends** Go to at loose ends.

leave someone **cold** to leave someone unaffected or bored. ☐ *He said it was dull, and it left him cold.* ☐ *The music's good, but the story left the producer cold.*

leave someone **flat 1.** *Fig.* to fail to entertain or stimulate someone. ☐ *Your joke left me flat.* ☐ *We listened carefully to his lecture, but it left us flat.* **2.** *Fig.* to leave someone without any money—flat broke. ☐ *Paying all my bills left me flat.* ☐ *The robber took all my money and left me flat.* **3.** *Fig.* to leave someone completely and suddently alone. ☐ *I was at the dance with Harry, but when he met Alice, he left me flat.* ☐ *They just walked off and left us flat.*

leave someone **for dead** to abandon someone as being dead. (The abandoned person may actually be alive.) ☐ *He looked so bad that they almost left him for dead.* ☐ *As the soldiers turned—leaving the enemy captain for dead—the captain fired at them.*

leave someone **high and dry 1.** *Lit.* [for water] to recede and leave someone untouched. ☐ *The waters receded and left us high and dry.* **2.** *Fig.* to leave someone unsupported and unable to maneuver; to leave someone helpless. ☐ *All my workers quit and left me high and dry.* ☐ *All the children ran away and left Billy high and dry to take the blame for the broken window.* **3.** *Fig.* to leave someone flat broke. ☐ *Mrs. Franklin took all the money out of the bank and left Mr. Franklin high and dry.* ☐ *Paying the bills always leaves me high and dry.*

leave someone **holding the bag** and **leave** someone **holding the baby** *Fig.* to allow someone to take all the blame; to leave someone appearing to be guilty. ☐ *They all ran off and left me holding the bag. It wasn't even my fault.* ☐ *It was all the mayor's fault, but he wasn't left holding the bag.*

leave someone **in peace** to stop bothering someone; to go away and leave someone alone. (Does not necessarily mean to go away from a person.) ☐ *Please go—leave me in peace.* ☐ *Can't you see that you're upsetting her? Leave her in peace.*

leave someone **in the lurch** *Fig.* to leave someone waiting for or anticipating your actions. ☐ *Where were you, John? You really left me in the lurch.* ☐ *I didn't mean to leave you in the lurch. I thought we had canceled our meeting.*

leave someone or some creature **out in the cold** Go to out in the cold.

leave someone or something **alone** Go to let someone or something alone.

leave someone or something **(at)** some place **1.** to abandon someone or something at some place. ☐ *Don't leave me here by myself!* ☐ *Betty left her newspaper at the table, hoping someone else would enjoy it.* **2.** to allow someone or something to remain at some place. ☐ *You leave me here and go on ahead.* ☐ *Please leave your packages at the door.* **3.** to allow someone or something to stay behind through forgetfulness. ☐ *I left my glasses behind on my desk.* ☐ *I was left at the movie theater by mistake.*

leave someone or something **be** Go to let someone or something alone.

leave someone or something **behind** to fail or forget to bring someone or something along. ☐ *John was sick, so we had to leave him behind.* ☐ *Oh, I left my money behind.*

leave someone or something **hanging (in midair)** and **keep** someone or something **hanging (in midair) 1.** *Lit.* to keep someone or something suspended in midair when support for the person or thing is removed. ☐ *The ladder collapsed and left me hanging in midair. Fortunately, I grabbed onto the windowsill.* **2.** *Fig.* to suspend dealing with someone or something; to leave someone or something waiting to be finished or continued. ☐ *She left her sentence hanging in midair.* ☐ *Tell me the rest of the story. Don't leave me hanging in midair.*

leave someone or something **in** one's **hands** *Fig.* to give one control of or responsibility for someone or something. ☐ *You left the whole project in my hands!* ☐ *I have to leave the care of baby in your hands while I go to the doctor.*

leave someone or something **in** someone's **care** Go to in the care of someone.

leave someone or something **in (**something**)** to permit someone or something to remain in something. ☐ *We left the children in the house while we went out to greet the guests.* ☐ *Did you leave the dog in the car?* ☐ *Poor puppy! I didn't mean to leave you in.*

leave someone or something **in the care of** someone Go to in the care of someone.

leave someone or something **in the trust of** someone Go to in the trust of someone.

leave someone or something **out of** something and **leave** someone or something **out**† to neglect to include someone or something in something. ☐ *Please leave me out of it.* ☐ *Can I leave John out this time?* ☐ *Leave out the last two eggs.*

leave someone or something **to** someone to give or abandon someone or something to someone. ☐ *I leave Mr. Franklin to you. Good luck in dealing with him.* ☐ *I leave the whole problem to you. Good luck.*

leave someone or something **under** someone's **care** Go to **in the care of** someone.

leave someone or something **with** someone or something to allow someone or something to remain with someone or something. ☐ *Can I leave Jimmy with you while I shop?* ☐ *Do you mind if I leave my papers with the committee, just in case they have time to look at them?*

leave someone **sitting pretty** Go to **sitting pretty.**

leave someone, something, or some creature **alone** and **let** someone, something, or some creature **alone; leave** someone, something, or some creature **be; let** someone, something, or some creature **be** to stop bothering someone or something. ☐ *Don't torment the cat. Leave it alone.* ☐ *I don't want your help. Let me alone.* ☐ *Don't argue about it. Let it be!*

leave someone **to it** to withdraw and allow someone to finish something alone. ☐ *I hate to leave before the job is finished, but I'll have to leave you to it.* ☐ *I will leave them to it. I have to go home now.*

leave someone **up in the air** *Fig.* to leave someone waiting for a decision. ☐ *Please don't leave me up in the air. I want to know what's going to happen to me.* ☐ *Nothing was decided, and they left me up in the air.*

leave someone **with an impression** Go to **leave an impression (on** someone**).**

leave something **aside**† **1.** to leave something in reserve. ☐ *Leave some of the sugar aside for use in the icing.* ☐ *Leave aside some cookies too.* **2.** to ignore something, especially a fact. ☐ *Let's leave the question of who will pay for it aside for a while.* ☐ *We will leave aside the current situation and talk about the future.*

leave something **down** to leave something in a lowered or low position. ☐ *Leave the window down, please. It's hot in this car.* ☐ *Leave the window down. This house is cold enough as it is.*

leave something **for another occasion** and **keep** something **for another occasion** to hold something back for later. (*Occasion* can be replaced with *time, day, person,* etc.) ☐ *Please leave some cake for another day.* ☐ *Don't eat all the cheese. Leave some for another occasion.* ☐ *I have to leave some of my earnings for next month.*

leave something **for** someone or an animal to allow something to remain for the use of someone or an animal. ☐ *I will leave this bread here for you, so you won't starve.* ☐ *Don't clean it up. Leave it for the dog.*

leave something **in limbo** Go to **in limbo.**

leave something **in ruins** Go to **in ruins.**

leave something **in the back of** someone's **mind** Go to **in the back of** someone's **mind.**

leave something **(lying) around** and **leave** something **(lying) about** to permit something to lie around unguarded; to leave something somewhere carelessly. ☐ *Don't leave your clothes lying around. Hang them up.* ☐ *Don't leave stuff lying about!*

leave something **on**† **1.** to continue to wear some article of clothing. ☐ *I think I will leave my coat on. It's chilly in here.* ☐ *I'll leave on my coat.* **2.** to allow something [that can be turned off] to remain on. ☐ *Who left the radio on?* ☐ *Please leave on the light for me.*

leave something **on** someone or something to allow something to remain on someone or something. ☐ *Leave the coats on the children. We are taking them out to a movie almost immediately.* ☐ *Who left this book on the table?*

leave something **on** someone's **shoulders** Go to **on** someone's **shoulders.**

leave something **open** to leave a date or time unscheduled. ☐ *I left something open on Friday, just in case we want to leave work early.* ☐ *Please leave an appointment open for Mrs. Wallace next week. She will be calling in to our office for an appointment.*

leave something **to chance** to allow something to be settled by chance. ☐ *Plan your day. Don't leave anything to chance.* ☐ *It is not a good idea to leave any of this to chance.*

leave something **to** someone **1.** *Lit.* to will something to someone. ☐ *My grandfather left his house to my mother.* ☐ *I will leave this watch to one of my grandchildren.* **2.** to assign work to or reserve a task for someone. ☐ *I will leave this last little bit of the job to you.* ☐ *Can I leave this last part to Carl to finish?* **3.** Go to **leave it to someone.**

L

leave something **up**† to leave something in a raised or high position. ☐ *It's still warm in here. Please leave the window up.* ☐ *Please leave up the window. It's so hot!*

leave something **up in the air** *Fig.* to leave a matter undecided. (Alludes to something drifting in the air, moving neither up nor down.) ☐ *Let's get this settled now. I don't want to leave anything up in the air over the weekend.* ☐ *The whole matter was left up in the air for another week.*

leave something **up to** someone or something Go to **up to** someone or something.

leave the door open (for something**)** *Fig.* to provide for the possibility that something might happen. ☐ *I think that the matter is completely settled, although we have left the door open for one or two last-minute changes.*

leave the room 1. to go out of the room. ☐ *I had to leave the room to get drinks for everyone.* **2.** *Euph.* to leave to go to the toilet. ☐ *I have to leave the room. I'll be back in a minute.*

leave them rolling in the aisles Go to **rolling in the aisles.**

leave well enough alone Go to **let well enough alone.**

leave with someone to depart in the company of someone. ☐ *I left with Frank early in the evening and did not see what happened to Tom and Edna.* ☐ *Mary is gone. She left with Gerald.*

leave word for someone **to** do something *Fig.* to leave a message or a request for someone. (See also **leave word (with** someone**).**) ☐ *I left word for you to come to my office.* ☐ *We left word for her to hurry up and come home.*

leave word (with someone**)** *Fig.* to leave a message with someone (who will pass the message on to someone else).

☐ *If you decide to go to the convention, please leave word with my secretary.* ☐ *Leave word before you go.* ☐ *I left word with your brother. Didn't he give you the message?*

lecture at someone **(about** something**)** to talk to someone about something in the manner of a lecture. ☐ *There is no need to lecture at me about the problem. I know how serious the matter is.* ☐ *Don't lecture at me all the time!*

lecture someone **for** something to give someone a talking-to about something. ☐ *Please don't lecture me for being late. It won't help now, will it?* ☐ *There is no point in lecturing us for something we didn't do.*

lecture ((to) someone**) about** someone or something and **lecture ((to)** someone**) on** someone or something **1.** to give an instructional speech to someone about someone or something. ☐ *He always lectured his children about their duty to vote.* ☐ *She lectured to all her classes on employment opportunities.* **2.** to scold someone about someone or something. ☐ *Please don't lecture me about my behavior.* ☐ *I like Ted! Don't lecture about him.*

leer at someone to gaze at someone flirtatiously or with lust. ☐ *Why are you leering at that woman in the bikini?* ☐ *Stop leering at me!*

left and right Go to right and left.

The **left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing.** *Prov.* One part of an organization does not know what another part is doing. (Biblical.) ☐ *It was evident that the left hand did not know what the right hand was doing when we planned our potluck dinner party, since everyone brought dessert and no one brought a main dish.*

left-handed compliment Go to backhanded compliment.

*a **leg up** *Fig.* a kind of help where someone provides a knee or crossed hand as a support for someone to place a foot on to get higher, as in mounting a horse or climbing over something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I gave her a leg up, and soon she was on her horse.* ☐ *Can I give you a leg up?* ☐ *Could I please have a leg up?*

*a **leg up on** someone *Fig.* an advantage that someone else does not have. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I have a leg up on Walter when it comes to getting around town, since I have a car.* ☐ *I want to practice indoors all winter and get a leg up on Ken, since he thinks he can beat me at tennis.*

a **legend in** one's **own (life)time** *Fig.* someone who is very famous and widely known for doing something special. ☐ *The young golfer became a legend in his own lifetime.*

legislate against something to prohibit something; to pass a law against something. ☐ *You can't just legislate against something. You have to explain to people why they shouldn't do it.* ☐ *The Congress has just legislated against insolvent banks.*

legislate for something to pass a law that tries to make something happen. ☐ *The candidate pledged to legislate for tax relief.* ☐ *We support your efforts to legislate for lower taxes.*

legwork the physical work accompanying a task. ☐ *I don't mind making the phone calls if you do the legwork.* ☐ *I have a gopher to do the legwork for me.*

lend a hand (to someone**)** Go to lend (someone) a hand.

lend an ear to someone or something and **lend your ear to** someone or something *Fig.* to listen to someone or what someone has to say. ☐ *Lend an ear to me and I will tell you a story.* ☐ *Lend your ear to what I am saying.*

lend color to something *Fig.* to provide an interesting accompaniment for something. ☐ *Your clever comments lent a great deal of color to the slide show of your vacation.* ☐ *The excellent master of ceremonies will lend color to an otherwise dry panel discussion.*

lend oneself or itself **to** something *Fig.* [for someone or something] to be adaptable to something; [for someone or something] to be useful for something. ☐ *This room doesn't lend itself to bright colors.* ☐ *John doesn't lend himself to casual conversation.* ☐ *I don't think that this gown lends itself to outdoor occasions.*

lend (someone**) a hand** and **lend a hand (to** someone**)** *Fig.* to give someone some help, not necessarily with the hands. ☐ *Could you lend me a hand with this piano? I need to move it across the room.* ☐ *Could you lend a hand with this math assignment?* ☐ *I'd be happy to lend a hand.*

lend someone **a hand with** something *Fig.* to help someone with something. (This need not involve "hands.") ☐ *Could you please lend us a hand with this?* ☐ *Can I lend you a hand with that?*

lend something **out† (to** someone**)** to allow someone to borrow something. ☐ *I lent my tuxedo out to a friend who was going to a dance, and now I haven't anything to wear to the opera.* ☐ *I lent out my copy of the book.* ☐ *Sorry, I lent it out.*

lend something **to** someone to make a loan of something to someone. ☐ *Never lend money to a friend.* ☐ *Would you be able to lend your coat to Fred?*

lend your ear to someone or something Go to lend an ear to someone or something.

Lend your money and lose your friend. *Prov.* You should not lend money to your friends; if you do, either you will have to bother your friend to repay the loan, which will make your friend resent you, or your friend will not repay the loan, which will make you resent your friend. ☐ *Bill: Joe needs a hundred dollars to pay his landlord. I'm thinking about lending it to him. Alan: Lend your money and lose your friend.*

lengthen out to stretch or grow longer. ☐ *The days began to lengthen out and we knew summer was upon us.* ☐ *As we approached the end of the trail, the distance seemed to lengthen out.*

A **leopard cannot change his spots.** *Prov.* One cannot change the basic way one is. ☐ *Bill may say he'll stop being so jealous after Cindy marries him, but I doubt he will. A leopard can't change his spots.*

Less is more. *Cliché* fewer or small is better. ☐ *Simplicity now rules our lives. Less is more. Smaller houses and cars. The world will be a better place!*

The **less said (about** something**), the better.** *Prov.* A way of indicating that you think something should not be talked about any further. ☐ *Jane: How are things going with your divorce proceedings? Ellen: The less said, the better.* ☐ *The less said about my financial situation, the better.*

less than pleased displeased. ☐ *We were less than pleased to learn of your comments.* ☐ *Bill was less than pleased at the outcome of the election.*

the **lesser (of the two)** the smaller one (of two); the one having the lesser amount. ☐ *The last two pieces of pie were not quite the same size, and I chose the lesser of the two.* ☐ *Faced with a basket containing too much and one with too little, Tom chose the lesser.*

the **lesser of two evils** the less bad thing of a pair of bad things. ☐ *I didn't like either politician, so I voted for the lesser of two evils.* ☐ *Given the options of going out with someone I don't like and staying home and watching a boring television program, I chose the lesser of the two evils and watched television.*

let alone someone or something not to mention or think of someone or something; not even to take someone or something into account. (Fixed order.) ☐ *Do I have a dollar? I don't even have a dime, let alone a dollar.* ☐ *I didn't invite John, let alone the rest of his family.*

Let bygones be bygones. *Cliché* Forgive someone for something he or she did in the past. ☐ *Jill: Why don't you want to invite Ellen to your party? Jane: She was rude to me at the office picnic. Jill: But that was six months ago. Let bygones be bygones.* ☐ *Nancy held a grudge against her teacher for a long time, but she finally decided to let bygones be bygones.*

let down to relax one's efforts or vigilance. ☐ *Now is no time to let down. Keep on your guard.* ☐ *After the contest was over, Jane let down a bit so she could relax.*

Let every man skin his own skunk. *Prov.* Everyone should do his own job and not interfere with others.; Each person should do his own dirty work. ☐ *We weren't supposed to help each other with the homework. "Let every man skin his own skunk," the teacher said.*

Let every tub stand on its own bottom. Go to Every tub must stand on its own bottom.

let fly with something *Fig.* to throw or thrust something, such as a rock, ball, punch, etc. ☐ *The pitcher wound up and let fly with a strike—right over the plate.* ☐ *Max let fly with a blow to Lefty's chin.*

Let George do it. *Fig.* Let someone else do it: it doesn't matter who. ☐ *Billie always says, "Let George do it." She is unwilling to help with things that don't interest her.*

let go of someone or something to release someone or something. ☐ *Please let go of me!* ☐ *Don't let go of the steering wheel.*

let go (with something**)** and **cut loose (with** something**); let loose (with** something**) 1.** to shout something out or expel something; to shout or express something wildly. ☐ *The whole team let go with a loud shout.* ☐ *The audience cut loose with a loud cheer.* **2.** to deliver a strong verbal reprimand. ☐ *Molly let loose with a tremendous scolding at Dave.* ☐ *Dave cut loose with a vengeful retort.*

let grass grow under one's **feet** *Fig.* to do nothing; to stand still. ☐ *Mary doesn't let the grass grow under her feet. She's always busy.* ☐ *Bob is too lazy. He's letting the grass grow under his feet.*

Let her rip! and **Let it roll!** *Inf.* Let it go!; Let it start! ☐ *Time to start. Let her rip!* ☐ *There's the signal! Let it roll!*

let it all hang out *Inf.* to be yourself, assuming that you generally are not; to become totally relaxed and unpretentious. ☐ *Come on. Relax! Let it all hang out.* ☐ *I tried to let it all hang out, but I still felt out of place.*

Let it be. Leave the situation alone as it is. ☐ *Alice: I can't get over the way he just left me there on the street and drove off. What an arrogant pig! Mary: Oh, Alice, let it be. You'll figure out some way to get even.* ☐ *John: You can't! Bill: Can too! John: Can't! Bill: Can too! Jane: Stop arguing! Let it be! That's enough!*

Let it go. Forget it.; Stop worrying about it. ☐ *Don't get so angry about it. Let it go.* ☐ *Let it go. Stop fretting.*

Let it roll! Go to Let her rip!

let loose of someone or something **1.** to loosen the grasp on someone or something. ☐ *Please let loose of me!* ☐ *Will you let loose of the doorknob?* **2.** to become independent from someone or something. ☐ *She is nearly forty years old and has not yet let loose of her mother.* ☐ *Dave can't let loose of his childhood.*

let loose (with something**)** Go to let go (with something).

Let me get back to you (on that). Go to I'll get back to you (on that).

Let me have it! and **Let's have it!** *Inf.* Tell me the news. ☐ *Bill: I'm afraid there's some bad news. Bob: Okay. Let me have it! Bill: The plans we made did away with your job. Bob: What?* ☐ *John: I didn't want to be the one to tell you this. Bob: What is it? Let's have it!*

let me (just) say and **just let me say** a phrase introducing something that the speaker thinks is important. ☐ *Rachel: Let me say how pleased we all are with your efforts. Henry: Why, thank you very much.* ☐ *Bob: Just let me say that we're extremely pleased with your activity. Bill: Thanks loads. I did what I could.*

let off (some) steam and **blow off (some) steam 1.** *Lit.* [for something] to release steam. ☐ *The locomotive let off some steam after it came to a halt.* ☐ *With a great hiss, it let off steam and frightened the children.* **2.** *Fig.* to work or play off excess energy. ☐ *Those boys need to get out and let off some steam.* ☐ *Go out and let off steam!* **3.** *Fig.* to release one's pent-up emotions, such as anger, usually verbally. ☐ *I'm sorry I yelled at you. I guess I needed to let off some steam.* ☐ *She's not that mad. She's just letting off steam.*

let on (about someone or something**) (to** someone**)** to confirm or reveal something about someone or something. ☐ *I won't let on about Kate.* ☐ *You promised you wouldn't let on about Sally and her new job!* ☐ *He was having money troubles, but he never let on about it to us.*

let on something to pretend something. ☐ *She let on that she was a college graduate.* ☐ *He looked quite tired, but that wasn't how he let on.*

let on (to someone**) (about** someone or something**)** to reveal knowledge about someone or something to someone. (See also let on (about someone or something).) ☐ *Please don't let on to anyone about what happened last night.* ☐ *I won't let on to anyone.*

let one's **emotions show** to be emotional, especially where it is not appropriate. ☐ *I'm sorry for the outburst. I didn't mean to let my emotions show.* ☐ *Please stop crying. You mustn't let your emotions show.*

L

let one's **guard down**† *Fig.* to stop guarding oneself against trouble; to relax one's vigilance. ☐ *He never lets his guard down because he trusts no one.*

let one's **hair down 1.** *Lit.* to undo one's hair and let it fall freely. ☐ *When she took off her glasses and let her hair down, she was incredibly beautiful.* **2.** *Fig.* to tell [someone] everything; to tell one's innermost feelings and secrets. ☐ *Let your hair down and tell me all about it.* ☐ *Come on. Let your hair down and tell me what you really think.*

let oneself **go 1.** *Fig.* to become less constrained; to get excited and have a good time. ☐ *I love to dance and just let myself go.* ☐ *Let yourself go, John. Learn to enjoy life.* **2.** *Fig.* to let one's appearance and health suffer. ☐ *When I was depressed, I let myself go and was really a mess.* ☐ *He let himself go and gained 30 pounds.*

let oneself **in for** something to make oneself vulnerable to some difficulty. ☐ *I don't want to let myself in for a lot of extra work.* ☐ *You really let yourself in for some problems!*

let out [for an event that includes many people] to end. (The people are then permitted to come out.) ☐ *What time does the movie let out? I have to meet someone in the lobby.* ☐ *The meeting let out at about seven o'clock.* ☐ *School lets out in June.*

let out some kind of sound [for a living creature] to make some kind of a noise or sound. ☐ *Be quiet. Don't let out a sound!* ☐ *Suddenly, Jane let out a shriek.*

L

let out (with) something **1.** to state or utter something loudly. ☐ *The man let out with a screaming accusation about the person whom he thought had wounded him.* ☐ *She let out a torrent of curses.* **2.** to give forth a scream or yell. ☐ *She let out with a bloodcurdling scream when she saw the snake in her chair.* ☐ *They let out with shouts of delight when they saw the cake.*

Let's bump this place! *Sl.* Let's get out of this place!; Let's leave! ☐ *Time to go. Let's bump this place!* ☐ *Let's bump this place! It's dead here.*

Let's call it a day. *Fig.* Let us end what we are doing for the day. ☐ *Mary: Well, that's the end of the reports. Nothing else to do. Sue: Let's call it a day.* ☐ *Bob: Let's call it a day. I'm tired. Tom: Me too. Let's get out of here.*

Let's do lunch (sometime). Go to We('ll) have to do lunch sometime.

Let's do this again (sometime). and **We must do this again (sometime).** an expression indicating that one member of a group or pair has enjoyed doing something and would like to do it again. ☐ *Bill: What a nice evening. Mary: Yes, let's do this again sometime. Bill: Bye. Mary: Bye, Bill.* ☐ *Sue (saying good night): So nice to see both of you. Mary: Oh, yes. We must do this again sometime.*

Let's dump. *Sl.* Let's go. ☐ *It's late. Let's dump.* ☐ *Let's dump. I've still got a lot to do at home tonight.*

Let's get down to business. *Fig.* a phrase marking a transition to a business discussion or serious talk. ☐ *John: Okay, enough small talk. Let's get down to business. Mary: Good idea.* ☐ *"All right, ladies and gentlemen, let's get down to business," said the president of the board.*

Let's get out of here. Let us leave (and go somewhere else). ☐ *Alice: It's really hot in this room. Let's get out of here. John: I'm with you. Let's go.* ☐ *Bill: This crowd is getting sort of angry. Bob: I noticed that too. Let's get out of here.*

Let's get together (sometime**).** a vague invitation to meet again, usually said upon departing. (The *sometime* can be a particular time or the word *sometime*.) ☐ *Bill: Goodbye, Bob. Bob: See you, Bill. Let's get together sometime.* ☐ *Jane: We need to discuss this matter. John: Yes, let's get together next week.*

Let's go somewhere where it's (more) quiet. Let us continue our conversation where there is less noise or where we will not be disturbed. ☐ *Tom: Hi, Mary. It's sure crowded here. Mary: Yes, let's go somewhere where it's quiet.* ☐ *Bill: We need to talk. Sally: Yes, we do. Let's go somewhere where it's more quiet.*

Let's have it! Go to Let me have it!

Let's not go through all that again. We are not going to discuss that matter again. (Compare this with Do we have to go through all that again?) ☐ *Bill: Now, I still want to explain again about last night. Sally: Let's not go through all that again!* ☐ *Sally: I can't get over the way you spoke to me at our own dinner table. Fred: I was only kidding! I said I was sorry. Let's not go through all that again!*

Let's rock and roll! *Inf.* Let's get started!; Let's get moving! ☐ *A: Everybody ready? B: Yeah. A: Good. Let's rock and roll!*

let's say introduces an estimate or a speculation. ☐ *I need about—let's say—twenty pounds.* ☐ *Let's say I go over and talk to him. What do you think?*

Let's shake on it. Let us mark this agreement by shaking hands on it. ☐ *Bob: Do you agree? Mary: I agree. Let's shake on it. Bob: Okay.* ☐ *Bill: Good idea. Sounds fine. Bob (extending his hand): Okay, let's shake on it. Bill (shaking hands with Bob): Great!*

Let's talk (about it). Let us talk about the problem and try to settle things. ☐ *Tom: Bill! Bill! I'm sorry about our argument. Let's talk. Bill: Get lost!* ☐ *Sally: I've got a real problem. Bob: Let's talk about it.*

Let sleeping dogs lie. *Prov.* Do not instigate trouble.; Leave something alone if it might cause trouble. ☐ *Jill: Should I ask the boss if he's upset at my coming in late in the mornings? Jane: If he hasn't said anything about it, just let sleeping dogs lie.* ☐ *I thought I would ask Jill if she wanted me to pay her back right away, but then I decided to let sleeping dogs lie.*

let someone **down** to disappoint someone; to fail someone. ☐ *I'm sorry I let you down. Something came up, and I couldn't meet you.* ☐ *I don't want to let you down, but I can't support you in the election.*

let someone **(get) by** and **let** someone **pass by** to permit someone to pass. ☐ *Please let me get by. I am in a hurry.* ☐ *Let the paramedics by, please.*

let someone **get by with** something to allow someone to do something wrong and not be punished or reprimanded. (An elaboration of get by (with something).) ☐ *She lets those kids get by with anything.* ☐ *They won't let you get by with that!*

let someone **(get) off (**something**)** to permit someone to disembark, dismount, or leave something. ☐ *Please move and let me get off the bus.* ☐ *Let her off!*

let someone **get on with** something to permit someone to continue something. ☐ *I will leave now and let you get on with your work.* ☐ *She had to settle the matter first. She would not let herself get on with life until the matter was settled.*

let someone **(get) past** to allow someone to pass; to get out of the way so someone can pass. ☐ *Please let me get past. I'm in a hurry.* ☐ *Do let me past.*

let someone **go** *Euph.* to fire someone. ☐ *They let Jane go from her job.* ☐ *I'm afraid we're going to have to let you go.*

let someone **have it (with both barrels)** *Fig.* to strike someone or attack someone verbally. (*With both barrels* intensifies the phrase; it alludes to firing a double-barreled shotgun.) ☐ *I really let Tom have it with both barrels. I told him he had better not do that again if he knows what's good for him.* ☐ *Bob was really angry and let John have it—with both barrels.*

let someone **in for** something to cause someone to be involved in something, usually something unpleasant. ☐ *Fred had no idea what his brother had let him in for when he agreed to take his place in the race.* ☐ *Jack didn't know what he was letting himself in for when he married that dreadful woman.*

let someone **in on** something Go to **in on** something.

let someone **in on the act** Go to **in on the act.**

let someone **in on the ground floor** Go to **in on the ground floor.**

let someone **know (about** something**)** to tell someone something; to inform someone of something. ☐ *Please let me know about it soon.* ☐ *Will you be coming to the picnic? Please let me know.*

let someone **off† 1.** to permit someone to disembark or leave a means of transportation. ☐ *The driver let Mary off the bus.* ☐ *"I can't let you off at this corner," said the driver.* ☐ *He let off passengers at every stop.* **2.** Go to next.

let someone **off (easy)** and **let** someone **off†** to release or dismiss someone without punishment. ☐ *The judge didn't let me off easy.* ☐ *The judge let off Mary with a warning.*

let someone **off the hook** Go to **off the hook.**

let someone or an animal **(get) out (of** something**) 1.** to permit someone or an animal to exit or escape from something or some place. ☐ *Please let the president get out of the car.* ☐ *Don't let the snake get out!* **2.** to permit someone or an animal to evade something. ☐ *I will not let you get out of your responsibilities.* ☐ *They wouldn't let me out of the contract.*

let someone or an animal **out of** something and **let** someone or an animal **out†** to permit someone or an animal to exit from something or some place. ☐ *Would you please let Ed out of his room?* ☐ *Please let out Ed.*

let someone or something **alone** and **leave** someone or something **alone; leave** someone or something **be** to avoid touching, bothering, or communicating with someone or something. ☐ *Leave me alone. I don't want your help.* ☐ *Let it alone! Don't touch it! It may be hot!*

let someone or something **at** someone or something to permit someone or something to attack or get at someone or something. ☐ *He did that? Just let me at him!* ☐ *Let the committee at her, then she'll change her tune.*

let someone or something **down†** *Fig.* to fail someone or something; to disappoint someone or a group. ☐ *Please don't let me down. I am depending on you.* ☐ *I let down the entire cast of the play.*

let someone or something **into** something and **let** someone or something **in†** to permit someone or something to enter something or some place; to make it possible for someone or something to enter something or some place. ☐ *Would you let Ed into his room? He forgot his key.* ☐ *Please let in the dog.*

let someone or something **through (**something**)** to permit someone or something to move through an opening or through a congested area. ☐ *The usher wouldn't let me through the door.* ☐ *Please let the ambulance through the crowd.*

let someone **pass by** Go to **let** someone **(get) by.**

let someone **slide by** *Fig.* to permit someone to get past a barrier or a challenge too easily. ☐ *You let too many students slide by. You need to be more rigorous.* ☐ *Don't let even one unqualified person slide by!*

let someone, something, or some creature **alone** Go to **leave** someone, something, or some creature **alone.**

let someone, something, or some creature **be** Go to **leave** someone, something, or some creature **alone.**

let something **(get) out** Go to **leak** something **(out).**

let something **off†** to release something; to give something off. ☐ *The engine let some evil smelling smoke off.* ☐ *The flower let off a wonderful smell.*

let something **out† 1.** *Fig.* to reveal something; to tell about a secret or a plan. (See also **leak** something **out.**) ☐ *It was supposed to be a secret. Who let it out?* ☐ *Who let out the secret?* **2.** *Fig.* to enlarge an article of clothing. ☐ *She had to let her overcoat out because she had gained some weight.* ☐ *I see you have had to let out your trousers.*

let something **out† (to** someone**)** to rent something to someone. ☐ *I let the back room out to a college boy.* ☐ *I let out the back room to someone.*

let something **pass** *Fig.* to let something go unnoticed or unchallenged. ☐ *Bob let Bill's insult pass because he didn't want to argue.* ☐ *Don't worry, I'll let this little incident pass.*

let something **ride** *Fig.* to allow something to continue or remain as it is. ☐ *It isn't the best plan, but we'll let it ride.* ☐ *I disagree with you, but I'll let it ride.*

let something **slide** Go to **let things slide.**

let something **slide by** Go to next.

let something **slip by** and **let** something **slide by 1.** *Lit.* to permit something to move quickly by oneself. ☐ *He let the ball slip by and he knew he had better get the next one.* ☐ *The careless cashier let the leaky milk carton slide by.* **2.** *Fig.* to forget or miss an important time or date. ☐ *I'm sorry I just let your birthday slip by.* ☐ *I let it slide by accidentally.* **3.** *Fig.* to waste a period of time. ☐ *You wasted the whole day by letting it slip by.* ☐ *We were having fun, and we let the time slide by.*

let something **slip (out)** *Fig.* to reveal a secret carelessly or by accident. ☐ *I didn't let it slip out on purpose. It was an accident.* ☐ *John let the plans slip when he was talking to Bill.*

Let the buyer beware. *Prov. Cliché* When you buy something, you must take precautions against being cheated, because you cannot trust merchants to be honest about what they sell. ☐ *Let the buyer beware when shopping for a used car.* ☐ *Several of the lamps among those Max offered for sale were broken. "If a customer isn't smart enough to try a lamp before he buys it, that's his problem," Max argued. "Let the buyer beware."*

let the cat out of the bag *Fig.* to reveal a secret or a surprise by accident. ☐ *When Bill glanced at the door, he let the cat out of the bag. We knew then that he was expecting someone to arrive.* ☐ *It's a secret. Try not to let the cat out of the bag.*

let the chance slip by *Fig.* to lose the opportunity (to do something). ☐ *When I was younger, I wanted to become a doctor, but I let the chance slip by.* ☐ *Don't let the chance slip by. Do it now!*

Let the chips fall where they may. *Prov.* Let something happen regardless of the consequences and no matter what happens. ☐ *I'm going to tell Ellen the truth about her husband, let the chips fall where they may.* ☐ *Kathy decided to risk her money on the investment, and let the chips fall where they may.*

Let the cobbler stick to his last. *Prov.* Do not advise someone in matters outside your area of expertise. ☐ *Whenever Ted, who is a lawyer, tried to give Bob suggestions about how to write his novel, Bob would say, "Let the cobbler stick to his last."* ☐ *Bill: I don't think you should put so much oregano in the spaghetti sauce. Nancy: You're a construction worker, not a chef. Let the cobbler stick to his last.*

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Let the dead bury the dead. *Prov.* Do not try to revive old grievances.; Forget about past conflicts. (Biblical.) ☐ *The Nelson family and the Hopkins family had been feuding for decades, but when Andrew Nelson and Louise Hopkins declared that they wanted to get married, their families decided to let the dead bury the dead.*

Let them eat cake. *Prov.* A joking disclaimer of responsibility for some group of people. (Supposed to have been said by Marie Antoinette when she heard that the common people had no bread.) ☐ *Fred: The budget will allow each one of our managers to get a substantial holiday bonus. Jane: And what about the rest of the employees? Fred: Let them eat cake!*

let things slide and **let** something **slide** *Fig.* to ignore the things that one is supposed to do; to fall behind in the doing of one's work. ☐ *I am afraid that I let the matter slide while I was recovering from my operation.* ☐ *If I let things slide for even one day, I get hopelessly behind in my work.*

let up 1. to diminish. ☐ *I hope this rain lets up a little soon.* ☐ *When the snow lets up so I can see, I will drive to the store.* **2.** to stop [doing something] altogether. ☐ *The rain let up about noon, and the sun came out.*

let up (on someone or something**)** *Fig.* to reduce the pressure or demands on someone or something. ☐ *You had better let up on Tom. He can't handle any more work.* ☐ *Please let up on the committee. It can only do so much.* ☐ *Do let up. You are getting too upset.*

Let us do something**.** We will do something [together]. ☐ *Let us go in peace.* ☐ *Let us bow our heads in prayer.*

let well enough alone and **leave well enough alone** to leave things as they are (and not try to improve them). ☐ *There isn't much more you can accomplish here. Why don't you just let well enough alone?* ☐ *This is as good as I can do. I'll stop and leave well enough alone.*

level a charge against someone *Fig.* to place a charge against someone; to accuse someone of something. ☐ *The neighbors leveled a disturbance of the peace charge against us.* ☐ *The cops leveled an assault charge against Max.*

level off [for variation or fluctuation in the motion of something] to diminish; [for a rate] to stop increasing or decreasing. ☐ *The plane leveled off at 10,000 feet.* ☐ *After a while the workload will level off.* ☐ *Things will level off after we get through the end of the month.*

level out [for something that was going up and down] to assume a more level course or path. ☐ *The road leveled out after a while and driving was easier.* ☐ *As we got down into the valley, the land leveled out and traveling was easier.*

a **level playing field** *Fig.* a situation that is fair to all; a situation where everyone has the same opportunity. (See also level the (playing) field.) ☐ *If we started off with a level playing field, everyone would have an equal chance.*

level something **at** someone or something to direct something at someone or something; to aim a remark at someone. ☐ *The sheriff leveled his rifle at the fleeing bandit.* ☐ *Why did you think you had to level that barrage of words at me? I didn't make the problem.* ☐ *Sam leveled an acid comment or two at the committee.*

level something **down** to make something level or smooth. ☐ *The soil is very uneven in this part of the garden. Would you please level it down?* ☐ *The huge earth-moving machines leveled the hill down in preparation for the building of the highway.*

level something **off**† to make something level or smooth. ☐ *You are going to have to level the floor off before you put the carpet down.* ☐ *Please level off the floor.*

level something **out**† to cause something to assume a more level course or path. ☐ *Level this path out before you open it to the public.* ☐ *They have to level out this roadway.*

level something **to the ground** to crush or demolish something down to the ground. ☐ *They were forced to level the building to the ground, because they could not afford to maintain it.* ☐ *The house was leveled to the ground by the tornado.*

level something **up**† to move something into a level or plumb position. ☐ *Use a piece of wood under the table's leg to level it up.* ☐ *I will level up the table.*

level the (playing) field *Fig.* to create a state where everyone has the same opportunity. (See also a level playing field.) ☐ *Let's level the playing field and give everyone a chance.*

level with someone **(about** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to be straightforward with someone about something; to be sincere or truthful about someone or something. ☐ *The police encouraged the criminal to level with them about the crime.* ☐ *Level with me, and tell me what you thought of my cake.*

levy something **(up)on** someone or something to place a tax on someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *The Congress was very straight-*

forward. It levied room taxes upon rich people. ☐ *The city council levied a heavy tax on hotel guests.*

A **liar is not believed (even) when he tells the truth.** *Prov.* If people think that you are a liar, they will not believe anything you say. ☐ *As it turned out, Fred was right when he warned his friends that the police were planning to raid their party; but they paid no attention to him, since they knew him to be a liar, and a liar is not believed even when he tells the truth.*

liberate someone or something **from** someone or something to free someone or something from someone or something; to set someone or something free from the control of someone or something. ☐ *The police hoped to liberate the child from his kidnappers.* ☐ *We liberated the town from the enemy.* ☐ *I liberated the cat from the trap.*

license to do something permission, right, or justification to do something. ☐ *You have no license to behave in that manner!* ☐ *Who granted you license to enter my house without knocking?*

*a **lick and a promise** *Fig.* a hasty bit of work; a quick once-over. (*Typically: **finish** something **with ~; give** something **~**.) ☐ *I was pressed for time, so I just gave the housework a lick and a promise.* ☐ *Mary spent so much time on her history paper that she had to finish her math homework with a lick and a promise.*

lick at something to draw the tongue over something repeatedly. ☐ *Jimmy was just licking at the ice-cream cone, and soon it began to melt and drip off his elbow.* ☐ *I don't just lick at the ice cream. I take big bites of it.*

a **lick of work** a bit of work. (Used with a negative.) ☐ *I couldn't get her to do a lick of work all day long!* ☐ *The boys didn't do a lick of work while you were away.*

lick one's **chops** *Fig.* to show one's eagerness to do something, especially to eat something. ☐ *We could tell from the way the boys were licking their chops that they really wanted a turn at riding the motorcycle.* ☐ *Fred started licking his chops when he smelled the turkey roasting in the oven.*

lick one's **lips** *Fig.* to show eagerness or pleasure about a future event. (From the habit of people licking their lips when they are about to enjoy eating something.) ☐ *The children licked their lips at the sight of the cake.* ☐ *The author's readers were licking their lips in anticipation of her new novel.*

lick one's **wounds** *Fig.* to recover from a defeat or a rebuke. (Also literal for an animal.) ☐ *After the terrible meeting and all the criticism, I went back to my office to lick my wounds.*

lick someone or something **into shape** to press or force someone or something into good shape or condition. ☐ *The drama coach will try to lick her into shape by performance time.* ☐ *Please try to lick this report into shape by tomorrow morning.*

lick something **into shape** and **whip** something **into shape** *Fig.* to put something into good condition, possibly with considerable effort. ☐ *I've got about two days more to lick this place into shape so I can sell it.* ☐ *I want to whip this house into shape for Saturday night.*

lick something **off (of)** something and **lick** something **off**† to remove something from something by licking with the tongue. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *The dog licked the grease off of the floor where the meat had dropped.* ☐ *The dog licked off the grease.*

lick something **up**† to clean up all of some substance by licking with the tongue. (Usually said of an animal.) ☐ *Don't worry about the spilled milk. The dog will lick it up.* ☐ *The dog licked up the milk.*

*a **licking** a spanking; a beating in a fight. (*Typically: **get ~; take ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Billy, you had better get in here if you don't want to get a licking.* ☐ *Bob took a real licking in the stock market.* ☐ *Tom gave Harry a licking in the fight he was in.*

*a **lid on** something **1.** *Lit.* a cover on something, such as a pot, pan, etc. (*Typically: **get ~; keep ~; put ~**.) ☐ *Keep the lid on the pot until the stew is almost done.* ☐ *Put the lid on the skillet for just a little while.* **2.** *Fig.* a scheme to suppress a scandalous or embarrassing situation and keep it secret. (*Typically: **get ~; keep ~; put ~**.) ☐ *We can't keep the lid on this any longer. The press has got wind of it.*

lie about 1. [for someone] to recline lazily somewhere. ☐ *She just lay about through her entire vacation.* ☐ *Don't lie about all the time. Get busy.* **2.** [for something] to be located somewhere casually and carelessly, perhaps for a long time. ☐ *This hammer has been lying about for a week. Put it away!* ☐ *Why are all these dirty dishes lying about?*

lie about someone or something **(to** someone**)** to say something untrue about someone or something to someone. ☐ *I wouldn't lie about my boss to anyone!* ☐ *I wouldn't lie about anything like that!*

lie ahead of someone or something and **lie before** someone or something **1.** to exist in front of someone or something. ☐ *A small cottage lay ahead of us near the trail.* ☐ *A huge mansion lay before the car at the end of the road.* **2.** to be fixed in the future of someone or something. ☐ *I just don't know what lies ahead of me.* ☐ *We don't know what lies before our country.*

lie alongside ((of) someone or an animal**)** to lie next to someone or an animal. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Jimmy came in to lie alongside of his father in bed.* ☐ *The puppy lay alongside its mother.*

lie around (some place**)** to recline some place; to spend some time lazily in some place. ☐ *I think I will just lie around the house all day.* ☐ *I need to lie around every now and then.*

lie at anchor [for a ship] to wait or rest at anchor. ☐ *The ship lay at anchor throughout the day while a shore party searched for the runaway.* ☐ *We lay at anchor overnight, waiting for the tide.*

lie at death's door *Fig.* to be close to dying. ☐ *She lay at death's door for over a month.* ☐ *I do not want to lie at death's door suffering. I hope to pass on quickly.*

lie back to relax; to lean back in a chair and relax. (See also kick back.) ☐ *Just lie back and try to get comfortable.* ☐ *I really need to get home and lie back and relax.*

lie before someone or something Go to lie ahead of someone or something.

lie behind someone or something **1.** [for something] to be positioned to the rear of someone or something. ☐ *A wide expanse of water lay behind the sentry, and a narrow road-*

way lay in front. ☐ *A vast field lies behind the house.* **2.** [for something] to be in someone's or a group's past. ☐ *Now that all of our difficulties lie behind us, we can get on with our business.* ☐ *The busy season lay behind the company and people could take their vacations.*

lie below someone or something Go to **below** someone or something.

lie beyond someone or something **1.** to be located on the other side of someone or something. ☐ *The stream lies beyond those men you see working in the field.* ☐ *The village lies just beyond that hill there.* **2.** to be outside the grasp or the ability of someone or a group. ☐ *I am afraid that this matter lies beyond Dave.* ☐ *The solution lies beyond the power of the committee.*

lie doggo *Fig.* to remain unrecognized (for a long time). ☐ *This problem has lain doggo since 1967.* ☐ *If you don't find the typos now, they will lie doggo until the next edition.*

lie down to recline. ☐ *Why don't you lie down for a while?* ☐ *I need to lie down and have a little snooze.*

lie down on something to recline on something. ☐ *Don't lie down on that couch!* ☐ *I will just lie down on my bed for a few minutes.*

lie down on the job and **lay down on the job** *Fig.* to do one's job poorly or not at all. (*Lay* is a common error for *lie.*) ☐ *Tom was fired because he was laying down on the job.* ☐ *You mean he was lying down on the job, don't you?*

lie down under something to lie down beneath something. ☐ *She was tired, so she lay down under a willow tree by the brook.* ☐ *The dog lay down under a lawn chair and slept.*

lie fallow 1. *Lit.* [for farmland] to exist unplanted for a period of time. ☐ *The fields lay fallow under the burning sun. It had been too wet to plant last spring.* **2.** *Fig.* [for a skill and talent] to remain unused and neglected. ☐ *You should not let your talent lie fallow. Practice the piano before you forget how to play it.* ☐ *His writing had lain fallow for so long that he could hardly write a proper sentence.*

lie in [for a woman] to lie in bed awaiting the birth of her child. ☐ *The child is due soon, and the mother is lying in at the present time.* ☐ *She did not lie in at all. She worked right up to the onset of labor pains.*

lie in ruins to exist in a state of ruin, such as a destroyed city, building, scheme, plan, etc. ☐ *The entire city lay in ruins.* ☐ *My garden lay in ruins after the cows got in and trampled everything.*

lie in something to recline in something, such as a bed, a puddle, etc. ☐ *I found my wallet lying in a puddle. My money was soaked!* ☐ *We found Jimmy lying in a pile of leaves, napping.*

lie in state [for a dead body] to be on display for public mourning. ☐ *The president will lie in state in the Capitol Rotunda.* ☐ *Mourners filed past the leader where he lay in state.*

lie in store (for someone**)** Go to **in store (for** someone**)**.

lie in wait (for someone or something**)** *Fig.* to stay still and hidden, waiting for someone or something. ☐ *Bob was lying in wait for Anne so he could scold her about something.* ☐ *The assassin lay in wait for his target to approach.*

lie like a rug *Sl.* to tell lies shamelessly. ☐ *He says he didn't take the money, but he's lying like a rug.* ☐ *I don't believe her. She lies like a rug.*

lie low and **lay low** *Fig.* to keep quiet and not be noticed; to avoid being conspicuous. (*Lay* is a common error for *lie.*) ☐ *I suggest you lie low for a few days.* ☐ *The robber said that he would lay low for a short time after the robbery.*

lie out (in something**)** to remain out (unenclosed or unprotected) in some area. ☐ *Who left my screwdriver lying out in the rain?* ☐ *It's not lying out. It's in the drawer.*

lie through one's **teeth** *Fig.* to lie boldly. ☐ *I knew she was lying through her teeth, but I didn't want to say so just then.* ☐ *If John denies it he's lying through his teeth, because I saw him do it.*

lie to someone **(about** someone or something**)** to tell an untruth about someone or something to someone. ☐ *You wouldn't lie to me about Sarah, would you?* ☐ *I'm not lying to you!*

lie (up)on someone Go to **(up)on** someone.

lie with someone **1.** to recline with someone. ☐ *Come and lie with me and we will keep warm.* ☐ *Jimmy and Franny were lying with each other to keep warm.* **2.** *Euph.* to recline with someone and have sex. ☐ *She claimed he asked her to lie with him.* ☐ *Do you mean to imply that she lay with him?*

lie within something to remain within a defined area or domain. ☐ *The boundaries of the village lie completely within the river valley.* ☐ *The cost you cited lies within the range I was considering.*

Life begins at forty. *Prov.* By the time you are forty years old, you have enough experience and skill to do what you want to do with your life. (Often said as an encouragement to those reaching middle age.) ☐ *Alan: Why are you so depressed? Jane: Tomorrow's my fortieth birthday. Alan: Cheer up! Life begins at forty.* ☐ *For Pete, life began at forty, because by that time he had enough financial security to enjoy himself now and then, rather than having to work all the time.*

life in the fast lane a very active or possible risky way to live. (See also **in the fast lane.**) ☐ *Life in the fast lane is too much for me.*

Life is just a bowl of cherries. *Prov.* Everything is going well.; Life is carefree. (Often used ironically, as in the second example.) ☐ *The real estate salesman tried to convince us that life in the suburbs is just a bowl of cherries.* ☐ *Jill: Hi, Jane. How are you? Jane: Oh, my alarm clock didn't go off this morning, and then my car wouldn't start, and I missed the bus and got to work late, and I just found out my rent's going up fifty dollars a month. Life is just a bowl of cherries.*

Life is short and time is swift. *Prov.* You should enjoy life as much as possible, because it does not last very long. ☐ *Jill: Want to go to the movies with me? Jane: Oh, I don't know; I should probably stay at work and finish a few things. Jill: Come on, Jane, life is short and time is swift.*

Life is too short. Life is short and there is no point in wasting it on things like worry, hatred, vengeance, etc. ☐ *I am not going to spend any more time trying to get even*

with Wally. Life's too short. ☐ *It's a waste of time worrying about money. Life is too short for that.*

Life isn't all beer and skittles. *Prov.* Life is not pleasurable all the time; you cannot always be having fun. (Skittles is a game like bowling.) ☐ *I don't really mind going back to work when my vacation is over. Life isn't all beer and skittles, and I enjoy my fun that much more because I have work to compare it to.* ☐ *When George's parents stopped supporting him, George suddenly discovered that life isn't all beer and skittles.*

the **life of the party** *Fig.* a person who is lively and helps make a party fun and exciting. ☐ *Bill is always the life of the party. Be sure to invite him.* ☐ *Bob isn't exactly the life of the party, but he's polite.*

Life's been good (to me). I am grateful that I am doing well in life. ☐ *I can't complain. Life's been good to me.* ☐ *I am doing fine. Life's been good.*

lift a hand (against someone or something**)** and **raise a hand (against** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to threaten (to strike) someone or something. (Often in the negative. The *a hand* can be replaced with *one's hand.*) ☐ *She's very peaceful. She wouldn't lift a hand against a fly.* ☐ *Would you raise your hand against your own brother?*

lift off [for a plane or rocket] to move upward, leaving the ground. ☐ *The rocket lifted off exactly on time.*

lift one's **elbow** Go to **bend** one's **elbow.**

lift someone or something **down† (from** something**)** to move someone or something down (from something or some place) by lifting and carrying. ☐ *Would you please lift Jimmy down from the top bunk?* ☐ *Frank lifted down the heavy box.*

lift someone or something **up†** to raise someone or something. ☐ *I helped lift him up and put him on the stretcher.* ☐ *Please lift up Tommy.*

lift someone's **spirits** Go to someone's **spirits.**

lift something **from** someone or something to raise something off someone or something. ☐ *Please lift this burden from me.* ☐ *I lifted the glass from the tray carefully.*

lift something **off (of)** someone or something and **lift** something **off†** to raise something and uncover or release someone or something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Lift the beam off of him and see if he is still breathing.* ☐ *Please lift off the heavy lid.*

lift something **out of context** Go to **out of context.**

lift up to raise up. ☐ *Suddenly, the top of the box lifted up and a hand reached out.* ☐ *Bill's hand lifted up and fell back again.*

light a fire under someone Go to a **fire under** someone.

***light as a feather** and ***light as air** *Cliché* light in weight; [of cakes and pastries] delicate and airy. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Carrying Esther from the car to the house was no problem; she was as light as a feather.* ☐ *What a delicious cake, Tom! And light as air, too.*

light as air Go to previous.

light into someone or something Go to **lace into** someone or something.

light out (for some place**)** Go to **cut out (for** some place**).**

light out (of some place**) (for** some place**)** *Fig.* to leave a place in a great hurry for some place. ☐ *I lit out of there for home as fast as I could.* ☐ *I lit out of there as fast as I could go.*

A **light purse makes a heavy heart.** *Prov.* If you do not have enough money, you will worry and be unhappy. ☐ *Nathan is a cheerful person by nature, but since he lost his job, worry has made him glum. A light purse makes a heavy heart.*

light someone or something **up†** to shine lights on someone or something. (See also **light** something **up.**) ☐ *We lit Fred up with the headlights of the car.* ☐ *Light up the stage and let's rehearse.*

light something **up† 1.** to light a fire, a gas burner, etc. ☐ *I lit the kindling up and soon the fire was going.* ☐ *You light up the stove and get dinner going.* **2.** to light something to smoke, such as a cigarette, pipe, etc. (See also **light** someone or something **up.**) ☐ *She lit the cigarette up and took in a great breath of the smoke.* ☐ *She lit up a cigarette.*

light something **with** something **1.** to set something afire with something else. ☐ *Kelly lit the fire with her last match.* ☐ *I will light the fire with a cigarette lighter.* **2.** to illuminate something using something. ☐ *She lit the room with a few candles.* ☐ *We lit the Christmas tree with colored lights.*

light up 1. to become brighter. ☐ *Suddenly, the sky lit up like day.* ☐ *The room lit up as the fire suddenly came back to life.* **2.** [for someone] to become interested and responsive in something. ☐ *We could tell from the way Sally lit up that she recognized the man in the picture.* ☐ *She lit up when we told her about our team's success.*

light (up)on someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to land on someone or something; to settle on someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on.*) ☐ *Three butterflies lit on the baby, causing her to shriek with delight.* ☐ *The bees lit on the clover blossom and pulled it to the ground.* ☐ *Her glance lit upon a dress in the store window.* **2.** *Fig.* to arrive at something by chance; to happen upon something. ☐ *The committee lit upon a solution that pleased almost everyone.* ☐ *We just happened to light upon this idea as we were talking to each other.*

lighten something **up†** to make something lighter or brighter. ☐ *Some white paint will lighten this room up a lot.* ☐ *The sunlight came in and lightened up the kitchen.*

lighten up to become lighter or brighter. (See also **lighten up (on** someone or something**).**) ☐ *We applied a new coat of white paint to the walls, and the room lightened up considerably.* ☐ *The sky is beginning to lighten up a little.*

lighten up (on someone or something**)** to be less rough and demanding or rude with someone or something. (See also **lighten up.**) ☐ *Please lighten up on her. You are being very cruel.* ☐ *You are too harsh. Lighten up.*

Lightning never strikes (the same place) twice. *Prov.* The same highly unlikely thing never happens to the same person twice. ☐ *Jill: I'm scared to drive ever since that truck hit my car. Alan: Don't worry. Lightning never strikes the same place twice.* ☐ *It's strange, but I feel safer since my apartment was robbed; I figure lightning never strikes the same place twice.*

L

like a bat out of hell *Inf.* very fast or sudden. (Use caution with hell.) ☐ *The cat took off like a bat out of hell.* ☐ *The car pulled away from the curb like a bat out of hell.*

like a blind dog in a meat market *Rur.* out of control. ☐ *The drunk staggered out of the saloon like a blind dog in a meat market, stumbling all over the sidewalk.* ☐ *The kids tore through the museum like a blind dog in a meat market, touching everything they weren't supposed to touch.*

like a bolt from the blue Go to next.

like a bolt out of the blue and **like a bolt from the blue** *Fig.* suddenly and without warning. (Alludes to a bolt of lightning coming out of a clear blue sky.) ☐ *The news came to us like a bolt from the blue.* ☐ *Like a bolt out of the blue, the boss came and fired us all.*

like a bull in a china shop Go to a bull in a china shop.

like a bump on a log *Fig.* completely inert. (Derogatory.) ☐ *Don't just sit there like a bump on a log; give me a hand!* ☐ *You can never tell what Julia thinks of something; she just stands there like a bump on a log.*

like a can of corn *Rur.* very easy. ☐ *Whipping up dinner for twelve is like a can of corn, as far as Jane is concerned.* ☐ *The championship game was like a can of corn for our team. We won easily.*

like a fish out of water *Fig.* appearing to be completely out of place; in a very awkward manner. ☐ *Bob stood there in his rented tuxedo, looking like a fish out of water.* ☐ *Whenever I am with your friends, I feel like a fish out of water. What on earth do you see in them—or me?*

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like a house on fire and **like a house afire** *Rur.* rapidly and with force. ☐ *The truck came roaring down the road like a house on fire.* ☐ *The crowd burst through the gate like a house afire.*

like a kid with a new toy *Fig.* very pleased; happily playing with something. ☐ *Every time Bill gets a new gadget for his kitchen, he's like a kid with a new toy.* ☐ *Jane is absorbed in that computer. Just like a kid with a new toy.*

like a lamb to the slaughter Go to like lambs to the slaughter.

like a million (dollars) *Fig.* very good or well. (Usually with verbs such as *feel, look, run,* etc.) ☐ *This old buggy runs like a million dollars.* ☐ *Man, I feel like a million.* ☐ *Your new hairdo looks like a million dollars.*

like a sitting duck Go to a sitting duck.

like a three-ring circus *Fig.* chaotic; exciting and busy. ☐ *Our household is like a three-ring circus on Monday mornings.* ☐ *This meeting is like a three-ring circus. Quiet down and listen!*

***like a ton of bricks** *Inf.* like a great weight or burden. (*Typically: **fall ~; hit ~; hit** someone **~**.) ☐ *Suddenly, the truth hit me like a ton of bricks.* ☐ *The sudden tax increase hit like a ton of bricks. Everyone became angry.*

(like) an open book *Fig.* [of someone or something] easy to understand. ☐ *Jane's an open book. I always know what she is going to do next.* ☐ *The committee's intentions are an open book. They want to save money.*

Like breeds like. *Prov.* People tend to raise children who are like them; something tends to give rise to things that resemble it. ☐ *Jill: I think Fred's little boy is going to be just as disagreeable as Fred. Jane: That's no surprise. Like breeds like.*

like crazy and **like mad** *Fig.* furiously; very much, fast, many, or actively. ☐ *People are coming in here like crazy. There isn't enough room for them all.* ☐ *We sold ice cream like crazy. It was a very hot day.*

***like death warmed over** *Fig.* very ill; appearing very sickly. (*Typically: **feel ~; look ~**.) ☐ *Oh dear, I feel like death warmed over.* ☐ *Poor Carol said you look like death warmed over.*

like father, like son *Prov.* Fathers and sons resemble each other, and sons tend to do what their fathers did before them. ☐ *Jill: George's father smoked all the time, and now George is smoking excessively, too. Jane: Like father, like son, eh?* ☐ *I think my son will grow up tall, just like his father. Like father, like son.*

like fighting snakes *Rur.* chaotic; challenging. (As if every time one snake is subdued, another one attacks.) ☐ *It's like fighting snakes to get anything done at this time of year.* ☐ *Arguing with you is like fighting snakes.*

like flies to manure *Rur.* eagerly gathering in large numbers. (Has unpleasant connotations because of the reference to manure.) ☐ *Look at all them folks going to the freak show like flies to manure.* ☐ *The reporters hovered around the movie star like flies to manure.*

like gangbusters with great excitement and speed. (From the phrase "Come on like gangbusters," a radio show that "came on" with lots of noise and excitement.) ☐ *She works like gangbusters and gets the job done.* ☐ *They are selling tickets like gangbusters.*

like greased lightning *Rur.* very fast. ☐ *Once I get her tuned up, this old car will go like greased lightning.* ☐ *He's a fat kid, but he can run like greased lightning.*

like hell Go to like the devil.

like hell and high lightning *Rur.* very fast. ☐ *The snowmobiles came zooming down the trail like hell and high lightning.* ☐ *The powerboat sped up the river like hell and high lightning.*

like herding frogs *Rur.* chaotic; disorderly. (On the image of trying to direct frogs, which will jump any which way.) ☐ *Trying to get those kids to march into the auditorium is like herding frogs.* ☐ *Trying to get everybody to cooperate is like herding frogs.*

like I was saying Go to as I was saying.

Like it or lump it! *Inf.* There is no other choice. Take that or none. ☐ *John: I don't like this room. It's too small. Bill: Like it or lump it. That's all we've got.* ☐ *Jane: I don't want to be talked to like that. Sue: Well, like it or lump it! That's the way we talk around here.*

Like it's such a big deal! *Inf.* It really isn't all that important! (Sarcastic.) ☐ *So I dropped the glass. Like it's such a big deal.* ☐ *Like it's such a big deal. Who cares?*

like it was going out of style *Fig.* rapidly or frequently. ☐ *I'm worried about Sally. She's taking aspirin like it's going out of style.* ☐ *The kids have been eating sweet corn like it was going out of style.*

like lambs to the slaughter and **like a lamb to the slaughter** *Fig.* quietly and without seeming to realize the likely difficulties or dangers of a situation. ☐ *Young men*

fighting in World War I simply went like lambs to the slaughter. ☐ *Our team went on the football field like lambs to the slaughter to meet the league-leaders.*

like looking for a needle in a haystack *Fig.* engaged in a hopeless search. ☐ *Trying to find a white glove in the snow is like looking for a needle in a haystack.* ☐ *I tried to find my lost contact lens on the beach, but it was like looking for a needle in a haystack.*

like mad Go to like crazy.

Like mother, like daughter. *Prov.* Daughters resemble their mothers.; Daughters tend to do what their mothers did before them. ☐ *My mother loved sweets, and every time my father saw me with a cookie in my hand, he would sigh, "Like mother, like daughter."* ☐ *Jill: Gina's beautiful. Jane: Like mother, like daughter; her mother's gorgeous, too.*

like nobody's business *Inf.* very well; very much. ☐ *She can sing like nobody's business. What a set of pipes!* ☐ *My mom can cook chocolate chip cookies like nobody's business.*

like nothing on earth 1. *Fig.* very untidy or very unattractive. ☐ *Joan arrived at the office looking like nothing on earth. She had fallen in the mud.* ☐ *Alice was like nothing on earth in that electric yellow dress.* **2.** *Fig.* very unusual; very distinctive. ☐ *The new car models look like nothing on earth this year.* ☐ *This cake is so good! It's like nothing on earth!*

like one of the family as if someone (or a pet) were a member of one's family. ☐ *We treat our dog like one of the family.* ☐ *We are very happy to have you stay with us, Bill. I hope you don't mind if we treat you like one of the family.*

like pigs to the slaughter *Rur.* obediently and in large numbers. (See also like lambs to the slaughter.) ☐ *Look at all the people lining up to mail their tax forms on time, like pigs to the slaughter.*

like rats abandoning a sinking ship Go to Rats abandon a sinking ship.

like shooting fish in a barrel and **as easy as shooting fish in a barrel** *Rur.* ridiculously easy. ☐ *Jane's a good mechanic. Changing a tire is like shooting fish in a barrel, for her.* ☐ *That comedian has an easy job. Making fun of politicians is like shooting fish in a barrel.*

like stealing acorns from a blind pig *Rur.* very easy. ☐ *Getting Mary to sign the house over to me was like stealing acorns from a blind pig.* ☐ *Tom: Was it hard to fool so many people? Charlie: Nope. It was like stealing acorns from a blind pig.*

***like stink** *Inf.* rapidly. (As fast as a smell spreads. *Typically: **go ~; move ~; run ~; swim ~**.) ☐ *Those kids moved through the whole test like stink. Real eager-beavers.* ☐ *The wood chipper went through the brush like stink and turned it into a small pile in minutes.*

like taking candy from a baby and **as easy as taking candy from a baby** *Cliché* very easy. ☐ *Getting to the airport was easy. It was like taking candy from a baby.*

***like the devil** and ***like the dickens; *like hell** *Fig.* with a fury; in a great hurry; with a lot of activity. (*Typically: **fight ~; run ~; scream ~; thrash around ~**.) ☐ *We were working like the dickens when the rain started and made us quit for the day.*

***like the dickens** Go to previous.

***like the wind** *Fig.* very fast; as fast and easy as the wind. (*Typically: **go ~; move ~; run ~**.) ☐ *Emily's sleek new bicycle can really go like the wind.* ☐ *The racehorse ran like the wind, beating its nearest opponent by several lengths.*

like there ain't no tomorrow Go to next.

like there's no tomorrow and **like there ain't no tomorrow** *Rur.* eagerly; rapidly; without stopping. ☐ *You can't go on eating candy bars like there's no tomorrow.* ☐ *Jim's spending money like there's no tomorrow.*

like to *Rur.* almost. ☐ *I like to died laughing when I saw Jim come in wearing a dress.* ☐ *Mary like to passed out when she saw how bad her house was damaged in the storm.*

like to hear oneself **talk** [for someone] to enjoy one's own talking more than people enjoy listening to it. ☐ *I guess I don't really have anything to say. I just like to hear myself talk, I guess.* ☐ *There he goes again. He just likes to hear himself talk.*

like tryin' to scratch your ear with your elbow *Rur.* impossible. ☐ *Getting those kids to settle down is like tryin' to scratch your ear with your elbow.* ☐ *Fixing all the leaks in that old roof is like tryin' to scratch your ear with your elbow.*

like (two) peas in a pod *Cliché* very close or intimate. (Compare this with as alike as (two) peas in a pod.) ☐ *Yes, they're close. Like two peas in a pod.* ☐ *They're always together. Like peas in a pod.*

like water off a duck's back *Fig.* easily; without any apparent effect. ☐ *Insults rolled off John like water off a duck's back.* ☐ *The bullets had no effect on the steel door. They fell away like water off a duck's back.*

like, you know *Inf.* a combining of the (essentially meaningless) expressions *like* and *you know*. (Never used in formal writing.) ☐ *She is, well, like, you know, uncool.* ☐ *This is, well, like, you know, too much!*

***likely as not** *Fig.* probably; with an even chance either way. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *He will as likely as not arrive without warning.* ☐ *Likely as not, the game will be canceled.*

liken someone or something **to** someone or something to compare someone or something to someone or something, concentrating on the similarities. ☐ *He is strange. I can only liken him to an eccentric millionaire.* ☐ *The poet likened James to a living statue of Mercury.*

the **likes of** someone or something someone or something similar to that person or thing; the equal or equals of someone or something. ☐ *I never want to see the likes of you again!* ☐ *We admired the splendid old ships, the likes of which will never be built again.*

Likewise(, I'm sure). *Fig.* The same from my point of view. (A hackneyed phrase said in greeting someone. See examples.) ☐ *Alice: I'm delighted to make your acquaintance. Bob: Likewise, I'm sure.* ☐ *John: How nice to see you! Sue: Likewise. John: Where are you from, Sue?*

limber someone or something **up**† to make someone or something more flexible or loose. ☐ *Let me give you a massage; that will limber you up.* ☐ *I need to limber up my arms.*

limit someone **to** something **1.** to restrict someone to a certain amount or number of something. ☐ *I will have to limit you to two helpings of mashed potatoes.* ☐ *I limit*

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myself to cola drinks only. **2.** to restrict someone to a certain area. ☐ *Please try to limit your children to your own yard.* ☐ *They limited themselves to the north side of town.*

limit something **to** something to restrict something to a limited set, a certain amount, or a specific number of something. ☐ *Please limit your comments to five minutes.* ☐ *Can you limit your remarks to the subject at hand?*

the **line of least resistance** the course of action that will cause least trouble or effort. ☐ *Jane won't stand up for her rights. She always takes the line of least resistance.* ☐ *Joan never states her point of view. She takes the line of least resistance and agrees with everyone else.*

***a line on** someone or something *Fig.* an idea on how to locate someone or something; an idea for finding someone who can help with someone or something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I got a line on a book that might help explain what you want to know.* ☐ *Sally has a line on someone who could help you fix up your apartment.*

line one's **own pocket(s)** *Fig.* to make money for oneself in a greedy or dishonest fashion. ☐ *They are interested in lining their pockets first and serving the people second.* ☐ *You can't blame them for wanting to line their own pockets.*

line someone or something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to put people or things in line. ☐ *Line everyone up and march them onstage.* ☐ *Line up the kids, please.* ☐ *Please line these books up.* ☐ *Hey, you guys! Line yourselves up!* **2.** *Fig.* to schedule someone or something [for something]. ☐ *Please line somebody up for the entertainment.* ☐ *We will try to line up a magician and a clown for the party.* ☐ *They lined up a chorus for the last act.*

line someone or something **up**† **against** something to put people or things into a row in front of or against something. ☐ *We lined everyone up against the wall for the photograph.* ☐ *Please line up everyone against the wall.*

line someone or something **up**† **behind** someone or something to put people or things into a line behind someone or something. ☐ *Please line all the children up behind the tallest child.* ☐ *Line up everyone behind the curtain.*

line someone or something **up**† **(in** something**)** to put people or things into some kind of formation, such as a row, column, ranks, etc. ☐ *The teacher lined the children up in two rows.* ☐ *Please line up the children in a row.*

line someone or something **up**† **on** something to place people or things into a line oriented on one or more things. ☐ *Line them all up on the edge of the grass.* ☐ *Line up the children on the white line.*

line someone or something **up**† **with** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to place people or things into a line with other people or things. ☐ *Line Fred up with the others.* ☐ *Line up these books with the others.* ☐ *Please line yourselves up with the others.* **2.** *Lit.* to place people or things into a line that is oriented on someone or something. ☐ *Line everyone up with the flagpole so we can march into the hall.* ☐ *Please line up everyone with the flagpole straight ahead.* **3.** *Fig.* to schedule a meeting date with someone or a group of people. ☐ *Will you line everyone up with us for a Monday morning meeting?* ☐ *See if you can line up a meeting with Todd and Frank.*

line someone or something **up**† **with** something to position someone or something (or a group) in reference to other things. ☐ *Please line the chairs up with the floor tiles.* ☐ *Line up this brick with the bricks below and at both sides. That's the way you lay bricks.*

line someone **up**† **behind** someone or something *Fig.* to organize people in support of someone or something. ☐ *I will see if I can line a few supporters up behind our candidate.* ☐ *I can line up everyone behind you.*

line someone **up**† **(for** something**)** *Fig.* to schedule someone for something; to arrange for someone to do or be something. ☐ *I lined gardeners up for the summer work on the gardens.* ☐ *I lined up four of my best friends to serve as ushers at my wedding.*

line someone **up**† **(with** someone**)** Go to **fix** someone **up**† **(with** someone**)**.

line something **with** something to place a layer of something over the inside surface of something. ☐ *You should line the drawers with clean paper before you use them.* ☐ *I want to line this jacket with new material.*

line up to form a line; to get into a line. ☐ *All right, everyone, line up!*

line up against someone or something to organize against someone or something. ☐ *Our people lined up against the candidate and defeated her soundly.* ☐ *We will line up against the opposing party as we did during the last election.*

line up alongside someone or something to form or get into a line beside someone or something. ☐ *Can you line up alongside the other people?* ☐ *Line up alongside the wall and get ready to be photographed.*

line up behind someone or something **1.** to form or get into a line behind someone or something. ☐ *Please line up behind Kelly.* ☐ *Please go and line up behind the sign.* **2.** and **get behind** someone or something to organize in support of someone or something. ☐ *We all got behind Todd and got him elected.* ☐ *We got behind the most active political party.*

line up for something to form or get into a line and wait for something. ☐ *Everyone lined up for a helping of birthday cake.* ☐ *Let's line up for dinner. The doors to the dining room will open at any minute.*

line up in(to) something to form or get into a line, row, rank, column, etc. ☐ *Please line up in three columns.* ☐ *I wish you would all line up into a nice straight line.*

line up on something to form a line oriented on something. ☐ *Line up on the white line painted on the pavement.* ☐ *Please line up on the marks on the floor.*

line up with someone to get into a line with someone. ☐ *Go over and line up with the others.* ☐ *Would you please line up with the other students?*

linger around to wait around; to be idle some place. ☐ *Don't linger around. Get going!* ☐ *All the students were lingering around, waiting until the last minute to go into the building.*

linger on to remain for a long time; to exist longer than would have been thought. ☐ *This cold of mine just keeps lingering on.* ☐ *Some of the guests lingered on for a long time after the party was over.*

linger on (after someone or something**)** and **stay on (after** someone or something**)** to outlast someone or something; to live longer than someone else or long after an event. ☐ *Aunt Sarah lingered on only a few months after Uncle Herman died.* ☐ *She lingered on and was depressed for a while.*

linger on something to delay moving on to the next thing; to remain at something and not move on. ☐ *Don't linger on that one problem so long.* ☐ *I don't want to waste a lot of time lingering on this question.*

linger over something **1.** to take too much time or idle over something, such as a meal, a cup of coffee, etc. ☐ *I could linger over coffee all morning, given the chance.* ☐ *Don't linger over your soup. It will get cold.* **2.** to dawdle over the doing of something. ☐ *You shouldn't linger over eating your dinner.* ☐ *It would be best not to linger over making up your mind.*

link someone or something **to** someone or something and **link** someone or something **and** someone or something **together; link** someone or something **together with** someone or something; **link** someone or something **with** someone or something **1.** to discover a connection between people and things, in any combination. ☐ *I would never have thought of linking Fred to Tom. I didn't even know they knew each other.* ☐ *I always sort of linked Tom with honesty.* **2.** to connect people and things, in any combination. ☐ *We have to link each person to one other person, using this colored yarn to tie them together.* ☐ *We linked each decoration together with another one.*

link someone or something **up**† **(to** something**)** to connect someone or something to something, usually with something that has a type of fastener or connector that constitutes a link. ☐ *They promised that they would link me up to the network today.* ☐ *They will link up my computer to the network today.*

link someone or something **with** someone or something Go to **link** someone or something **to** someone or something.

link up to someone or something and **link (up) with** someone or something to join up with someone or something. ☐ *I have his new e-mail address so I can link up to Bruce.* ☐ *Now my computer can link up with a computer bulletin board.*

the **lion's share of** something**)** *Fig.* the largest portion of something. ☐ *I earn a lot, but the lion's share goes for taxes.* ☐ *The lion's share of the surplus cheese goes to school cafeterias.*

liquor someone **up**† to get someone tipsy or drunk. ☐ *He liquored her up and tried to take her home with him.* ☐ *They liquored up the out-of-town visitors.*

liquor up to drink an alcoholic beverage, especially to excess. ☐ *Sam sat around all evening liquoring up.* ☐ *They seem to liquor up almost every night of the week.*

list someone **as** something to categorize someone as something, usually in a written list. ☐ *I will list you as a contributor to the Preservation Fund, if you don't mind.* ☐ *Although she was not registered as such, she listed herself as a stockbroker.*

list someone or something **among** something to include someone or something in a particular category. ☐ *I list George among the all-time greats.* ☐ *I have to list the budget committee as the most efficient ever.*

list someone or something **off**† to recite a list of people or things, one by one. ☐ *She listed everyone off in order without having to look at her notes.* ☐ *She listed off the names of the people who are always late.* ☐ *Dale listed each one off.*

list to a direction to lean to one side or another; to lean toward a specific direction. (Usually of ships or boats.) ☐ *The ship had listed to one side since being struck by the speedboat.* ☐ *The huge ship listed a tiny bit to starboard.*

listen for someone or something to try to hear someone or something. ☐ *I will have to let you in the front door if you come home late. I will listen for you.* ☐ *I am listening for the telephone.*

listen in (on someone or something**) 1.** to join someone or a group as a listener. ☐ *The band is rehearsing. Let's go listen in on them.* ☐ *It won't hurt to listen in, will it?* **2.** to eavesdrop on someone. ☐ *Please don't try to listen in on us. This is a private conversation.* ☐ *I am not listening in. I was here first. You are talking too loud.*

listen to reason to yield to a reasonable argument; to take the reasonable course. ☐ *Please listen to reason, and don't do something you'll regret.* ☐ *She got into trouble because she wouldn't listen to reason.*

listen to someone or something **1.** to pay attention to and hear someone or something. ☐ *Listen to me! Hear what I have to say!* ☐ *I want to listen to his speech.* **2.** to heed someone, orders, or advice. ☐ *Listen to me! Do what I tell you!* ☐ *You really should listen to his advice.*

listen up to listen carefully. (Usually a command.) ☐ *Now, listen up! This is important.* ☐ *Listen up, you guys!*

Listeners never hear any good of themselves. Go to Eavesdroppers never hear any good of themselves.

litmus test 1. *Lit.* a test used to determine the acidity or alkalinity of chemical substances. (Acid turns litmus paper red and alkaline compounds turn it blue.) ☐ *I used a litmus test to show that the compound was slightly acid.* **2.** *Fig.* a question or experiment that seeks to determine the state of one important factor. ☐ *His performance on the long exam served as a litmus test to determine whether he would go to college.* ☐ *The amount of white cells in my blood became the litmus test for diagnosing my disease.*

litter something **about** and **litter** something **around** to cast around something, such as trash, clothing, personal possessions, etc. ☐ *Don't litter all that stuff about.* ☐ *I wish you wouldn't litter your trash around.*

litter something **up**† to mess something up with litter, trash, possessions, etc. ☐ *Who littered this room up?* ☐ *Who littered up this room?*

Little and often fills the purse. *Prov.* If you get a little bit of money frequently, you will always have enough. ☐ *Jill: I don't think I'll ever be able to save very much; I can only afford to save such a little bit of money from every paycheck. Jane: Ah, but little and often fills the purse.*

A **little bird told me.** *Fig.* a way of indicating that you do not want to reveal who told you something. (Sometimes used playfully, when you think that the person you are addressing knows or can guess who was the source of your information.) ☐ *Jill: Thank you for the beautiful pre-*

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sent! How did you know I wanted a green silk scarf? Jane: A little bird told me. ☐ *Bill: How did you find out it was my birthday? Jane: A little bird told me.*

a **little bit (of** something**)** a small amount; some. ☐ *Can I have a little bit of candy?* ☐ *I need a little bit of time to finish this essay.*

little bitty very little. ☐ *Can I have just a little bitty piece of that lemon meringue pie?* ☐ *He was just a little bitty boy.*

little by little gradually, a little bit at a time. ☐ *I earned enough money, little by little, to buy a car.* ☐ *Jimmy crawled, little by little, until he reached the door.*

A **little (hard) work never hurt anyone.** and A **little (hard) work never killed anyone.** *Prov.* One should expect to do hard or difficult work and not avoid doing it. ☐ *Go help your father with the yard work. A little hard work never hurt anyone.* ☐ *Go ahead. Bring me some more bricks. A little work never killed anyone.*

A **little knowledge is a dangerous thing.** and A **little learning is a dangerous thing.** *Prov. Cliché* If you only know a little about something, you may feel you are qualified to make judgments when, in fact, you are not. ☐ *After Bill read one book on the history of Venezuela, he felt he was an authority on the subject, but he wound up looking like a fool in discussions with people who knew a lot more about it than he did. A little learning is a dangerous thing.*

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(a **little) new to (all) this** an apologetic way of saying that one is experiencing something new or participating in something new. ☐ *I'm sorry I'm slow. I'm a little new to all this.* ☐ *She's new to this. She needs practice.*

a **(little) nip in the air** a cold feeling; cold weather. ☐ *I felt a little nip in the air when I opened the window.* ☐ *There's more of a nip in the air as winter approaches.*

a **little off** Go to a bit off.

little old someone or something ordinary; harmless. (Said to downplay or minimize the importance of something.) ☐ *Aw, honey, I wasn't gambling. I just went to one little old poker game.* ☐ *Charlie: Did you eat that whole chocolate cake that I was saving for the party? Jane: Little old me?*

Little pitchers have big ears. *Prov.* Children like to listen to adult conversations and can understand a lot of what they hear. (Used to warn another adult not to talk about something because there is a child present.) ☐ *I started to tell Mary about the date I had on Saturday, but she interrupted me, saying, "Little pitchers have big ears," and looked pointedly at her six-year-old daughter, who was in the room with us.*

a **little pricey** Go to a little steep.

little shaver *Rur.* a child; a baby. ☐ *I think the little shaver needs her diaper changed.* ☐ *Tom thinks his grandson is the cutest little shaver there ever was.*

a **(little) short on one end** *Rur.* short. ☐ *You'll recognize Bill right away. He's got red hair, and he's a little short on one end.* ☐ *He's not small; he's just short on one end.* ☐ *The barber cut my hair a little short on one end.*

a **little steep** and a **little pricey** *Fig.* relatively expensive; costing more than one wants to pay. ☐ *The food here is a little pricey, but you get a lot of it.*

Little strokes fell great oaks. *Prov.* You can complete a large, intimidating task by steadily doing small parts of it. ☐ *Jill: How can I possibly write a fifty-page report in two months? Jane: Just write a little bit every day. Little strokes fell great oaks.*

Little thieves are hanged, but great ones escape. *Prov.* Truly expert criminals are never caught. ☐ *Everyone's making such a fuss because they convicted that bank robber, but he must not have been a very dangerous criminal. Little thieves are hanged, but great ones escape.*

Little things please little minds. and **Small things please small minds.** *Prov.* People who are not intelligent are pleased by trivial things. (Implies that the person you are talking about is not intelligent.) ☐ *Jill: Nathaniel's been awfully cheerful today. Jane: Yes, his favorite TV show is on tonight. Jill: Little things please little minds, they say.*

a **little white lie** *Fig.* a small, usually harmless lie; a fib. ☐ *Every little white lie you tell is still a lie and it is still meant to mislead people.*

live a dog's life Go to lead a dog's life.

live a life of something to have a life of a certain quality or style. ☐ *The movie star lived a life of luxury.* ☐ *After Anne won the lottery, she lived the life of a queen.*

live above someone or something and **live over** someone or something to live in a place that is at a higher level than someone or something; to dwell directly over someone or something. ☐ *We used to live above a small grocery store.* ☐ *Now we live over a student, who often has noisy parties.*

live among someone to live in a community with someone or a community made up of certain people. ☐ *The anthropologist lived among the small tribe for two years.* ☐ *They lived among the Jivaro Indians for a brief period.*

live and learn *Cliché* to increase one's knowledge by experience. (Usually said when one is surprised to learn something.) ☐ *I didn't know that snakes could swim. Well, live and learn!* ☐ *John didn't know he should water his houseplants a little extra in the dry winter months. When they all died, he said, "Live and learn."*

live and let live *Cliché* not to interfere with other people's business or preferences. ☐ *I don't care what they do! Live and let live, I always say.* ☐ *Your parents are strict. Mine just live and let live.*

live apart (from someone**)** to live separated from a person whom one might be expected to live with. ☐ *John lives apart from his wife, who has a job in another city.* ☐ *He lives apart, but they are still married.*

live around someone or something Go to around someone or something.

live beyond one's **means** to spend more money than one can afford. ☐ *The Browns are deeply in debt because they are living beyond their means.* ☐ *I keep a budget so that I don't live beyond my means.*

live by one's **wits** *Fig.* to survive by being clever. ☐ *When you're in the kind of business I'm in, you have to live by your wits.* ☐ *John was orphaned at the age of ten and grew up living by his wits.*

live by something **1.** to live near something. ☐ *We live by a lovely park that is filled with children in the summer.* ☐ *I would love to live by the sea.* **2.** to survive by doing or using something in particular. (See also live by one's

wits.) ☐ *She lives by her own skill and hard work.* ☐ *We live by the skills that we have—and hard work, of course.*

Live by the sword, die by the sword. *Prov.* If you use violence against other people, you can expect to have violence used against you.; You can expect to become a victim of whatever means you use to get what you want. (Biblical.) ☐ *The gang leader who organized so many murders was eventually murdered himself. Live by the sword, die by the sword.* ☐ *Bill liked to spread damaging gossip about other people, until he lost all his friends because of some gossip that was spread about him. Live by the sword, die by the sword.*

live for someone or something **1.** to exist for the benefit of someone or something. ☐ *She just lives for her children.* ☐ *Roger lives for his work.* **2.** to exist to enjoy someone or something. ☐ *She lives for her vacations in Acapulco.*

live for the moment *Fig.* to live only for the pleasures of the present time without planning for the future. ☐ *You need to make plans for your future. You cannot live just for the moment!* ☐ *He lives only for the moment.*

live from day to day *Fig.* to survive on limited means one day at a time with no plans or possibilities for the future. ☐ *The Simpsons just live from day to day. They never plan for the future.* ☐ *I can't live from day to day. I have to provide for the future.*

live from hand to mouth *Fig.* to live in poor circumstances. ☐ *When both my parents were out of work, we lived from hand to mouth.* ☐ *We lived from hand to mouth during the war. Things were very difficult.*

live happily ever after *Cliché* to live in happiness after a specific event. (A formulaic phrase at the end of fairy tales.) ☐ *The prince and the princess lived happily ever after.* ☐ *They went away from the horrible haunted castle and lived happily ever after.*

live high off the hog and **live high on the hog; eat high on the hog** *Rur.* to live well and eat good food. (Note the variation with *pretty*.) ☐ *After they discovered oil on their land, they lived pretty high on the hog.* ☐ *Looks like we're living high off the hog tonight. What's the occasion?*

live in to live at the residence at which one works. ☐ *In order to be here early enough to prepare breakfast, the cook has to live in.* ☐ *Mr. Simpson has a valet, but he doesn't live in.*

live in a world of one's **own** Go to **in a world of** one's **own.**

live in an ivory tower Go to **in an ivory tower.**

live in hope(s) of something to live with the hope that something will happen. ☐ *I have been living in hopes that you would come home safely.* ☐ *Greg lives in hope of winning a million dollars in the lottery.*

live in sin to live with and have sex with someone to whom one is not married. (Sometimes serious and sometimes jocular.) ☐ *Would you like to get married, or would you prefer that we live in sin for a few more years?* ☐ *Let's live in sin. There's no risk of divorce.*

live in something to dwell within something or some place. ☐ *They live in the village.* ☐ *She lives in a large house in the country.*

live in the best of both worlds Go to the **best of both worlds.**

live in the boonies Go to **in the boondocks.**

live in the fast lane Go to **in the fast lane.**

live in the past *Fig.* to live while dwelling on past memories without participating in the present or planning for the future. ☐ *You are just living in the past. Join us in the twenty-first century.* ☐ *Living in the past has its advantages.*

live in the poorhouse Go to **in the poorhouse.**

live in the present *Fig.* to deal with contemporary events and not be dominated by events of the past or planning for the future. ☐ *Forget the past; live in the present.* ☐ *It was no longer possible to get Uncle Herman to live in the present.*

live in (with someone**)** [for servants or lovers] to live in a residence that one might be expected only to visit rather than reside in. ☐ *Their maid lives in with them.* ☐ *She lived in for a few months before they were married.*

live it up to have an exciting time; to do what one pleases—regardless of cost—to please oneself. ☐ *At the party, John was really living it up.* ☐ *Come on! Have fun! Live it up!*

live large to live in luxury; to spend time in grand style. ☐ *George loved to live large, dining at fine French restaurants.*

live like a marked man Go to a **marked man.**

live next door (to someone**)** to live in the house or dwelling next to someone. ☐ *I live next door to John.* ☐ *John lives next door to me.* ☐ *John lives next door.*

live off campus Go to **off campus.**

live off (of) someone or something to obtain one's living or means of survival from someone or something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *You can't live off your uncle all your life!* ☐ *I manage to live off of my salary.*

live off the fat of the land *Fig.* to live on stored-up resources or abundant resources. ☐ *If I had a million dollars, I'd invest it and live off the fat of the land.* ☐ *I'll be happy to retire soon and live off the fat of the land.*

live off the land to live by eating only the food that one produces from the land; to survive by gathering or stealing food, fruits, berries, eggs, etc., while traveling through the countryside. ☐ *We lived off the land for a few years when we first started out farming.* ☐ *The homeless man wandered about, living off the land.*

live on (after someone**)** to outlive someone. ☐ *Aunt Sarah lived on after Uncle Herman only a short time.* ☐ *She had hoped to live on after him and have some fun.*

live on (after someone or something**)** to be remembered long after someone or something might otherwise be forgotten or dead, in the case of persons. ☐ *His good works will live on long after him.* ☐ *Fears of war will live on after the actual conflict.* ☐ *I hope my memory lives on.*

live on an amount of money to live on a specific amount of money; to manage to live on a specific amount of money. ☐ *Can you live on only that much money?* ☐ *I can live on a very small amount of money.*

live on borrowed time *Fig.* to exist only because of good fortune; to live on when death was expected. ☐ *The doc-*

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tors told him he was living on borrowed time. ☐ *You are living on borrowed time, so make the best of it.*

live on one's **own** to live independently, in a separate dwelling. ☐ *I moved out of my parents' house because I wanted to live on my own for a while.* ☐ *It's time you were out living on your own.*

live on something to depend on something for sustenance. (Compare this with **live off** someone or something.) ☐ *I can't live on bread and water.* ☐ *We can hardly live on $500 a week.*

live on the edge Go to **on the edge**.

live out of a suitcase *Fig.* to stay very briefly in several places, never unpacking one's luggage. ☐ *I hate living out of a suitcase. For my next vacation, I want to go to just one place and stay there the whole time.*

live out of cans *Fig.* to eat only canned food. ☐ *You have to have some fresh fruit and vegetables. You can't just live out of cans.* ☐ *We lived out of cans for the entire camping trip.*

live out one's **days** and **live out** one's **life** to live for the remainder of one's life. (Usually with some reference to a place.) ☐ *Where do you plan to live out your days?* ☐ *I will live out my life in sunny Florida.*

live over someone or something Go to **live above** someone or something.

live something **down**† to overcome the shame or embarrassment of something. ☐ *You'll live it down someday.* ☐ *Wilbur will never be able to live down what happened at the party last night.*

live something **out**† to act out something such as one's fantasies. ☐ *She tried to live her dreams out.* ☐ *He has a tendency to try to live out his fantasies.*

live something **over** to go back and live a part of one's life again in order to do things differently. ☐ *I wish I could go back and live those days over again. Boy, would I do things differently!* ☐ *I would like to live that period of my life over again.*

live the life of Riley Go to **lead the life of Riley**.

live through something to endure something; to survive an unpleasant or dangerous time of one's life. ☐ *I almost did not live through the operation.* ☐ *I know I can't live through another attack.*

live to do something **1.** to survive long enough to do something. ☐ *I just hope I live to see them get married and have children.* ☐ *Bill wants to live to see his grandchildren grow up.* **2.** to exist only to do something. ☐ *He lives to work.* ☐ *One shouldn't live to eat.*

live to the (ripe old) age of something to survive to a specific [advanced] age. ☐ *Sally's aunt lived to the ripe old age of one hundred.* ☐ *Ken lived to the age of sixty-two.*

live together 1. [for two people] to dwell in the same place. ☐ *I live together with my sister in the house my parents left us.* ☐ *Henry and Jill live together in their parents' house.* **2.** [for two people] to dwell together in a romantic relationship. ☐ *I heard that Sally and Sam are living together.* ☐ *They are living together and may get married.*

live (together) with someone [for someone] to live with someone else. ☐ *She lives together with her sister in a condo.* ☐ *He lives with his family.*

live under someone or something to dwell directly beneath someone or something. ☐ *We live under the Johnsons. They are fairly quiet.* ☐ *We lived under a law office for a few years.*

live under something (negative) to exist under some kind of worry or threat. ☐ *I can't continue to live under the threat of bankruptcy all the time.* ☐ *It is hard to live under the worry of another war.*

live under the same roof (with someone**)** *Fig.* to share a dwelling with someone. (Implies living in a close relationships, as a husband and wife.) ☐ *I don't think I can go on living under the same roof with her.* ☐ *She was quite happy to live under the same roof with him.*

live up to one's **end of the bargain** and **keep** one's **side of the bargain; live up to** one's **side of the bargain; keep** one's **end of the bargain** to carry though on a bargain; to do as was promised in a bargain. ☐ *You can't quit now. You have to live up to your end of the bargain.* ☐ *Bob isn't keeping his end of the bargain, so I am going to sue him.*

live up to something to fulfill expectations; to satisfy a goal or set of goals. (Often with *one's reputation, promise, word, standards,* etc.) ☐ *I hope I can live up to my reputation.* ☐ *The class lives up to its reputation of being exciting and interesting.*

live with someone *Euph.* to live together with someone; to live in a romantic relationship with someone outside of marriage. ☐ *I lived with my aunt when I was growing up.* ☐ *Is Frank living with his girlfriend?* ☐ *Sandy is living with her domestic partner.*

live with something to put up with something; to endure something. (Does not mean "to dwell with.") ☐ *That is not acceptable. I can't live with that. Please change it.* ☐ *Mary refused to live with the proposed changes.*

live within one's **means** to spend no more money than one has. ☐ *We have to struggle to live within our means, but we manage.* ☐ *John is unable to live within his means.*

live within something **1.** to live within certain boundaries. ☐ *Do you think you can live within your space, or are we going to argue over the use of square footage?* ☐ *Ted demanded again that Bill live within his assigned area.* **2.** to keep one's living costs within a certain amount, especially within one's budget, means, etc. ☐ *Please try to live within your budget.* ☐ *You must learn to live within your take-home pay every month.*

live without something to survive, lacking something. ☐ *I just know I can't live without my car.* ☐ *I am sure we can live without vegetables for a day or two.*

live worlds apart Go to **worlds apart**.

liven something **up**† to make something more lively or less dull. ☐ *Some singing might liven things up a bit.* ☐ *The songs livened up the evening.*

the **living end** *Fig.* the absolute best [person]. ☐ *We really like Ralph. He is the living end as far as his girlfriend is concerned.*

Lo and behold! *Cliché* Look here!; Thus! (An expression of surprise.) ☐ *Lo and behold! There is Fred! He beat us here by taking a shortcut.*

load into something [for people] to get into something. ☐ *Everyone loaded into the bus, and we set off for Denver.* ☐ *The kids all loaded into the station wagon for the trip.*

***a load off** one's **feet** *Fig.* the weight of one's body no longer supported by one's feet, as when one sits down. (*Typically: **get ~; take ~**.) ☐ *Come in, John. Sit down and take a load off your feet.* ☐ *Yes, I need to get a load off my feet. I'm really tired.*

***a load off** one's **mind** and ***a weight off** one's **mind** *Fig.* the relief from a mental burden gained by saying what one is thinking or by speaking one's mind. (*Typically: **get ~; take ~**.) ☐ *I think you'll feel better after you get a load off your mind.*

load someone or something **down† (with** someone or something**)** to burden someone or something with someone or something. ☐ *Don't load down my car with too many people.* ☐ *Tom loaded himself down with work every weekend.*

load someone or something **into** something and **load** someone or something **in†** to put someone or something into something. ☐ *Would you load the dishes into the dishwasher?* ☐ *Let's load the kids into the car and go to the zoo.* ☐ *Load them in, and let's go.*

load someone or something **up† (with** someone or something**)** to burden someone or something greatly or to the maximum with someone or something. ☐ *I loaded her up with a number of books on investments, so she could learn what to do with her money.* ☐ *Don't load up your shelves with books you will never look at.*

load something **onto** someone or something and **load** something **on†** to lift something onto someone or something. ☐ *We loaded the trunk onto Sam, and he carried it up the stairs into the house.* ☐ *Please help me load the boxes onto the cart.* ☐ *Load on the boxes, and let's go.*

load something **with** something to burden something with something; to put a lot of something onto or into something. ☐ *Load this box with all the clothing you can get into it.* ☐ *Don't load these drawers with so much stuff.*

load up (with something**)** to take or accumulate a lot of something. ☐ *Don't load up with cheap souvenirs. Save your money.* ☐ *Whenever I get into a used-book store, I load up.*

loaded for bear 1. *Inf.* angry. ☐ *He left here in a rage. He was really loaded for bear.* ☐ *When I got home from work, I was really loaded for bear. What a horrible day!* **2.** *Inf.* drunk. (An elaboration of *loaded,* which means "drunk.") ☐ *By the end of the party, Bill was loaded for bear.* ☐ *The whole gang drank for an hour until they were loaded for bear.*

loaded to the barrel Go to next.

loaded to the gills and **loaded to the barrel** *Sl.* intoxicated. ☐ *He's loaded to the gills.* ☐ *Man, he's loaded to the barrel and fighting mad.*

loaf around to waste time; to idle the time away doing almost nothing. ☐ *Every time I see you, you are just loafing around.* ☐ *I enjoy loafing around on the weekend.*

loaf something **away†** to waste away a period of time. ☐ *You have loafed the entire day away!* ☐ *He loafed away the entire day.*

loan something **to** someone to lend something to someone. (Considered to be an error for *lend*.) ☐ *Can you loan a few bucks to Sam and me?* ☐ *I will not loan anything to you.*

lob something **at** someone or something to throw or toss something at someone or something. ☐ *Who lobbed this thing at me?* ☐ *They lobbed a stone at the cat, but that only made it mad.*

lobby against something to solicit support against something, such as a piece of legislation or a government regulation. ☐ *We sent a lot of lawyers to the state capital to lobby against the bill, but it passed anyway.* ☐ *They lobbied against the tax increase.*

lobby for something to solicit support for something among the members of a voting body, such as the Congress. ☐ *Tom is always lobbying for some reform bill or other.* ☐ *The manufacturers lobbied for tax relief.*

local yokel a local resident of a rural place. (Mildly derogatory.) ☐ *One of the local yokels helped me change the tire.* ☐ *The local yokels all listen to the same radio station.*

lock horns (with someone**)** *Fig.* to get into an argument with someone. ☐ *Let's settle this peacefully. I don't want to lock horns with the boss.* ☐ *The boss doesn't want to lock horns either.*

lock in on someone or something and **lock on(to)** someone or something *Fig.* to fix some kind of electronic sensing device on someone or something. ☐ *The enemy pilot was flying just ahead of us. Aiming the laser, we locked in on him and shot him down.* ☐ *We locked onto the satellite and got an excellent TV picture.*

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lock on(to someone or something**)** to fasten or grab onto someone or something. (See also lock in on someone or something.) ☐ *She locked onto the child and wouldn't leave his side for an instant.* ☐ *I saw the thing I wanted and locked on.*

lock someone or an animal **(up) in (**something**)** and **lock** someone or an animal **up†** to fasten the opening to something so someone, a group, or an animal cannot get out. ☐ *Take Chuck and lock him up in the cell.* ☐ *Lock up the killer and throw away the key!*

lock someone or something **away†** to put someone or something away in a locked container or space. ☐ *You will have to lock all the medications away when the grandchildren come to visit.* ☐ *They locked away some cash for a rainy day.* ☐ *They locked it away.*

lock someone or something **out of** something and **lock** someone or something **out†** to lock something to prevent someone or something from getting into it. ☐ *Someone locked me out of my office.* ☐ *Who locked out the office staff this morning?*

lock someone or something **up† (**somewhere**)** to lock someone or something within something or some place. ☐ *The captain ordered the sailor locked up in the brig until the ship got into port.* ☐ *Don't lock me up!* ☐ *The sheriff locked up the crook in a cell.*

lock something **in†** to make something, such as a rate of interest, permanent over a period of time. ☐ *You should try to lock in a high percentage rate on your bonds.* ☐ *We locked in a very low rate on our mortgage.*

lock something **onto** someone or something and **lock** something **on†** to attach or fix something onto someone or

something. ☐ *The cop locked the handcuffs onto the mugger and led him away.* ☐ *Andy locked his bicycle onto the signpost.* ☐ *See that bike rack? Lock your bike on and keep an eye on it.*

lock, stock, and barrel *Cliché* everything. ☐ *We had to move everything out of the house—lock, stock, and barrel.* ☐ *We lost everything—lock, stock, and barrel—in the fire.*

Lock the stable door after the horse is stolen. Go to Shut the stable door after the horse has bolted.

lodge someone **with** someone to have someone stay with someone as a guest. ☐ *We lodged the visitor with George for the weekend.* ☐ *Would it be possible for us to lodge Mary with you?*

lodge something **against** someone to place a charge against someone. ☐ *The neighbors lodged a complaint against us for walking on their grass.* ☐ *I want to lodge an assault charge against Randy.*

lodge something **against** something to place or prop something against something. ☐ *We lodged the chest against the door, making it difficult or impossible to open.* ☐ *Let's lodge the stone against the side of the barn to help support it.*

lodge something **in** something to get something stuck in something or some place. ☐ *She lodged her coat in the door and tore it.* ☐ *He lodged a screwdriver in the machine's gears by accident.*

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lodge with someone to stay or reside with someone. ☐ *I lodged with my cousin while I was in Omaha.* ☐ *Tricia plans to lodge with us while she is here.*

log off and **log out** to record one's exit from a computer system. (This action may be recorded, or logged, automatically in the computer's memory.) ☐ *I closed my files and logged off.* ☐ *What time did you log out?*

log on to begin to use a computer system, as by entering a password, etc. (This action may be recorded, or logged, automatically in the computer's memory.) ☐ *What time did you log on to the system this morning?* ☐ *I always log on before I get my first cup of coffee.*

log out Go to log off.

log someone **for** something **1.** to schedule someone for something. ☐ *I am going to log you for sentry duty on the weekends.* ☐ *We will have to log Bill for service as a parking attendant.* **2.** to make a note in a log about someone's bad behavior. ☐ *The captain logged the first mate for the navigation error.* ☐ *I will have to log you for that.*

log someone **off** and **log** someone **out** [for someone] to cause someone to exit from a computer system. (This exit may be recorded, or logged, automatically in the computer's memory.) ☐ *Mary had to rush off to an appointment, so I logged her off.*

log someone **on**† **(to** something**)** to allow someone to link (electronically) to a computer system. (This action may be recorded, or logged, automatically in the computer's memory.) ☐ *I will log you on to the system if you forgot how to do it.* ☐ *I will log on Jill, who is late.*

log someone **out** Go to log someone off.

log something **up**† to record an amount of something. ☐ *The ship logged many nautical miles up on its last voyage.* ☐ *It logged up a lot of miles.*

loiter around to idle somewhere; to hang around. ☐ *Stop loitering around! Get going!* ☐ *The kids were loitering around for most of the summer.*

loiter over something to dawdle or linger over something. ☐ *Don't loiter over your meal. I want to start the dishwasher.* ☐ *I wish you wouldn't loiter over your chores.*

loiter something **away**† to idle away a period of time. ☐ *Those boys will loiter half their lives away.* ☐ *They loitered away their summer vacation.*

loll about (some place**)** to lie, lounge, or droop some place. ☐ *The tired travelers lolled about all over the hotel lobby until their rooms were ready.* ☐ *They were still lolling about at three in the afternoon.*

loll around to roll, flop, or hang around. ☐ *The dog's tongue lolled around as it rolled on its back, trying to keep cool.* ☐ *Stop lolling around and get to work.*

loll back [for a head] to fall or droop backwards. ☐ *As he passed out, his head lolled back and struck the corner of the table.* ☐ *Her head lolled back and suddenly she was fast asleep.*

loll out [for a tongue] to hang or flop out. ☐ *The dog's tongue lolled out as it lay sleeping.* ☐ *Since the dog's tongue lolled out every time it opened its mouth, it is a wonder it didn't bite it when it closed its mouth.*

lollygag (around) to loaf; to loiter. ☐ *How can I get my work done with you lollygagging around?* ☐ *I spent my vacation just lollygagging.*

the **long and the short of it** and the **short and the long of it** *Fig.* the most important point; the summary of the matter. ☐ *Jill: Is there some reason that you've spent the last half hour complaining about Fred? Jane: The long and the short of it is, I hate working with him so much that I'm going to resign.* ☐ *Dad keeps saying that he can't spend the rest of his life in mourning for Mother. I finally asked him if he was thinking of getting married again. "That's the long and the short of it," he admitted.*

the **long arm of the law** *Fig.* the police; the law. ☐ *The long arm of the law is going to tap you on the shoulder some day, Lefty.* ☐ *The long arm of the law finally caught up with Gert.*

long for someone or something to desire or pine for someone or something. ☐ *She is longing for her old friends.* ☐ *Walter longed for his hometown in the mountains.*

long gone gone a long time ago; used up a long time ago. ☐ *The ice cream and cake are long gone. You are simply too late for the refreshments.*

long in the tooth *Fig.* old. ☐ *That actor is getting a little long in the tooth to play the romantic lead.* ☐ *I may be long in the tooth, but I'm not stupid.*

***a long shot** *Fig.* a risky bet; an attempt, bet, or proposition that has a low probability of success. (*Typically: **be ~; seem like ~**.) ☐ *Your solution is a long shot, but we'll try it and hope it works.*

long story short *Sl.* to make a long story short. ☐ *Okay, long story short: everything that goes up comes down, okay?* ☐ *Then the guy comes over, and—long story short—"You got a match?"*

Long time no see. *Cliché* I have not seen you in a long time.; We have not seen each other in a long time. ☐ *Tom:*

Hi, Fred. Where have you been keeping yourself? Fred: Good to see you, Tom. Long time no see. ☐ *John: It's Bob! Hi, Bob! Bob: Hi, John! Long time no see.*

The **longest way round is the shortest way home.** and The **longest way round is the nearest way home.** *Prov.* It may seem as if it will take too long to do something carefully and according to directions, but in fact it will take less time than doing something carelessly, because you will not have to fix it afterwards. ☐ *I would advise you to read the instructions before trying to use your new stereo. It takes some time, but the longest way round is the nearest way home.*

look a gift horse in the mouth *Fig.* to be ungrateful to someone who gives you something; to treat someone who gives you a gift badly. (Usually with a negative.) ☐ *Never look a gift horse in the mouth.* ☐ *I advise you not to look a gift horse in the mouth.*

look about (for someone or something**)** to try to locate someone or something. ☐ *I have to look about for someone to serve as a babysitter.* ☐ *I don't see it here. I'll have to look about.*

look after number one and **look out for number one** to take care of oneself first. ☐ *You gotta look after number one, right?* ☐ *It's a good idea to look out for number one. Who else will?*

look after someone or something to take care of someone or something. ☐ *Please look after my little boy.* ☐ *Will you look after my cat while I'm away?* ☐ *Do you want me to look after your car?*

look ahead to something to try to foresee something; to think into the future about something. ☐ *She looked ahead to a bright future in sales.* ☐ *I look ahead to a new job when I graduate.*

look alike to appear similar. ☐ *All these cars look alike these days.* ☐ *The twins look alike and not many people can tell them apart.*

Look alive! Act alert and responsive! ☐ *"Come on, Fred! Get moving! Look alive!" shouted the coach, who was not happy with Fred's performance.* ☐ *Bill: Look alive, Bob! Bob: I'm doing the best I can.*

look around (at something**)** to investigate something; to study something visually. ☐ *Go into the room and look around at the way they have fixed it up.* ☐ *I went in and looked around.*

look around for someone or something to seek someone or something out. ☐ *Look around for Ted and tell him to come home.* ☐ *I looked around for the can opener, but it's not there.*

look around (in) some place to investigate some place. ☐ *Look around the kitchen. You will find what you want.* ☐ *Tell her to look around in the attic. Maybe the camping gear is there.*

look as if butter wouldn't melt in one's **mouth** *Fig.* to appear to be cold and unfeeling (despite any information to the contrary). ☐ *Sally looks as if butter wouldn't melt in her mouth. She can be so cruel.* ☐ *What a sour face. He looks as if butter wouldn't melt in his mouth.*

look aside to look to one side; to turn one's head aside so as not to see someone or something. ☐ *As I approached, he looked aside, pretending not to recognize me.* ☐ *She looked aside, hoping I wouldn't see her.*

look askance at someone or something *Fig.* to be surprised or shocked at someone or something. ☐ *The teacher looked askance at the student who had acted so rudely.* ☐ *Everyone had looked askance at her efforts as an artist.*

look at someone **cross-eyed** *Fig.* to merely appear to question, threaten, or mock someone. (Often in the negative.) ☐ *You had better be on your best behavior around Tony. Don't even look at him cross-eyed!* ☐ *If you so much as look at me cross-eyed, I will send you to your room.*

look at someone or something to examine someone or something. ☐ *The doctor needs to look at the wound before you leave.* ☐ *You had better have the doctor look at you. That is a nasty wound.*

look at the crux of the matter and **look at the heart of the matter; look at the root of the matter** Go to the crux of the matter.

look at the heart of the matter Go to previous.

Look (at) what the cat dragged in! *Inf.* Look who's here! (A good-humored and familiar way of showing surprise at someone's presence in a place, especially if the person looks a little rumpled. Compare this with look like something the cat dragged in.) ☐ *Bob and Mary were standing near the doorway talking when Tom came in. "Look what the cat dragged in!" announced Bob.* ☐ *Mary: Hello, everybody. I'm here! Jane: Look at what the cat dragged in!*

L

look away (from someone or something**)** to turn one's gaze away from someone. ☐ *She looked away from him, not wishing her eyes to give away her true feelings.* ☐ *In embarrassment, she looked away.*

look back (at someone or something**)** and **look back (on** someone or something**)** **1.** *Lit.* to gaze back and try to get a view of someone or something. ☐ *She looked back at the city and whispered a good-bye to everything she had ever cared for.* ☐ *I went away and never looked back.* **2.** *Fig.* to think about someone or something in the past. ☐ *When I look back on Frank, I do remember his strange manner, come to think of it.* ☐ *When I look back, I am amazed at all I have accomplished.*

look becoming on someone Go to becoming on someone.

Look before you leap. *Prov. Cliché* Think carefully about what you are about to do before you do it. ☐ *I'm not saying you shouldn't sign the lease for that apartment. I'm just saying you should look before you leap.* ☐ *Jill: I'm thinking about going to night school. Jane: Are you sure you can spare the time and the money? Look before you leap.*

look beyond someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to try to see to a point farther than someone or something. ☐ *Look beyond Claire at the forest in the distance.* ☐ *Look beyond the house and see what you can spot in the trees behind it.* **2.** *Fig.* to try to think or plan further than someone or something. ☐ *Sally will be gone soon. Look beyond Sally and decide whom you want to hire.* ☐ *Look beyond Tom. Think about how you will deal with the next person who has Tom's job.*

look daggers at someone *Fig.* to give someone a dirty look. ☐ *Tom must have been mad at Ann from the way he*

was looking daggers at her. ☐ Don't you dare look daggers at me! Don't even look cross-eyed at me!

look down (at someone or something**) 1.** to turn one's gaze downward at someone or something. ☐ *She looked down at me and giggled at the awkward position I was in.* ☐ *She looked down and burst into laughter.* **2.** and **look down** one's **nose at** someone or something; **look down on** someone or something to view someone or something as lowly or unworthy. ☐ *She looked down at all the waiters and treated them badly.* ☐ *They looked down on our humble food.* ☐ *Don't look down your nose at my car just because it's rusty and noisy.*

look fit to kill *Fig.* [dressed up] to look very fancy or sexy. ☐ *Mary put on her best clothes and looked fit to kill.* ☐ *John looked fit to kill in his new tuxedo.*

look for someone or something to seek someone or something. ☐ *I am looking for Mr. William Wilson. Do you know where he lives?* ☐ *I am looking for the address of Bill Wilson.*

look for someone or something **high and low** and **look high and low (for** someone or something**)** to search everywhere for someone or something. ☐ *Where were you? I looked for you high and low.* ☐ *I looked high and low for my passport.*

look for trouble Go to ask for trouble.

L

look forward to something to anticipate something with pleasure. ☐ *I'm really looking forward to your visit next week.* ☐ *We all look forward to your new book on gardening.*

look good on paper to seem fine in theory, but not perhaps in practice; to appear to be a good plan. ☐ *The plan looks good on paper, but it may not work.* ☐ *This looks good on paper. Let's hope it works in the real world.*

look here a phrase emphasizing the point that follows. (Can show some impatience.) ☐ *Henry: Look here, I want to try to help you, but you're not making it easy for me. Rachel: I'm just so upset.* ☐ *Andy: Look here, I just asked you a simple question! Bob: As I told you in the beginning, there are no simple answers.*

look high and low (for someone or something**)** Go to look for someone or something high and low.

look in (on someone or something**)** and **check in (on** someone or something**)** to see to the welfare of someone or something; to check briefly on someone or something. ☐ *I'll stop by your house and look in on things while you're on vacation.* ☐ *Yes, just look in and make sure nothing is wrong.*

look into something **1.** *Lit.* to gaze into the inside of something. ☐ *Look into the box and make sure you've gotten everything out of it.* ☐ *Look into the camera's viewfinder at the little red light.* **2.** and **check into** something; **see into** something *Fig.* to investigate something. ☐ *I'll have to look into that matter.* ☐ *The police checked into her story.* ☐ *Don't worry about your problem. I'll see into it.*

look like a candidate for a pair of wings Go to a candidate for a pair of wings.

look like a case of something Go to a case of something.

look like a (dead) ringer (for someone**)** Go to a (dead) ringer (for someone).

look like a million dollars Go to like a million dollars.

look like a saddle on a sow *Rur.* to look ridiculous and out of place. ☐ *Tom: How do you like my new diamond earring? Jane: It looks like a saddle on a sow.* ☐ *The fancy wheels on that beat-up old car look like a saddle on a sow.*

look like death warmed over Go to like death warmed over.

look like someone or something to resemble someone or something. ☐ *You look like my cousin Fred.* ☐ *This one looks like an apple.*

look like something to give the appearance of predicting (something). ☐ *The sky looks like rain.* ☐ *No, it looks like snow.* ☐ *Oh, oh. This looks like trouble. Let's go.*

look like something **the cat dragged in** *Fig.* to look very shabby, worn, exhausted, or abused. (Sometimes with *drug*.) ☐ *That new sofa of theirs looks like something the cat dragged in.* ☐ *Poor Dave looks like something the cat drug in. He must have been out late last night.*

look like the cat that swallowed the canary *Fig.* to appear as if one had just had a great success. ☐ *After the meeting John looked like the cat that swallowed the canary. I knew he must have been a success.* ☐ *Your presentation must have gone well. You look like the cat that swallowed the canary.*

Look me up when you're in town. When you next come to my town, try to find me (and we will get together). (A vague and perhaps insincere invitation.) ☐ *Bob: Nice to see you, Tom. Bye now. Tom: Yes, indeed. Look me up when you're in town. Bye.* ☐ *Sally (on the phone): Bye. Nice talking to you. Mary: Bye, Sally. Sorry we can't talk more. Look me up when you're in town.*

look none the worse for wear Go to none the worse for wear.

look on to be a spectator and watch what is happening without participating. ☐ *The beating took place while a policeman looked on.* ☐ *While the kittens played, the mother cat looked on contentedly.*

look on someone **as** something to view or think of someone as something. ☐ *I look on you as a very thoughtful person.* ☐ *Mary looked on Jane as a good friend.*

look on the bright side *Fig.* consider the positive aspects of a negative situation. ☐ *Look on the bright side. Things could have been much worse than they are.*

look on (with someone**)** to share and read from someone else's notes, paper, book, music, etc. ☐ *I don't have a copy of the notice, but I will look on with Carlo.* ☐ *Carla has a copy of the music. She doesn't mind if I look on.*

look out Go to watch out for someone or something.

look out for number one Go to look after number one.

look out for someone Go to watch out for someone.

look out (of) something to gaze outward from inside something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Look out of the window and see if it is raining.* ☐ *I looked out of the door to see what the weather was like.*

look (out) on(to) something [for something] to face onto something or some place. ☐ *The balcony looks out onto the meadow.* ☐ *My window looks onto the street.*

look someone **in the eye** Go to next.

look someone **in the face** and **look** someone **in the eye; stare** someone **in the face** *Fig.* to face someone directly. (Facing someone this way is a sign of sincerity.) ☐ *I don't believe you. Look me in the eye and say that.* ☐ *She looked him in the face and said she never wanted to see him again.*

look someone or something **over**† to examine someone or something. ☐ *I think you had better have the doctor look you over.* ☐ *Please look over these papers.*

look someone or something **up**† and **hunt** someone or something **up**† **1.** to seek someone, a group, or something out. ☐ *I lost track of Sally. I'll try to look her up and get in touch with her.* ☐ *I am going to look up an old friend when I am in Chicago.* ☐ *I am going to hunt that old gang up.* ☐ *Ted came into town and looked up his favorite pizza place.* **2.** to seek information about someone or something in a book or listing. ☐ *I don't recognize his name. I'll look him up and see what I can find.* ☐ *I'll look up this person in a reference book.* ☐ *She looked herself up in the telephone book to make sure her name was spelled correctly.*

look the other way 1. *Lit.* to look in the opposite direction. ☐ *To make sure it's safe to cross the street, look the other way before you step off the curb.* **2.** *Fig.* to ignore something on purpose. ☐ *John could have prevented the problem, but he looked the other way.* ☐ *By looking the other way, he actually made the problem worse.*

look through something **1.** to gaze through something. ☐ *Look through the window at what the neighbors are doing.* ☐ *Look through the binoculars and see if you can get a better view.* **2.** to examine the parts, pages, samples, etc., of something. ☐ *Look through this report and see what you make of it.* ☐ *I will look through it when I have time.*

look to be a million miles away Go to a million miles away.

look to one's **laurels** *Fig.* to take care not to lower or diminish one's reputation or position, especially in relation to that of someone else potentially better. ☐ *With the arrival of the new member of the football team, James will have to look to his laurels to remain as the highest scorer.* ☐ *The older members of the team will have to look to their laurels when the new players arrive.*

look to someone or something **(for** something**)** to expect someone or something to supply something. ☐ *Children look to their parents for help.* ☐ *Tom looked to the bank for a loan.*

look to the naked eye Go to the naked eye.

look toward someone or something to face in the direction of someone or something. ☐ *Look toward Sarah and see where she is standing. Isn't that a lovely garden she's in?* ☐ *Look toward the sea and see what a sunset is meant to look like.*

look under the hood to examine the engine of a car; to check the oil, water, and other such routine items associated with the engine of a car. ☐ *I finished putting gas in. I need to look under the hood.* ☐ *Do you want me to look under the hood, sir?*

look up to show promise of improving. ☐ *My prospects for a job are looking up.* ☐ *Conditions are looking up.*

look up and down (for someone or something**)** to look everywhere for someone or something. ☐ *Where is Kelly? I looked up and down for her.* ☐ *I can't find her. I looked up and down, but no Kelly.*

look up and down something to gaze up and then down something, such as a street. ☐ *We looked up and down the street and saw no cars, no houses, and no people.* ☐ *Mary looked up and down the highway, but she could not find her lost hubcap.*

look up at someone or something to raise one's gaze to someone or something. ☐ *Would you please look up at me while I am talking to you? I hate to be ignored.* ☐ *Look up at the top of that building.*

look up (from something**)** to gaze upwards; to stop reading or working and lift one's gaze upward. ☐ *She looked up from her reading and spoke to us.* ☐ *Mary looked up as we came into the room.*

look up to someone *Fig.* to view someone with respect and admiration. ☐ *Bill really looks up to his father.* ☐ *Everyone in the class looked up to the teacher.*

look (up)on someone or something **as** something to view someone or something as something; to consider someone or something to be something. ☐ *I look upon Todd as a fine and helpful guy.* ☐ *I look on these requests as an annoyance.*

L

look (up)on someone or something **with** something to view someone or something with an attitude, such as scorn, favor, anger, disgust, etc. ☐ *She looked upon all of us with scorn.* ☐ *Bill looked on the food set before him with disgust.*

Look who's here! an expression drawing attention to someone present or who just arrived at a place. ☐ *Bill: Look who's here! My old friend Fred. How goes it, Fred? Fred: Hi, there, Bill! What's new? Bill: Nothing much.* ☐ *Bill: Look who's here! Mary: Yeah. Isn't that Fred Morgan?*

Look who's talking! *Fig.* You are guilty of doing the same thing that you have criticized someone else for doing or that you accused someone else of doing. ☐ *Andy: You criticize me for being late! Look who's talking! You just missed your flight! Jane: Well, nobody's perfect.* ☐ *Mary: You just talk and talk, you go on much too long about practically nothing, and you never give a chance for anyone else to talk, and you just don't know when to stop! Sally: Look who's talking!*

looking like a sitting duck Go to a sitting duck.

looking over one's **shoulder** *Fig.* keeping watch for danger or threats to oneself. ☐ *Bob's a little paranoid. He's always looking over his shoulder.*

*a **look-see** *Rur.* a look at someone or something; a peek. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~; take ~**.) ☐ *A: Do you think they have finished painting your office yet? B: Let's go down there and take a look-see.*

loom large (on the horizon) *Cliché* to be of great importance, especially when referring to an upcoming problem, danger, or threat. ☐ *The exams were looming large on the horizon.* ☐ *Eviction was looming large when the tenants could not pay their rent.*

loom out of something to appear to come out of or penetrate something. ☐ *A truck suddenly loomed out of the fog and just missed hitting us.* ☐ *A tall building loomed out of the mists.*

loom up to appear to rise up [from somewhere]; to take form or definition, usually threatening to some degree. ☐ *A great city loomed up in the distance. It looked threatening in the dusky light.* ☐ *A ghost loomed up, but we paid no attention, since it had to be a joke.* ☐ *The recession loomed up, and the stock market reacted.*

a **loose cannon** a person whose actions are unpredictable and uncontrollable. ☐ *As it turned out, he's not just a loose cannon. He makes sense.* ☐ *Some loose cannon in the State Department has been leaking stories to the press.*

Loose lips sink ships. Don't talk carelessly because you don't know who is listening. (From wartime. Literally, "Don't reveal even the location of a loved one on a ship, because the location could be communicated to the enemy by a spy.") ☐ *You never know who is going to hear what you say and how they will use what they hear. Remember, loose lips sink ships.*

a **loose translation** Go to a free translation.

loosen someone or something **up**† to make someone's muscles and joints move more freely by exercising them. ☐ *The exercise loosened me up quite nicely.* ☐ *It loosened up my legs.* ☐ *I have to do some exercises to loosen myself up.*

loosen someone **up**† *Fig.* to make someone or a group more relaxed and friendly. ☐ *I loosened up the audience with a joke.* ☐ *Loosen yourself up. Relax and try to enjoy people.*

loosen up to become loose or relaxed. ☐ *Loosen up. Relax.* ☐ *We tried to get Mary to loosen up, but she did not respond.*

lop something **off (of)** something and **lop** something **off**† to chop or cut something off something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Lop that long branch off the tree before you put the saw away, will you?* ☐ *Please lop off that branch.*

lope along to move along, bounding. ☐ *The dog loped along at a very even pace, answering to his master's whistle.* ☐ *The horses loped along, eager to get home.*

(lord) high muck-a-muck *Rur.* a very important person. (Humorous.) ☐ *Jim's acting like he's some kind of lord high muck-a-muck. What's gotten into him?* ☐ *Mary got a promotion, so now she's a real high muck-a-muck.*

lord it over someone *Fig.* to dominate someone; to direct and control someone. ☐ *Mr. Smith seems to lord it over his wife.* ☐ *The boss lords it over everyone in the office.*

Lord knows I've tried. *Fig.* I certainly have tried very hard. ☐ *Alice: Why don't you get Bill to fix this fence? Mary: Lord knows I've tried. I must have asked him a dozen times—this year alone.* ☐ *Sue: I can't seem to get to class on time. Rachel: That's just awful. Sue: Lord knows I've tried. I just can't do it.*

Lord love a duck! *Fig.* My goodness! (An exclamation of surprise.) ☐ *Lord love a duck! How that rain is coming down!* ☐ *Lord love a duck! Did you see that cat chasing that dog?*

Lord willing and the creek don't rise Go to God willing and the creek don't rise.

lose a bundle *Sl.* to lose a lot of money. ☐ *Don lost a bundle on that land purchase.* ☐ *I know I would lose a bundle if I went to a casino and gambled.*

lose (all) one's **marbles** Go to lose one's marbles.

lose (all) one's **marbles** and **lose** one's **mind** *Fig.* to go crazy; to go out of one's mind. ☐ *What a silly thing to say! Have you lost your marbles?* ☐ *Look at Sally jumping up and down and screaming. Is she losing all her marbles?* ☐ *I can't seem to remember anything. I think I'm losing my mind.*

lose at something to be defeated at a particular game or activity. ☐ *We lost at basketball but we won at football this weekend.* ☐ *I hate to lose at checkers.*

lose by something to be defeated by a certain amount. ☐ *Our team lost by ten points.* ☐ *I only lost by a few points.*

lose contact with someone or something and **lose touch with** someone or something [for communication with someone or a group] to fail or fade away; to let one's friendship or relationship with someone or a group lapse. ☐ *I hope I don't lose contact with you.* ☐ *I don't want to lose touch with my old friends.*

lose count of someone or something to fail to be able to count someone or something, especially because there are so many. ☐ *I have lost count of the people who have asked that question.* ☐ *I am afraid I have lost count of all the times we have run out of money.*

lose face *Fig.* to lose status; to become less respectable. ☐ *John is more afraid of losing face than losing money.* ☐ *Things will go better if you can explain to him where he was wrong without making him lose face.*

lose favor (with someone**)** Go to fall out of favor (with someone).

lose ground (to someone or something**)** to fall behind someone or something. ☐ *I am losing ground to Wendy in the sales contest.* ☐ *We were losing ground to the opposite team in our quest for the trophy.*

lose heart *Fig.* to lose one's courage or confidence. ☐ *Now, don't lose heart. Keep trying.* ☐ *What a disappointment! It's enough to make one lose heart.*

lose it 1. *Sl.* to empty one's stomach; to vomit. ☐ *Oh, God! I think I'm going to lose it!* ☐ *Go lose it in the bushes.* **2.** *Sl.* to get angry; to lose one's temper. ☐ *It was too much for him. Ted lost it.* ☐ *I sat there calmly, biting my lip to keep from losing it.*

lose money on something to have a net loss on something, such as an investment. ☐ *I lost thousands on that deal.* ☐ *I don't want to lose money on any investment.*

lose one's **appetite** to lose one's desire to eat. ☐ *After that gory movie, I'm afraid I've lost my appetite.*

lose one's **cool** and **blow** one's **cool** to lose one's temper; to lose one's nerve. ☐ *Wow, he really lost his cool! What a tantrum!* ☐ *Whatever you do, don't blow your cool.*

lose one's **grip on** someone or something Go to lose one's hold on someone or something.

lose one's **head (over** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to become confused or overly emotional about someone or something. ☐ *Don't lose your head over John. He isn't worth it.* ☐ *I'm sorry. I got upset and lost my head.*

lose one's **hold on** someone or something and **lose** one's **grip on** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to fail to keep one's handhold on someone or something. □ *I lost my hold on the child, and she nearly slipped away.* □ *She lost her grip on the bag of jewels and it fell overboard.* **2.** and **lose** one's **hold over** someone or something *Fig.* to give up control over someone or something. □ *The manager lost her hold on her employees and was fired.* □ *Fred is losing his grip on his workers.* □ *He is losing his hold over his empire.*

lose one's **lunch** Go to **blow** (one's) **lunch.**

lose one's **reason** *Fig.* to lose one's power of reasoning, possibly in anger. □ *I was so confused that I almost lost my reason.* □ *Bob seems to have lost his reason when he struck John.*

lose one's **shirt** *Fig.* to lose a lot of money; to lose all of one's assets (as if one had even lost one's shirt). □ *I almost lost my shirt on that deal. I have to invest more wisely.* □ *No, I can't loan you $200. I just lost my shirt at the racetrack.*

lose one's **temper (at** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to become angry at someone or something. □ *Lisa lost her temper and began shouting at Bob.* □ *I hate to lose my temper at someone. I always end up feeling guilty.*

lose one's **touch (with** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to lose one's ability to handle someone or something. □ *I seem to have lost my touch with my children. They won't listen to me anymore.* □ *We've both lost our touch as far as managing people goes.*

lose one's **train of thought** *Fig.* to forget what one was talking or thinking about. □ *Excuse me, I lost my train of thought. What was I talking about?* □ *Your question made the speaker lose her train of thought.*

lose oneself **in** someone or something to be thoroughly absorbed in someone or something; to become engrossed in someone or something. □ *Frank loses himself in his children when he is at home.* □ *When I lose myself in my work, time just rushes by.*

lose out 1. to lose in competition; to lose one's expected reward. □ *Our team lost out because our quarterback broke his leg.* □ *I ran my best race, but I still lost out.* **2. lose out (on** something**)** Go to **miss out (on** something**).**

lose out to someone or something to lose a competition to someone or something. □ *Our team lost out to the other team.* □ *Bill lost out to Sally in the contest.*

lose patience (with someone or something**)** to stop being patient with someone or something; to become impatient with someone or something. □ *Please try to be more cooperative. I'm losing patience with you.*

lose sight of someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to have one's vision of someone or something fade because of distance or an obstruction. □ *I lost sight of Alice as she walked into the distance.* □ *We lost sight of the ship as it sailed out of the harbor.* **2.** *Fig.* to forget to consider someone or something. □ *Don't lose sight of Alice and her basic contributions.* □ *Don't lose sight of the basic value of the land on which the house sits.*

lose sleep over someone or something and **lose sleep about** someone or something *Fig.* to worry about someone or something a lot, sometimes when one should be sleeping. (Often used with *any* and the negative.) □ *Yes, Kelly is in a little bit of trouble, but I'm not going to lose any sleep over her.* □ *Don't lose any sleep over the matter.* □ *I refuse to lose sleep about it.*

lose some amount of **time** [for some amount of time] to be wasted. □ *We lost a lot of time waiting for Hermione.* □ *He lost no time in getting out of there.*

lose something **at** something to lose a wager at playing something or at gambling. □ *I lost a fortune at gambling.* □ *We lost all our money at dice.*

lose something **in** something to misplace something in something. □ *I lost my wallet in the barn.* □ *Did someone lose something in the dining room?*

lose something **to** someone to yield or give up something in defeat to someone. □ *We lost the case to the opposing lawyers.* □ *Mary lost her title to last year's runner-up.*

lose the use of something to be deprived of the use of something. □ *After the accident, I lost the use of my left arm for a few days.* □ *Andy lost the use of the car for a week.*

lose to someone or something to be defeated by someone or something. □ *I lost to Wendy in the sales contest.* □ *Our team lost to the Adamsville Raiders for the seventh year in a row.*

lose touch with reality to began to think unrealistically; to become unrealistic. □ *I am so overworked that I am losing touch with reality.* □ *The psychotic criminal had lost touch with reality.*

lose touch with someone or something Go to **lose contact with** someone or something.

lose trace of someone or something *Rur.* to fail to maintain a way of finding someone or something. □ *I lost trace of Walter after we left high school.* □ *I lost trace of the stock certificates after about twenty years.*

lose track (of someone or something**)** to lose contact with someone; to forget where something is. □ *I lost track of all my friends from high school.* □ *Tom has lost track of his glasses again.*

***a losing streak** *Fig.* a series of losses [in sports, for instance]. (*Typically: **be on ~; have ~; continue** one's **~**.) □ *The team was on a losing streak that started nearly three years ago.*

lost and gone forever lost; permanently lost. □ *My poor doggy is lost and gone forever.* □ *My money fell out of my pocket and I am sure that it is lost and gone forever.*

a **lost cause** a futile attempt; a hopeless matter. □ *Our campaign to have the new party on the ballot was a lost cause.* □ *Todd gave it up as a lost cause.*

***lost in** something enveloped in something; engrossed in something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) □ *Ed sat under the tree, lost in reverie.* □ *Excuse me. I didn't hear you. I was lost in my own thoughts.*

***lost on** someone *Fig.* wasted on someone; not valued or appreciated by someone. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) □ *My jokes are lost on him. He is too literal.* □ *The humor of the situation was lost on Mary. She was too upset to see it.*

lost without someone or something unable to function without someone or something. □ *I am just lost without you.* □ *The engineer is lost without his pocket computer.*

L

lost-and-found an office or department that handles items that someone has lost that have been found by someone else. ☐ *The lost-and-found office had an enormous collection of umbrellas and four sets of false teeth!* ☐ *I found a book on the seat of the bus. I turned it in to the driver, who gave it to the lost-and-found office.*

a **lot of give-and-take 1.** *Fig.* a lot of two-way discussion. ☐ *It was a good meeting. There was a lot of give-and-take, and we all learned.* **2.** *Fig.* a lot of negotiating and bargaining. ☐ *After an afternoon of give-and-take, we were finally able to put all the details into an agreement.*

*a **lot of nerve 1.** *Fig.* great rudeness; a lot of audacity or brashness. (*Typically: **have ~; take ~**.) ☐ *He walked out on her, and that took a lot of nerve!* ☐ *You have a lot of nerve! You took my parking place!* **2.** *Fig.* courage. (*Typically: **have ~; take ~**.) ☐ *He climbed the mountain with a bruised foot. That took a lot of nerve.* ☐ *He has a lot of nerve to go into business for himself.*

*a **lot of promise** much promise for the future. (*Typically: **have ~; show ~**.) ☐ *Sally is quite young, but she has a lot of promise.* ☐ *This bush is small, but it shows a lot of promise.*

a **lot of** someone or something and **lots of** people or things a large number of people or things; much of something. ☐ *I got a lot of presents for my birthday.* ☐ *I ate lots of cookies after dinner.*

L

Lots of luck! 1. Good luck! ☐ *I'm glad you're giving it a try. Lots of luck!* ☐ *Lots of luck in your new job!* **2.** You don't have a chance!; Good luck, you'll need it! (Sarcastic.) ☐ *Think you stand a chance? Lots of luck!* ☐ *You a senator? Lots of luck!*

lots of people or things Go to a **lot of** someone or something.

loud and clear clear and distinctly. (Originally said of radio reception that is heard clearly and distinctly.) ☐ *Tom: If I've told you once, I've told you a thousand times: Stop it! Do you hear me? Bill*: Yes, loud and clear. ☐ *I hear you loud and clear.*

lounge around (some place**)** to pass time idly some place. ☐ *I am going to lounge around the house this morning.* ☐ *Don't lounge around all day.*

louse someone or something **up**† *Inf.* to ruin something; to **mess** someone or something **up.** ☐ *You really loused me up! You got me in a real mess!* ☐ *Who loused up my scheme?*

lousy with someone or something *Inf.* having lots of someone or something. (Like an infestation of lice.) ☐ *Old Mr. Wilson is lousy with money.* ☐ *Tiffany is lousy with jewels and furs, but she's got bad teeth.*

love at first sight *Fig.* love established when two people first see one another. ☐ *Bill was standing at the door when Ann opened it. It was love at first sight.* ☐ *It was love at first sight when they met, but it didn't last long.*

Love begets love. *Prov.* If you behave lovingly to other people, they will behave lovingly to you. ☐ *Child: I hate Tammy! She's always mean to me. Father: If you're nicer to her, maybe she'll change her ways. Love begets love.*

Love is blind. *Cliché* If you love someone, you cannot see any faults in that person. ☐ *Jill: I don't understand why Joanna likes Tom. He's inconsiderate, he's vain, and he isn't even good-looking. Jane: Love is blind.*

Love makes the world go round. *Prov.* Life is more pleasant when people treat each other lovingly. ☐ *Come on, guys, stop fighting with each other all the time. Love makes the world go round.*

Love me, love my dog. *Prov.* If you love someone, you should accept everything and everyone that the person loves. ☐ *Jill: I wish you'd keep your dog out of the house when I come over. Jane: Love me, love my dog.* ☐ *Most of Alice's friends didn't like her sister, but they accepted her because Alice insisted, "Love me, love my dog."*

The **love of money is the root of all evil.** Go to Money is the root of all evil.

Love will find a way. *Prov.* People who are in love will overcome any obstacles in order to be together. (Sometimes used ironically, to suggest that someone is in love with whatever he or she is struggling to be near, as in the second example.) ☐ *Jill: I feel so sorry for Lily and Craig. They just got engaged, and now his job is transferring him across the country. Jane: Love will find a way, I'm sure.* ☐ *Alan: Fred's feeling discouraged because he didn't get the loan he needed to buy the sports car he wants. Bill: I'm sure he'll get that car eventually. Love will find a way.*

Love you! *Inf.* You are great! (Often insincere.) ☐ *See ya around, Martin. Let's do lunch! Love ya! Bye-bye.* ☐ *Nice talking to you, babe. Love you!*

a **love-hate relationship** *Fig.* a relationship of any kind that involves both devotion and hatred. ☐ *Tommy has a love-hate relationship with his teacher. Mostly, though, it's hate lately.*

Lovely weather for ducks. and **Fine weather for ducks.** *Cliché* a greeting meaning that this unpleasant rainy weather must be good for something. ☐ *Bill: Hi, Bob. How do you like this weather? Bob: Lovely weather for ducks.* ☐ *Sally: What a lot of rain! Tom: Yeah. Lovely weather for ducks. Don't care for it much myself.*

low man on the totem pole *Fig.* the least important or lowest-ranking person of a group. ☐ *I was the last to find out because I'm low man on the totem pole.* ☐ *I can't be of any help. I'm low man on the totem pole.*

*a **low profile** *Fig.* a persona or character that does not draw attention. (*Typically: **assume ~; have ~; keep ~; give** oneself **~**.) ☐ *I try to be quiet and keep a low profile. It's hard because I just love attention.*

*the **lowdown (on** someone or something**)** the full story about someone or something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I need to get the lowdown on John. Is he still an accountant?* ☐ *Sally wants to get the lowdown on the new pension plan. Please tell her all about it.*

lower one's **sights** *Fig.* to set one's goals lower. (Alludes to pointing the barrel of a rifle lower to lower the aim of the rifle.) ☐ *Even though you get frustrated, don't lower your sights.* ☐ *I shouldn't lower my sights. If I work hard, I can do what I want.*

lower one's **voice** *Fig.* to speak more softly. ☐ *Please lower your voice or you'll disturb the people who are working.* ☐ *He wouldn't lower his voice, so everyone heard what he said.*

lower oneself **to** some level *Fig.* to bring oneself down to some lower level of behavior. ☐ *I refuse to lower myself to your level.* ☐ *Has TV news lowered itself to the level of the tabloids?*

lower someone's **ears** *Rur.* to cut someone's hair. ☐ *I asked the barber to lower my ears.* ☐ *Looks like somebody lowered Joe's ears!*

lower someone's **spirits** Go to someone's **spirits.**

lower the boom on someone *Fig.* to scold or punish someone severely; to crack down on someone; to **throw the book at someone.** ☐ *If Bob won't behave better, I'll have to lower the boom on him.* ☐ *The teacher lowered the boom on the whole class for misbehaving.*

low-hanging fruit *Fig.* the easiest person(s) to sell something to, to convince of something, or to fool. (From the much older **easy pickings.**) ☐ *People who always want to be the first to buy something, they're low-hanging fruit for this product.* ☐ *Don't be satisfied with the low-hanging fruit. Go after the hard-sell types.*

luck into something to find something by luck; to get involved in something by luck. ☐ *I lucked into this apartment on the very day I started looking.* ☐ *We lucked into a good deal on a used car.*

the **luck of the draw** the results of chance; the lack of any choice. ☐ *Why do I always end up with the luck of the draw?* ☐ *The team was assembled by chance. It was just the luck of the draw that we could work so well together.*

luck out to be fortunate; to strike it lucky. ☐ *I really lucked out when I ordered the duck. It's excellent.* ☐ *I didn't luck out at all. I rarely make the right choice.*

luck out of something to get out of something by luck alone. ☐ *I lucked out of taking a driving test. I only had to pass a vision test to get my license.* ☐ *Man, I really lucked out of it.*

Lucky at cards, unlucky in love. *Prov.* If you frequently win at card games, you will not have happy love affairs. (Can imply the converse, that if you do not win at card games, you will have happy love affairs.) ☐ *Fred: I wish I was George. He always wins tons of money at our poker games. Alan: Don't be jealous of him. Lucky at cards, unlucky in love.*

a **lucky break** and a **nice break;** a **big break** significant good fortune or opportunity. ☐ *I need a lucky break about now.* ☐ *She's never had a lucky break.* ☐ *Mary is going to get a big break soon.*

a **lucky dog** *Fig.* a lucky person. ☐ *You won the lottery? You are a lucky dog!*

lucky for you a phrase introducing a description of an event that favors the person being spoken to. ☐ *Andy: Lucky for you the train was delayed. Otherwise you'd have to wait till tomorrow morning for the next one. Fred: That's luck, all right. I'd hate to have to sleep in the station.* ☐ *Jane: I hope I'm not too late. Sue: Lucky for you, everyone else is late too.*

*a **lucky streak** and *a **streak of luck** *Fig.* a series of lucky wins in gambling or games. (*Typically: **be on ~; have ~.**) ☐ *Thanks to a lucky streak, I won enough in Las Vegas to pay for the trip.*

the **lull before the storm** and the **calm before the storm** a quiet period just before a period of great activity or excitement. (Literal in reference to weather.) ☐ *It was very quiet in the cafeteria just before the students came in for lunch. It was the lull before the storm.* ☐ *In the brief calm before the storm, the clerks prepared themselves for the doors to open and bring in thousands of shoppers.*

lull someone **into a false sense of security** *Cliché* to lead someone into believing that all is well before attacking or doing someone bad. ☐ *We lulled the enemy into a false sense of security by pretending to retreat. Then we launched an attack.* ☐ *The boss lulled us into a false sense of security by saying that our jobs were safe and then let half the staff go.*

lull someone or an animal **to sleep** to quiet and comfort someone or an animal to sleep. ☐ *The sound of the waves lulled me to sleep.* ☐ *The dog's heartbeat lulled her puppies to sleep.*

lumber along to lope or walk along heavily and awkwardly. ☐ *The horses were lumbering along very slowly because they were tired out.* ☐ *They were lumbering along, hoping to get there on time.*

lumber off to move or lope away heavily and awkwardly. ☐ *The frightened bear lumbered off, and we left in a hurry.* ☐ *He lumbered off, leaving us there alone.*

*a **lump in** one's **throat** the feeling of something in one's throat—as if one were going to cry. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** one **~.**) ☐ *Whenever they play the national anthem, I get a lump in my throat.* ☐ *I have a lump in my throat because I'm frightened.*

Lump it! *Inf.* Forget it!; Go away! ☐ *Well, you can just lump it!* ☐ *Lump it! Drop dead!*

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lump someone **and** someone else **together** and **lump** something **and** something else **together** to classify people or things as members of the same category. ☐ *You just can't lump Bill and Ted together. They are totally different kinds of people.* ☐ *I tend to lump apples and oranges together.*

the **lunatic fringe** the more extreme members of a group. ☐ *Most of the members of that religious sect are quite reasonable, but Lisa belongs to the lunatic fringe.* ☐ *Many people try to avoid eating a lot of fat, but Mary is part of the lunatic fringe and will eat anything.*

lunch off something to make a lunch by eating something or part of something. ☐ *We will be able to lunch off the leftover turkey for days!* ☐ *I can lunch off what is in the refrigerator. Don't worry about me.*

lunch out to eat lunch away from one's home or away from one's place of work. ☐ *I think I'll lunch out today. I'm tired of carrying lunches.* ☐ *I want to lunch out today.*

lunge at someone or something to jump or dive at someone or something. ☐ *The dog lunged at the man, but he got out of the way without getting bitten.* ☐ *The dog lunged at the bicycle.*

lunge for someone or something to charge or jump at someone or something; to attack someone or something. ☐ *The mugger lunged for her, but she dodged him.* ☐ *Ted lunged for the door, but Bill beat him to it.*

lurch at someone or something and **lurch toward** someone or something to sway or turn quickly toward someone or something. ☐ *Todd lurched at the door and got it open just as the guard saw him.* ☐ *Bill lurched toward the ship's rail and hung on.*

lurch forward to jerk or sway forward. ☐ *The car lurched forward and shook us around.* ☐ *When the train lurched forward, we were pushed back into our seats.*

lure someone or something **away**† **(from** someone or something**)** to entice or draw someone away from someone or something. ☐ *Do you think we could lure her away from her present employment?* ☐ *They were not able to lure away many of the employees of the other companies.*

lure someone or something **in to** something and **lure** someone or something **in**† to entice someone or something into something or a place. ☐ *The thief tried to lure the tourist into an alley to rob him.* ☐ *Using an old trick, the thief lured in the tourist.*

lurk around to slink or sneak around somewhere. ☐ *Who is that guy lurking around the building?* ☐ *Stop lurking around.*

lust after someone and **lust for** someone to desire someone sexually. ☐ *You could see that Sam was lusting after Sally.* ☐ *Roger claims that he does not lust for anyone.*

lust for something *Fig.* to desire something. ☐ *He says he lusts for a nice cold can of beer.* ☐ *Mary lusts for rich and fattening ice cream.*

luxuriate in something to indulge oneself in something; to enjoy the luxury of something. ☐ *She stood in front of the mirror, luxuriating in her lovely new coat.* ☐ *They were all luxuriating in the warm, bubbling waters of the hot tub.*

mad about someone or something Go to **crazy about** someone or something.

***mad as a hatter** and ***mad as a march hare 1.** crazy. (Alludes to the crazy characters in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.* *Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Poor old John is as mad as a hatter.* ☐ *All these screaming children are driving me mad as a hatter.* **2.** angry. (This is a misunderstanding of *mad* in the first sense. *Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *You make me so angry! I'm as mad as a hatter.* ☐ *John can't control his temper. He's always mad as a hatter.*

***mad as a hornet** and ***mad as a wet hen; *mad as hell** very angry. (*Also: **as ~**. Use *hell* with caution.) ☐ *You make me so angry. I'm as mad as a hornet.* ☐ *What you said made Mary mad as a wet hen.* ☐ *Those terrorists make me mad as hell.*

mad as a march hare Go to **mad as a hatter.**

mad as a wet hen Go to **mad as a hornet.**

mad as hell Go to **mad as a hornet.**

***mad (at** someone or something**)** angry at someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; make** someone **~**.) ☐ *Don't get mad at me. I didn't do it.* ☐ *I got mad at my car. It won't start.*

mad enough to chew nails (and spit rivets) and **angry enough to chew nails; mad enough to spit nails** *Inf. Fig.* very angry, as if to be able to bite through metal nails. ☐ *I am mad enough to chew nails! Who took my checkbook?* ☐ *Her sudden tirade made him angry enough to chew nails.* ☐ *He stomped in, mad enough to chew nails and spit rivets.*

mad enough to kick a cat *Rur.* very angry. ☐ *Stay out of my way. I'm mad enough to kick a cat!* ☐ *The team lost. The coach was mad enough to kick a cat.*

mad enough to spit nails Go to **mad enough to chew nails (and spit rivets).**

made conspicuous by one's **absence** Go to **conspicuous by** one's **absence.**

made for each other [of two people] very well suited romantically. ☐ *Bill and Jane were made for each other.* ☐ *Mr. and Mrs. Smith were not exactly made for each other. They really don't get along.*

made for someone created to please someone or look good on someone in particular. ☐ *This hat was made for me.* ☐ *This suit was just made for me!*

made for something to have been designed or manufactured for some purpose; to be very suitable for something or some purpose. ☐ *This night was made for love.* ☐ *This wrench is manufactured from the strongest metal. It is made for jobs just like this one.*

made from the same mold Go to **cut from the same cloth.**

made to measure [of clothing] made especially to fit the measurements of a particular person. ☐ *Jack has his suits made to measure because he's rather large.* ☐ *Having clothes made to measure is rather expensive.*

made to order made to one's own measurements and on request. (See also **make** something **to order.**) ☐ *This suit fits so well because it's made to order.* ☐ *His feet are so big that all his shoes have to be made to order.*

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maiden voyage *Fig.* the first voyage of a ship or boat. ☐ *The liner sank on its maiden voyage.* ☐ *Jim is taking his yacht on its maiden voyage.*

mail something **from** some place to send something by mail from a particular place. ☐ *I mailed the check from my office.* ☐ *I will mail it from the main post office.*

mail something **to** someone to send something to someone by mail. ☐ *I mailed the check to you yesterday.* ☐ *I mailed a gift to my niece.*

main strength and awkwardness *Fig.* great force; brute force. ☐ *They finally got the piano moved in to the living room by main strength and awkwardness.* ☐ *Lifting the antique table must be done carefully. This is not a job requiring main strength and awkwardness.*

maintain someone **in** something to keep or provide for someone in a certain style or condition. ☐ *I insist that you maintain me in the style to which I have become accustomed.* ☐ *He had hoped to maintain himself in comfort.*

maintain something **at** something to keep something at a certain level, setting, degree, amount, etc. ☐ *You must maintain the temperature at 30 degrees Celsius.* ☐ *We have to maintain the temperature at a very high level.*

major in something to specialize in a certain subject in college. ☐ *I majored in history in college.* ☐ *I want to major in math.*

make a beeline for someone or something *Fig.* to head straight toward someone or something. (Alludes to the straight flight of a bee.) ☐ *Billy came into the kitchen and made a beeline for the cookies.* ☐ *After the game, we all made a beeline for John, who was serving cold drinks.*

make a believer (out) of someone to convince someone decisively about something. ☐ *The game they played made a believer out of me; from now on, I'm betting on them.* ☐ *It was an interesting discussion, but it did not make a believer out of me.*

make a big deal about something Go to **make a federal case out of** something.

make a (big) stink (about someone or something**)** and **raise a (big) stink (about** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to make trouble about someone or something. ☐ *Why did you raise a big stink about it?* ☐ *Jim is making a stink about Alice.*

make a bolt for someone or something *Fig.* to run quickly to or at someone or something. ☐ *The child came into the*

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room and made a bolt for her mother. ☐ *The dog made a bolt for the door.*

make a break for someone or something *Fig.* to run suddenly toward someone or something; to seize an opportunity to run toward someone or something. ☐ *The crook made a break for the cop in order to get his gun.* ☐ *Max made a break for the door.*

make a bundle and **make a pile** to make a lot of money. ☐ *John really made a bundle on that deal.* ☐ *I'd like to make a pile and retire.*

make a check (out†) (to someone or something**)** *Fig.* to write a check to someone or a group. ☐ *Please make the check out to Bill Franklin.* ☐ *Make out a check to me.* ☐ *Please make a check out to the bank.* ☐ *Make a check to the phone company.*

make a check over to someone or something to endorse the back of a check, making it payable to someone or a group. ☐ *Please make the check over to Bill Franklin.* ☐ *Would you make the check over to my bank?*

make a check to someone or something to write a check to someone. (See also **make a check out (to** someone or something**)**.) ☐ *The check should be for fifty dollars. Please make it to me.* ☐ *Make the check to Jim.* ☐ *She made the check to the bank, and sent it off in the mail.*

make a clean breast of something **(to** someone**)** *Fig.* to admit something to someone. ☐ *You should make a clean breast of the matter to someone.* ☐ *You'll feel better if you make a clean breast of the incident.*

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make a clean sweep *Fig.* to do something completely or thoroughly, with no exceptions. ☐ *The boss decided to change the direction of the company, so he made a clean sweep and fired all the top management.* ☐ *They made a clean sweep through the neighborhood, repairing all the sidewalks.*

make a comeback to return to one's former (successful) career. ☐ *After ten years in retirement, the singer made a comeback.* ☐ *You're never too old to make a comeback.*

make a dash for someone or something to run quickly for someone or something. ☐ *Suddenly Max made a dash for Lefty and punched him in the stomach.* ☐ *John made a dash for the bathroom as soon as they arrived home.*

make a day of doing something and **make a day of it** to spend the whole day doing something. ☐ *We went to the museum to see the new exhibit and then decided to make a day of it.* ☐ *They made a day of cleaning the attic.*

make a day of it Go to previous.

make a deal with someone to strike a bargain with someone. ☐ *I want to buy your car and I think I can make a deal with you.* ☐ *I will make a deal with you that you will like.*

make a dent in something **1.** *Lit.* to make a depression in something. ☐ *I kicked the side of the car and made a dent in it.* ☐ *Please don't make a dent in the side of the house.* **2.** *Fig.* to use only a little of something; to make a small amount of progress with something. ☐ *Look at what's left on your plate! You hardly made a dent in your dinner.* ☐ *I've been slaving all day, and I have hardly made a dent in my work.*

make a difference in someone or something to cause a noticeable change in someone or something. ☐ *Getting a job made a big difference in my lifestyle.* ☐ *His mother's death made a difference in his attitude toward doctors.*

make a difference to someone [for one choice or another] to matter to someone. ☐ *The big one or the little one—does it really make a difference to anyone?* ☐ *It makes quite a difference to me!*

make a face (at someone**)** and **make faces (at** someone**) 1.** to show a funny or distorted expression to someone in ridicule. ☐ *Mother, Billy made a face at me!* ☐ *The teacher sent Jane to the principal for making a face in class.* **2.** to attempt to communicate to someone through facial gestures, usually an attempt to say "no" or "stop." ☐ *I started to tell John where I was last night, but Bill made a face so I didn't.* ☐ *John made a face at me as I was testifying, so I avoided telling everything.*

make a fast buck and **make a quick buck** to make money with little effort or in a short time. ☐ *Tom is always ready to make a fast buck.* ☐ *I made a quick buck selling used cars.*

make a federal case out of something and **make a big deal about** something to exaggerate the seriousness of something. ☐ *Come on. It was nothing! Don't make a federal case out of it.* ☐ *I only stepped on your toe. Don't make a big deal about it.*

make a fool (out) of someone and **make a monkey (out) of** someone to make someone look foolish. ☐ *John made a monkey out of himself while trying to make a fool out of Jim.* ☐ *John made a fool out of himself at the party.* ☐ *Are you trying to make a monkey out of me?*

make a fresh start Go to a **fresh start**.

make a friend and **make friends** to establish a link of friendship with someone. ☐ *I have never found it difficult to make friends.* ☐ *Mary had to make new friends when she changed schools.*

make a fuss (over someone or something**) 1.** to worry about or make a bother about someone or something. ☐ *Why do you make a fuss over a problem like that?* ☐ *Please don't make a fuss. Everything will be all right.* **2.** to be very solicitous and helpful toward a person or a pet. ☐ *How can anyone make a fuss over a cat?* ☐ *Billy was embarrassed when his mother made a fuss over him.* **3.** to argue about someone or something. ☐ *Please don't make a fuss over who gets the last cookie.* ☐ *Please discuss it. Don't make a fuss over it!*

make a go of something to succeed at something. (Often with *it*.) ☐ *She just didn't have the energy or inclination to make a go of her marriage.* ☐ *I did everything I could to make a go of it.*

make a grab at someone or something to grasp at someone or something. ☐ *Don made a grab at Betsy, but she eluded him.* ☐ *Kelly made a grab at the ball, but it went on past her.*

make a great show of something *Fig.* to make something obvious; to do something in a showy fashion. ☐ *Ann made a great show of wiping up the drink that John spilled.* ☐ *Jane displayed her irritation at our late arrival by making a great show of serving the cold dinner.*

make a guess Go to **take a guess**.

make a habit of something to do something so often that it becomes a habit. ☐ *You mustn't make a habit of interrupting.* ☐ *I make a habit of counting my change.*

make a hit with someone to please someone; to impress someone. ☐ *The dessert you served really made a hit with the guests.* ☐ *Her talk made a hit with the audience.*

make a killing *Fig.* to have a great success, especially in making money. ☐ *John has got a job selling insurance. He's not exactly making a killing.* ☐ *Bill made a killing at the racetrack yesterday.*

make a (kind of**) life for oneself** to develop and live a particular kind of lifestyle for oneself. ☐ *She made a good life for herself in New York City, working as a freelancer.*

Make a lap! *Sl.* to sit down. ☐ *Hey, make a lap and get out of the way!* ☐ *Pull up a chair and make a lap!*

make a laughingstock of oneself **or** something and **make** oneself **or** something **a laughingstock** to make oneself a source of ridicule or laughter; to do something that invites ridicule. ☐ *Laura made herself a laughingstock by arriving at the fast-food restaurant in full evening dress.* ☐ *The board of directors made the company a laughingstock by hiring an ex-convict as president.*

make a living by doing something Go to next.

make a living from something and **make a living by** doing something to earn a living from something or by doing something. ☐ *John makes a living from painting houses.* ☐ *Can you really make a living by selling jewelry?*

make a long story short and **cut a long story short** to leave out parts of a story to make it shorter; to bring a story to an end. (A formula that introduces a summary of a story or a joke. See also long story short.) ☐ *And—to make a long story short—I never got back the money that I lent him.* ☐ *If I can make a long story short, let me say that everything worked out fine.*

make a man of someone *Fig.* to make a young male into an adult male. ☐ *The experience will make a man of Ted.* ☐ *Send Wally into the army. That'll make a man of him.*

make a meal of something **1.** to eat something. ☐ *The cat made a meal of the fish.* ☐ *They made a meal of the roast beef and enjoyed it very much.* **2.** to eat enough of something to consider it or have it as a full meal. ☐ *I really don't want to make a meal of lettuce alone.* ☐ *Can we make a meal of this turkey, or should we save some for sandwiches?*

make a mental note of something to remember something. ☐ *So, you want to be considered for a job. I'll make a mental note of that.* ☐ *Please make a mental note of my telephone number.*

make a mess of something *Fig.* to mess something up; to ruin something. ☐ *Give it a try, but don't make a mess of it.* ☐ *Jerry made a mess of the kitchen.*

make a mistake to commit an error; to do something wrong accidentally. ☐ *I made a mistake and I am really sorry about it.*

make a mockery of something to make a deliberate parody or a poor imitation of something. ☐ *What a mess. You made a mockery of the task.* ☐ *You have made a mockery of my position!*

make a monkey (out) of someone Go to make a fool (out) of someone.

make a mountain out of a molehill *Cliché* to make a major issue out of a minor one; to exaggerate the importance of something. ☐ *Come on, don't make a mountain out of a molehill. It's not that important.* ☐ *Mary is always making mountains out of molehills.*

make a move on someone to attempt to seduce someone. ☐ *Was he making a move on me? I think he was.* ☐ *Jed is known for making moves on young women.*

make a name (for oneself**)** *Fig.* to become famous. ☐ *Sally wants to work hard and make a name for herself.* ☐ *It's hard to make a name without a lot of talent and hard work.*

make a night of it *Fig.* to spend the entire evening or night doing something. (Especially when one had intended to devote only a little time to the outing.) ☐ *We went out to have a bite to eat and were having such a good time that we decided to make a night of it.* ☐ *I did not want to make a night of it, so I left early.*

make a note of something **1.** *Lit.* to write something down as a reminder. ☐ *Please make a note of it so you will remember.* ☐ *I will make a note of it and try to remember where I put the note.* **2.** *Fig.* to make a mental note of something. ☐ *You want to be considered for promotion. I'll make a note of it.* ☐ *Please make a note of it.*

make a nuisance of oneself to be a constant bother. ☐ *I'm sorry to make a nuisance of myself, but I do need an answer to my question.* ☐ *Stop making a nuisance of yourself and wait your turn.*

make a paper trail Go to a paper trail.

make a pass at someone to flirt with or suggest sexual activity with someone. ☐ *Can you believe it? Larry made a pass at me!* ☐ *No one ever makes a pass at me.*

make a pass at something to fly over or close by something. ☐ *The plane made a pass at the landing field and pulled up at the last minute.* ☐ *The bird made a pass at me because I got too close to its nest.*

make a pig of oneself *Fig.* to eat too much, too fast, or noisily; to eat more than one's share. ☐ *Don't make a pig of yourself!* ☐ *Sam is making a pig of himself and taking more than his share.*

make a pile Go to make a bundle.

make a pitch (for someone or something**)** *Fig.* to say something in support of someone or something; to attempt to promote, sell, or advance someone or something. ☐ *Bill is making a pitch for his friend's new product again.* ☐ *The theatrical agent came in and made a pitch for her client.* ☐ *Every time I turn on the television set, someone is making a pitch.*

make a play (for someone**)** to attempt to attract the romantic interest of someone. ☐ *Ann made a play for Bill, but he wasn't interested in her.* ☐ *I knew he liked me, but I never thought he'd make a play.*

make a point and **make points 1.** *Lit.* to score a point in a game. ☐ *Bob made a point in the last match.* ☐ *Karen made twenty points in the second half.* **2.** *Fig.* to state an item of importance. (See also make a point of someone or something; make points (with someone.) ☐ *You made a point that we all should remember.* ☐ *He spoke for an hour without making a point.*

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make a point of doing something and **make a point of** something *Fig.* to make an effort to do something. ☐ *Please make a point of mailing this letter. It's very important.* ☐ *The hostess made a point of thanking me for bringing flowers.*

make a point of someone or something and **make an issue of** someone or something *Fig.* to turn someone or something into an important matter. ☐ *Please don't make a point of John's comment. It wasn't that important.* ☐ *I hope you make an issue of Tom's success and the reasons for it.*

make a practice of something and **make** something **a practice** to turn something into a habitual activity. ☐ *Jane makes a practice of planting daisies every summer.* ☐ *Her mother also made it a practice.*

make a quick buck Go to make a fast buck.

make a reservation and **make reservations** to reserve a seat, as in an airplane, restaurant, or theater in advance; to reserve a room, as in a hotel in advance. ☐ *Did you make a reservation or are we just going to chance getting a table?* ☐ *I made reservations for a flight at twelve noon.*

make a run for it *Fig.* to run fast to get away or get somewhere. ☐ *When the guard wasn't looking, the prisoner made a run for it.* ☐ *In the baseball game, the player on first base made a run for it, but he didn't make it to second base.*

make a scene and **create a scene** *Fig.* to make a public display or disturbance. ☐ *When John found a fly in his drink, he started to create a scene.* ☐ *Oh, John, please don't make a scene. Just forget about it.*

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make a secret of something to act as if something were a secret. ☐ *I'm not making a secret of it. I am quitting this job.* ☐ *Mary made a secret of her intentions.*

make a start on something to set out to do something; to make a beginning on something. ☐ *See if you can make a start on the project.* ☐ *I will try to make a start on the cleaning before I leave today.*

make a stink (about something**)** Go to create a stink (about something).

make a virtue of necessity *Prov.* to do what you have to do cheerfully or willingly. ☐ *When Bill's mother became sick, there was no one but Bill to take care of her, so Bill made a virtue of necessity and resolved to enjoy their time together.*

make advances at someone Go to next.

make advances to someone and **make advances at** someone to flirt with someone; to begin to seduce someone. ☐ *She began making advances to me, and I left the room.* ☐ *Mary made advances at every male she encountered.*

make allowance(s) (for someone or something**) 1.** to allow time, space, food, etc., for someone or something. ☐ *When planning the party, please make allowances for John and his family.* ☐ *I'm making allowance for ten extra guests.* **2.** to make excuses or explanations for someone or something; to take into consideration the negative effects of someone or something. ☐ *You're very late even when we make allowance for the weather.* ☐ *We have to make allowance for the age of the house when we judge its condition.*

make amends (to someone**) (for** someone or something**)** to make up to someone for something that someone or something did. ☐ *Don't worry. I will make amends to her for my sister, who behaved so badly.* ☐ *I will try to make amends for the accident.* ☐ *I can make amends to Sam, I'm sure.*

make an all-out effort Go to an all-out effort.

make (an amount of**) headway 1.** *Lit.* to move forward. ☐ *Even in a light wind, the ship could not make any headway.* **2.** *Fig.* to advance toward completing a task. ☐ *With the help of Garret, Christopher made a lot of headway on the project.*

make an appearance to appear; to appear in a performance. ☐ *We waited for thirty minutes for the professor to make an appearance, then we went home.* ☐ *The famous singing star made an appearance in Detroit last August.*

make an appointment (with someone**)** to schedule a meeting with someone. ☐ *I made an appointment with the doctor for late today.* ☐ *The professor wouldn't see me unless I made an appointment.*

make an entrance to enter [a place], in some formal or special way, as onto the stage in a play or opera. ☐ *She made her entrance too early and threw everyone into confusion.*

make an example of someone to do something to someone that shows the bad results of bad behavior; to point to someone as a bad example. ☐ *The judge said that he would make an example of Sally and would fine her the maximum amount.* ☐ *The teacher made an example of me to the class, with a detention on the first day of school.*

make an exception (for someone**)** to suspend a rule or practice for someone in a single instance. ☐ *Please make an exception just this once.* ☐ *The rule is a good one, and I will not make an exception for anyone.*

make an exhibition of oneself to show off; to try to get a lot of attention for oneself. ☐ *She is not just dancing, she is making an exhibition of herself.* ☐ *Whenever Rudy drinks, he makes an exhibition of himself.*

make an honest woman of someone *Fig.* to marry a woman. (Intended as jocular.) ☐ *So you finally made an honest woman out of Denise.* ☐ *She had wanted Max to make an honest woman of her, but you can't depend on Max to do anything right.*

make an impression on someone to produce a positive memorable effect on someone while one is present. (Akin to leave an impression (on someone).) ☐ *Tom made quite an impression on the banker.*

make an issue of someone or something Go to make a point of someone or something.

make an offer one **cannot refuse** Go to an offer one cannot refuse.

make an uproar Go to create an uproar.

make application (to someone or something**) (for** something**)** to apply to a person or an office for something. ☐ *You must make application to the committee for admission.* ☐ *Can I make application to this office for a scholarship?*

make arrangements for someone to plan accommodations for someone. ☐ *John is coming for a visit next week.*

Please make arrangements for him at the hotel. ☐ *I will make arrangements for everyone when I call the hotel.*

make arrangements to do something to plan to do something; to facilitate the doing of something. ☐ *Please make arrangements to have all this stuff hauled away.* ☐ *We will make arrangements to be there on time.*

make arrangements (with someone**) (for** something**)** to make plans with someone for something. ☐ *I will make arrangements with Fred for the loan.* ☐ *We can make arrangements for a car with the manager.*

make as if to do something to act as if one were about to do something. ☐ *The thief made as if to run away but changed his mind.* ☐ *Jane made as if to smack the child.*

make away with someone or something and **make off with** someone or something to take someone or something away; to make someone or something disappear. ☐ *The robber made away with the jewelry.* ☐ *The maid quickly made off with the children. We only saw them for a moment.*

make believe that... to pretend that... ☐ *Make believe that you have a million dollars. What would you do with it?*

make book on something **1.** *Sl.* to make or accept bets on something. ☐ *Well, she might. But I wouldn't make book on it.* ☐ *Don't make book on my success in this game.* **2.** *Sl.* to feel confident enough about something to accept wagers on it. ☐ *Of course the delivery date is certain. You can make book on it!* ☐ *The work might be done on time, but I wouldn't make book on it.*

make (both) ends meet *Fig.* to earn and spend equal amounts of money. (Usually in reference to a meager living with little if any money after basic expenses.) ☐ *I have to work at two jobs to make ends meet.* ☐ *Through better budgeting, I am learning to make both ends meet.*

make certain of something to check something in order to be sure. ☐ *Please make certain of what you want to do.* ☐ *Would you please make certain of the number of things you want to order?*

make change (for someone**) (for** something**) 1.** to return change [coins] for someone to use for some purpose. ☐ *Will you please make change for me for the telephone?* ☐ *I will make change for the telephone for you.* **2.** to return change [coins or bills or both] to someone for paper money. ☐ *The clerk refused to make change for her for the dollar bill.* ☐ *I will be happy to make change for a ten for you.*

make chin music *Fig.* to talk or chatter. ☐ *We sat around all evening making chin music.* ☐ *You were making chin music when you should have been listening.*

make contact with someone Go to **contact with** someone.

make cracks about someone or something *Fig.* to make jokes or smart remarks about someone or something. ☐ *Stop making cracks about my cousin.* ☐ *Ken made a few cracks about the movie.*

make demands of someone or something and **make demands on** someone or something to expect someone or something to do something or act in a particular way. ☐ *Please don't make demands of everyone in the shop.* ☐ *The boss is making a lot of demands on the new machinery.*

make do (with someone or something**)** to do as well as possible with someone or something. (See also **do with** someone or something.) ☐ *You'll have to make do with less money next year. The economy is very weak.* ☐ *We'll have to make do with John even though he's a slow worker.*

make every effort to do something to try very hard to accomplish something. ☐ *I will make every effort to be there on time.*

make eyes at someone *Fig.* to flirt with someone. ☐ *Mother, he's making eyes at me!* ☐ *Jed tried to make eyes at all the young women.*

make faces (at someone**)** Go to **make a face (at** someone**)**.

make fast work of someone or something Go to **make short work of** someone or something.

make for somewhere to set out for somewhere; to run or travel to somewhere. ☐ *Wilbur made for Philadelphia when he heard the police in the Big Apple were after him.* ☐ *Barlowe made for the stairs, but two shots rang out, and he knew it was all over for Mary.*

make free with someone to exploit someone; to take advantage of someone. ☐ *You shouldn't make free with your employees. They are liable to take you to court.* ☐ *He was making free with his secretary, having her do his private business.*

make free with something to use something freely; to exploit something. ☐ *You can make free with the hot water. We have a huge tank.* ☐ *Sally is making free with the sugar I was saving for breakfast cereal.*

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make friends Go to **make a friend**.

make friends with someone to work to become a friend of someone. ☐ *I want to make friends with all the people I am going to be working with.* ☐ *Let's try to make friends with each other.*

make fun of someone or something to ridicule someone or something. ☐ *Are you making fun of me?* ☐ *I am making fun of your hat.*

make good as something to succeed in a particular role. ☐ *I hope I make good as a teacher.* ☐ *John made good as a football player.*

make good (at something**)** to succeed at something. ☐ *Bob worked hard to make good at selling.* ☐ *Jane was determined to make good.*

make good money to earn a sizable amount of money. ☐ *Ann makes good money at her job.* ☐ *I don't know what she does, but she makes good money.*

make good on something **1.** to fulfill a promise. ☐ *Tom made good on his pledge to donate $1,000.* ☐ *Bill refused to make good on his promise.* **2.** to repay a debt. (See also **set** something **right**.) ☐ *I couldn't make good on my debts, and I got in a lot of trouble.* ☐ *If you don't make good on this bill, I'll have to take back your car.*

make good time to proceed at a fast or reasonable rate. ☐ *On our trip to Toledo, we made good time.* ☐ *I'm making good time, but I have a long way to go.*

make (good) use of something to use something well. ☐ *I am sure I can make good use of the gift you gave me.* ☐ *We will make use of this book.*

make hamburger (out) of someone Go to **make mincemeat (out) of** someone.

Make haste slowly. and **More haste, less speed.** *Prov.* Act quickly, but not so quickly that you make careless mistakes. ☐ *Jane: Why are you throwing your clothes around the room? Alan: You told me to get my things packed in a hurry. Jane: Yes, but make haste slowly; otherwise we'll have to spend an hour cleaning up the mess you make.* ☐ *I know you want to finish that sweater by Joe's birthday, but you're knitting so fast that you make mistakes. More haste, less speed.*

Make hay while the sun shines. *Prov.* If you have an opportunity to do something, do it before the opportunity expires. ☐ *Jane: While my husband's out of town, I'm going to watch all the movies he wouldn't take me to see. Jane: Why not? Make hay while the sun shines.*

make heads or tails of someone or something *Fig.* to understand someone or something that someone has said. (Usually with the negative.) ☐ *I can't make heads or tails of Fred.* ☐ *No one can make heads or tails of this problem.*

make inroads into something *Fig.* to succeed in getting something done or at least started. ☐ *George was unable to make inroads into solving the problem.* ☐ *We are making no inroads into the high-priority project.*

make it 1. to achieve one's goals. ☐ *I can see by looking around this room that you have really made it.* ☐ *I hope I make it someday. But if not, I tried.* **2.** *Sl.* to copulate (with someone). ☐ *There was no doubt in his mind that those bedroom eyes were telling him their owner wanted to make it.* ☐ *She wanted to make it, but he convinced her they should wait.*

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make it big to become successful, especially financially. ☐ *I always knew that someday I would make it big.* ☐ *My brother made it big, but it has just led to tax problems.*

make it by the seat of one's **pants** Go to **by the seat of** one's **pants.**

make it hot for someone *Fig.* to make things difficult for someone; to put someone under pressure. ☐ *Maybe if we make it hot for them, they'll leave.* ☐ *John likes making it hot for people. He's sort of mean.*

make it one's **business to** do something and **take it upon** oneself **to** do something *Fig.* to do something on one's own even if it means interfering in something that does not directly concern one. (As opposed to minding one's own business.) ☐ *I know it doesn't concern me, but I made it my business to call city hall because someone had to.* ☐ *Jane took it upon herself to find out exactly what had happened to the old lady.*

Make it snappy! *Inf.* **Hurry up!;** Move quickly and smartly. ☐ *Andy: Make it snappy! I haven't got all day. Bob: Don't rush me.* ☐ *Mary: Do you mind if I stop here and get some film? Bob: Not if you make it snappy! Mary: Don't worry. I'll hurry.*

make it (to) some place to reach some place; to be able to attend an event at a place. ☐ *I couldn't make it to the party.* ☐ *He didn't think his car could make it to Cleveland.*

make it to something**; make it as far as** something Go to **make it (until** something**).**

Make it two. I wish to order the thing that someone else just now ordered. (Said to food or drink server.) ☐ *Bill (speaking to the waiter): I'll have the roast chicken. Mary: Make it two.* ☐ *Waiter: Would you like something to drink? Tom: Just a beer. Waiter (turning to Mary): And you? Mary: Make it two.*

make it (until something**)** and **make it to** something**; make it as far as** something to endure until something; to last until some time or until reaching some place. ☐ *I hope my car can make it to the next town.* ☐ *Do you think you can make it until we come to a hotel?*

make it worth someone's **while** *Euph.* to tip or offer special (usually extra) payment to someone. ☐ *I made it worth the waiter's while to give us good service.* ☐ *If you'll throw a few contracts my way, I'll make it worth your while.*

make last-ditch effort Go to **last-ditch effort.**

make life miserable for someone to give someone misery; to be a great nuisance to someone. ☐ *This nagging backache is making life miserable for me.* ☐ *I wish you would stop making life miserable for me.*

make light of something to treat something as if it were unimportant or humorous. ☐ *I wish you wouldn't make light of his problems. They're quite serious.* ☐ *I make light of my problems, and that makes me feel better.*

make like a tree and leave *Sl.* to leave; to depart. (Jocular; a pun on the *leaf* of a tree.) ☐ *I have to leave now. It's time to make like a tree and leave.* ☐ *Hey, Jane. Don't you have an appointment somewhere? Why don't you make like a tree and leave?*

make like someone or something to act like someone or something. ☐ *Why don't you make like a bunny and run away? Beat it!* ☐ *Would you please make like a butler and hold the door open for me?*

make little of someone or something to minimize someone or something; to **play** someone or something **down;** to belittle someone or something. ☐ *John made little of my efforts to collect money for charity.* ☐ *The neighbors made little of John and thought he would amount to nothing.*

make love (to someone**) 1.** to kiss and caress someone. ☐ *Ernest made love to Linda in the garden in the moonlight.* ☐ *She liked the way he made love to her—all that poetry.* **2.** *Euph.* to have sex with someone. ☐ *I really think that he wanted to make love to me.* ☐ *She did not want to make love to him.*

make mention of someone or something to mention someone or something. ☐ *Did you have to make mention of Sally? I'm angry with her.* ☐ *I will have to make mention of your failure to secure additional business.*

make merry to have fun; to have an enjoyable time. ☐ *The guests certainly made merry at the wedding.* ☐ *The children were making merry in the backyard.*

make mincemeat (out) of someone and **make hamburger (out) of** someone *Fig.* to beat or pound someone or something; to treat someone or something roughly. (As if chopping someone up.) ☐ *If you don't behave, I'll make mincemeat out of you.* ☐ *Do you want Fred to make hamburger out of you?*

Make mine something. I wish to have the thing named. (The *something* can be a particular food or drink, a flavor of a food, a size of a garment, or a type of almost anything. Most typically used for food or drink.) ☐ *Bill: I want some pie. Yes, I'd like apple. Tom: Make mine cherry.*

☐ *Waiter: Would you care for some dessert? The ice cream is homemade. Tom: Yes, indeed. Make mine chocolate.*

make mischief to cause trouble. ☐ *Bob loves to make mischief and get other people into trouble.* ☐ *Don't believe what Mary says. She's just trying to make mischief.*

make money on something to make a certain amount of profit on something. ☐ *I am sure I can make something on the deal.* ☐ *Can I make any money on this sale?*

Make my day! *Inf.* Go ahead, do what you are going to do, and I will be very happy to do what I have to do! (A catchphrase from a movie scene of a police officer who has a gun pointed at a criminal. The police officer wants the criminal to do something that will justify pulling the trigger, which the police officer will do with pleasure. Used in real life in any context, and especially in sarcasm.) ☐ *Move a muscle! Go for your gun! Go ahead, make my day!* ☐ *Make my day. Just try it.*

Make no bones about it. to make no mistake (about it); no need to doubt it; absolutely. ☐ *This is the greatest cake I've ever eaten. Make no bones about it.* ☐ *Make no bones about it, Mary is a great singer.*

make no difference (to someone**)** [for a choice] not to matter to someone. (*Any* is used with negative nouns or verbs.) ☐ *Pick whom you like. It makes no difference to me.* ☐ *It doesn't make any difference to me.* ☐ *Nothing much makes any difference to them anymore.*

Make no mistake (about it)! *Inf.* Do not be mistaken! You can be certain. ☐ *Sally: I'm very angry with you! Make no mistake about it! Fred: Whatever it's about, I'm sorry.* ☐ *Clerk: Make no mistake, this is the finest carpet available. Sally: I'd like something a little less fine, I think.*

make nonsense of something to make something appear to be silly or nonsensical. ☐ *You are just making nonsense of everything I have tried to do.* ☐ *Your statement makes nonsense of everything you have said before.*

make nothing of something to ignore something as if it had not happened; to think no more about something. (Often with *it*.) ☐ *My father caught me throwing the snowball, but he made nothing of it.* ☐ *I made nothing of the remark, even though it seemed quite rude.* ☐ *I saw him leave early, but I made nothing of it.*

make off with someone or something Go to make away with someone or something.

make one **an offer** one **cannot refuse** Go to an offer one cannot refuse.

make one's **mark** to do something that allows one to receive appropriate recognition. ☐ *Perry made his mark by inventing a special kind of holder for a cell phone.*

make one's **mind up**† **(about** someone or something**)** to decide about someone or something. ☐ *Please make your mind up about Ralph. Will you pick him or not?* ☐ *Make up your mind about her!* ☐ *I just couldn't make my mind up.*

make one's **money stretch** Go to stretch one's money.

make one's **(own) bed 1.** *Lit.* to restore order to the bedclothes on one's own bed. ☐ *Jimmy, you are old enough to make your own bed.* **2.** *Fig.* to be the cause of one's own misery. ☐ *Well, I guess I made my own bed. Now I have to lie in it.* ☐ *"We all make our own beds," said the minister.*

make (one's**) peace with** someone to set things right with someone; to make amends with someone. ☐ *I will make my peace with Jane. You needn't be the one to patch things up.* ☐ *Let's go make peace with Karen.*

make one's **way along** something to move along something slowly or carefully. ☐ *Todd made his way along the slippery walk.* ☐ *The old man made his way along the street carefully.*

make one's **way back (to** something**)** to work one's way back to something or some place. ☐ *I made my way back to the little town in the densest fog I have ever seen.* ☐ *I went for a walk and got lost. It took hours for me to make my way back.*

make one's **way in the world** *Fig.* to succeed in the world independently. ☐ *I intend to prepare myself to make my way in the world by getting a college degree.* ☐ *I know that all my children can make their way in the world.*

make one's **way through** something Go to pick one's way through something.

make oneself **at home** to make oneself comfortable as if one were in one's own home. ☐ *Please come in and make yourself at home.* ☐ *I'm glad you're here. During your visit, just make yourself at home.*

make oneself **conspicuous** to attract attention to oneself. ☐ *Please don't make yourself conspicuous. It embarrasses me.* ☐ *Ann makes herself conspicuous by wearing brightly colored clothing.*

make oneself **heard** to speak loudly so that one will be heard above background noise. ☐ *I had to shout to make myself heard.* ☐ *He screamed to make himself heard over the sound of the plane's engines.*

make oneself **miserable** to do things which cause one to be unhappy. ☐ *You're just making yourself miserable by trying to do something you aren't qualified to do.* ☐ *I'm not making myself miserable! You're making me miserable.*

make oneself **or** something **a laughingstock** Go to make a laughingstock of oneself or something.

make oneself **scarce** *Fig.* [for someone] to become difficult to find; [for someone to] go into hiding. ☐ *Tom is mad and is looking for you. Better make yourself scarce.* ☐ *Make yourself scarce! Here comes the sheriff.*

make (oneself**) up** to put makeup on oneself. ☐ *I have to make up now. I go on stage in ten minutes.* ☐ *I will make myself up. I don't need your help.*

make or break someone [of a task, job, career choice] to bring success to or improve, or ruin, someone. ☐ *The army will either make or break him.* ☐ *It's a tough assignment, and it will either make or break her.*

make (out) after someone or something to run after someone or something; to start out after someone or something. ☐ *Paul made out after Fred, who had taken Paul's hat.* ☐ *The police officer made after the robber.*

make (out) for someone or something to run toward someone, something, or some place. ☐ *They made out for Sam as soon as they saw him coming.* ☐ *The boys made for the swimming pool as soon as the coach blew the whistle.*

make out like a bandit *Rur.* to make a large profit. ☐ *Joe's making out like a bandit, selling expensive cameras.* ☐

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Mary made out like a bandit, playing twenty-one in Las Vegas.

make (out) like something *Rur.* to pretend something. ☐ *Let's make out like we're cowboys and Indians.* ☐ *Joe made out like he had a lot of money, and folks believed him.*

make out that... to pretend that [something is so]. ☐ *He made out that he hadn't seen me.* ☐ *We all made out that we hadn't heard the sound.*

make out (with someone**)** to kiss and pet with someone. ☐ *All evening long, he was trying to make out with me.* ☐ *Sharon was trying to make out with Bill.*

make out (with someone or something**) 1.** to manage to do something with someone or something. ☐ *I think I can make out with this hammer.* ☐ *If I can't make out with a crew of four, I'll have to ask for more help.* **2.** Go to make out (with someone).

make overtures about doing something to give hints about something; to present or suggest ideas. ☐ *The company made overtures about hiring me.* ☐ *Tom is making overtures about inviting us to his country home next month.*

make points (with someone**)** *Fig.* to gain favor with someone; to impress someone. (See also make a point.) ☐ *Tom is trying to make points with Ann. He wants to ask her out.* ☐ *He's trying to make points by smiling and telling her how nice she looks.*

make reservations Go to make a reservation.

make room (for someone or something**)** to provide space for someone or something. ☐ *Make room for Sam. He needs a place to sit.* ☐ *Can you make room for this package?*

make sense to be understandable. ☐ *John doesn't make sense.* ☐ *What John says makes sense to me.*

make short work of someone or something and **make fast work of** someone or something to finish with someone or something quickly. ☐ *I made short work of Tom so I could leave the office to play golf.* ☐ *Billy made fast work of his dinner so he could go out and play.*

make so bold as to do something Go to be so bold as to do something.

make (some) sense (out) of someone or something to understand someone or something. ☐ *I can't make sense out of Doris and what she has done!* ☐ *No one can make sense out of Tom's story.*

make someone *Sl.* to identify someone. (Used especially in the context of law enforcement.) ☐ *The cop stared at Wilbur and tried to make him, but failed to identify him and let him go.* ☐ *The cops took the suspect downtown where the police chief made him as a wanted criminal.*

make someone **an offer** to offer someone an amount of money for something. (Usually an invitation.) ☐ *Do you like it? Make me an offer.*

make someone **eat crow** *Fig.* to cause someone to retract a statement or admit an error. ☐ *Because Mary was completely wrong, we made her eat crow.* ☐ *They won't make me eat crow. They can't prove I was wrong.*

make someone **look good** to cause someone to appear successful or competent (especially when this is not the case). ☐ *John arranges all his affairs to make himself look good.* ☐ *The manager didn't like the quarterly report because it didn't make her look good.*

make someone **look ridiculous** to make someone look foolish (not funny). ☐ *This hat makes me look ridiculous.* ☐ *Please make me look good. Don't make me look ridiculous!*

make someone **mad (at** someone or something**)** Go to mad (at someone or something).

make someone or something **available to** someone to supply someone with someone or something. ☐ *I made my car available to Bob.* ☐ *They made their maid available to us.*

make someone or something **into** something to turn someone or something into something. ☐ *I will make you into a Hollywood star!* ☐ *We made our basement into a family room.*

make someone or something **tick** *Fig.* to cause someone or something to run or function. (Usually with *what*. *Tick* refers to a watch or clock.) ☐ *I don't know what makes it tick.* ☐ *What makes John tick? I just don't understand him.* ☐ *I took apart the radio to find out what made it tick.*

make someone **over**† Go to do someone over†.

make someone's **bed (up**†**)** Go to make the bed (up†).

make someone's **blood boil** *Fig.* to make someone very angry. ☐ *It just makes my blood boil to think of the amount of food that gets wasted around here.* ☐ *Whenever I think of that dishonest mess, it makes my blood boil.*

make someone's **blood run cold** *Fig.* to shock or horrify someone. ☐ *The terrible story in the newspaper made my blood run cold.* ☐ *I could tell you things about prisons that would make your blood run cold.*

make someone's **flesh crawl** and **make** someone's **skin crawl** to cause someone's skin to feel funny or get goose pimples through fright. ☐ *Just to hear the story of the killings made my flesh crawl.* ☐ *The horror movie made our skin crawl.*

make someone's **gorge rise** *Fig.* to cause someone to become very angry. ☐ *The unnecessary accident made my gorge rise.* ☐ *Getting his tax bill made Bob's gorge rise.*

make someone's **hair curl** Go to curl someone's hair.

make someone's **hair stand on end** *Fig.* to cause someone to be very frightened. ☐ *The horrible scream made my hair stand on end.* ☐ *The ghost story made our hair stand on end.*

make someone's **head spin** Go to next.

make someone's **head swim** and **make** someone's **head spin 1.** *Fig.* to make someone dizzy or disoriented. ☐ *Riding the merry-go-round makes my head spin.* ☐ *Breathing the gas made my head swim.* **2.** *Fig.* to confuse or overwhelm someone. ☐ *All these numbers make my head swim.* ☐ *The physics lecture made my head spin.*

make someone's **mind up**† to decide; to do something that decides something for someone. ☐ *Will you please make up your mind?* ☐ *I will help make up your mind.*

make someone's **mouth water** to make someone hungry (for something); to cause saliva to flow in someone's mouth. ☐ *That beautiful salad makes my mouth water.* ☐ *Talking about food makes my mouth water.*

M

make someone's **position clear** to clarify where someone stands on an issue. ☐ *I don't think you understand what I said. Let me make my position clear.* ☐ *I can't tell whether you are in favor of or against the proposal. Please make your position clear.*

make someone's **skin crawl** Go to make someone's flesh crawl.

make someone **sick** to disgust someone. ☐ *I am really tired of your vile talk. You make me sick!* ☐ *She screamed at him that he made her sick and then she ran out of the house.*

make someone **sick at heart** Go to sick at heart.

make someone **stir crazy** Go to stir crazy.

make someone **the scapegoat for** something to make someone take the blame for something. ☐ *They made Tom the scapegoat for the whole affair. It wasn't all his fault.* ☐ *Don't try to make me the scapegoat. I'll tell who really did it.*

make someone **up**† to put makeup on someone. ☐ *You have to make the clowns up before you start on the other characters in the play.* ☐ *Did you make up the clowns?*

make something to attend an event. ☐ *I hope you can make our party.* ☐ *I am sorry, but I won't be able to make it.*

make something **a practice** Go to make a practice of something.

make something **about** someone or something to make comments, remarks, a furor, a fuss, etc., about someone or something. ☐ *Why are you making such a furor about such a minor matter?* ☐ *You are making too many negative remarks about Sue.*

make something **against** someone or something to build a legal case, argument, speech, etc., against someone or something. ☐ *The prosecutor made a strong case against Tim.* ☐ *I made a strong speech against the proposed legislation.*

make something **at** someone to make some sign or signal at or to a person. ☐ *Carlo made a sign at Bill, who seemed to know just what to do.* ☐ *Jimmy made an obscene gesture at me!*

make something **clear to** someone to help someone understand something. ☐ *Let me help make the contract clear to you.* ☐ *I want to make it clear to you, so ask questions if you want.*

make something **for** someone or something to prepare something for someone or something. ☐ *I made a big bowl of fruit salad for the visitors.* ☐ *James made a cake for the party.*

make something **from scratch** Go to from scratch.

make something **from** something to make something from certain parts or ingredients. ☐ *I made this cake from fresh butter and eggs.* ☐ *They made the fences from the stones of a ruined Roman fort.*

make something **good** Go to set something right.

make something **in** something to make money in a particular enterprise. ☐ *She made a lot of money in real estate.* ☐ *I hope to make some money in the stock market.*

make something **of** someone or something to succeed with improving someone or something; to turn someone or something into someone or something worthwhile. ☐ *I tried to make something of you, but you had to do things the way you saw fit.* ☐ *I think I can make something of this script.*

make something **of** something **1.** to make an interpretation of something. ☐ *What do you make of this letter?* ☐ *Look through this and see what sense you make of it.* **2.** to turn an incident into a dispute. (Usually with *it*. Often as an invitation to fight. See also make something (out) of something.) ☐ *Do you want to make something of it?* ☐ *He looks like he wants to make something of it.*

make something **off (of)** someone or something to make money from someone or something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Are you trying to make your fortune off of me?* ☐ *We think we can make some money off the sale of the house.*

make something **out**† to see, read, or hear something well enough to understand it. ☐ *What did you say? I couldn't quite make it out.* ☐ *Can you make out what he is saying?*

make something **out of nothing 1.** *Lit.* to create something of value from nearly worthless parts. ☐ *My uncle—he sells sand—made a fortune out of nothing.* ☐ *My model airplane won the contest even though I made it out of scrap.* **2.** *Fig.* to make an issue of something of little importance. ☐ *Relax, John, you're making a big problem out of nothing.* ☐ *You have no evidence. You're making a case out of nothing.*

make something **(out) of** something **1.** *Lit.* to make something out of parts or raw materials. ☐ *I will make the cake out of the very best ingredients.* ☐ *Can you make a salad out of these vegetables?* **2.** *Fig.* to make an interpretation of something. ☐ *Can you make anything out of this message? I don't understand it.* ☐ *I'm sorry, I can't make any sense out of it.* **3.** *Fig.* to interpret something negatively. (See also make something of something.) ☐ *The hostess made too much out of my absence.*

make something **out to be** something **else** to portray something as something else. ☐ *You are trying to make this tragedy out to be a minor matter.* ☐ *They made the disease out to be something far more serious than it really is.*

make something **over**† Go to do something over†.

make something **right** Go to set something right.

make something **to order** to custom-make an item; to make an item to fit someone's specifications. (See also made to order.) ☐ *The tailor made the jacket to order for me.* ☐ *The carpenter made the built-in bookcase to order for us.*

make something **up**† **1.** to redo something; to do something that one has failed to do in the past. ☐ *Can I make the lost time up?* ☐ *Can I make up the test that I missed?* **2.** to assemble something. ☐ *We will ship the parts to China where we will make up the computers with cheap labor. (See also* make the bed (up).) ☐ *Have they finished making up the pages for the next edition of the magazine?* **3.** to think up something; to make and tell a lie. ☐ *That's not true! You just made that up!* ☐ *I didn't make it up!* ☐ *You made up that story!* **4.** to mix something up; to assemble something. ☐ *John: Is my prescription ready? Druggist: No, I haven't made it up yet.* ☐ *I'll make up your prescription in a minute.*

make something **up† from** something to create something from something. ☐ *I will make some stew up from the ingredients available in the fridge.* ☐ *I will make up a stew from the leftovers.*

make something **up† out of whole cloth** *Fig.* to fabricate a story or a lie. ☐ *That's a lie. You just made that up out of whole cloth.* ☐ *That's a lie. You just made up that story out of whole cloth.*

make something **up to** someone to make amends to someone. ☐ *I'm so sorry. I will do what I can to make it up to you.* ☐ *I will make it up to them. Don't worry.*

make something **with** something to make something out of something. ☐ *I will make the cake with margarine rather than butter.* ☐ *Can you make our coffee with spring water, please?*

make sure (of something**)** to check something and be certain about it. ☐ *Please make sure of your facts before you write the report.* ☐ *We made sure of the route we had to follow before we left.* ☐ *Please double-check and make sure.*

make the arrangements *Euph.* to arrange a funeral. ☐ *A funeral services practitioner will be happy to help you make the arrangements.* ☐ *When my father died, I was the one who made the arrangements.*

make the bed (up†) and **make** someone's **bed (up†)** to restore a bed to an unslept-in condition. ☐ *I make my bed every morning.* ☐ *The maid goes to all the rooms to make the beds.* ☐ *Please make up all the beds early today.*

M

make the best of a bad job *Prov.* to try to salvage something from a ruined situation. ☐ *When the dry cleaners ruined Mrs. Anderson's coat, they made the best of a bad job by offering to buy her another one.*

make the best of something to do as well as possible with something that is not too promising. ☐ *I don't like it, but I will try to make the best of my summer landscaping job by getting a good tan.* ☐ *I will make the best of it, for a while anyway.*

make the fur fly and **make the feathers fly** *Fig.* to cause a fight or an argument; to create an uproar. ☐ *When your mother gets home and sees what you've done, she'll really make the fur fly.* ☐ *When those two get together, they'll make the feathers fly. They hate each other.*

make the grade to be satisfactory; to be what is expected. ☐ *I'm sorry, but your work doesn't exactly make the grade.* ☐ *This meal doesn't just make the grade. It is excellent.*

make the most of something to make something appear as good as possible; to exploit something; to get as much out of something as is possible. ☐ *Mary knows how to make the most of her talents.* ☐ *They designed the advertisements to make the most of the product's features.*

make the scene 1. *Sl.* to attend an event. ☐ *We plan to make the scene, but we may be a bit late.* ☐ *I hope everybody can make the scene.* **2.** *Sl.* to understand a situation; to appreciate the situation. ☐ *I can't quite make the scene, but it looks like Willie punched the guy over here. Then he moved to the window over here, and that's when the woman across the street saw him.* ☐ *I can make the scene. It's just like you said, except Willie came in and found the guy laid out on the floor.*

make the team to have been qualified enough to be selected to play on a sports team. ☐ *I tried out, but I didn't make the team.*

make time for someone or something Go to **time for** someone or something.

make time (with someone**)** to flirt with, date, or hang around with someone. ☐ *I hear that Tom's been making time with Ann.* ☐ *I hear they've been making time for months.*

make (too) much of someone or something to pay too much attention to someone or something. ☐ *We all believe you are making much of Tom when he has done no more than anyone else.* ☐ *Don't make too much of it. It was really nothing.*

make tracks (for something**)** *Fig.* to move rapidly toward something or some place. ☐ *The cowboys all made tracks for the chuck wagon.* ☐ *Let's make tracks! Here comes the sheriff.*

make trouble to cause trouble or additional work. ☐ *I don't want to make trouble, but I have a few suggestions that could make things work more smoothly.*

make up to put on makeup. ☐ *I have to go make up before Joe comes to pick me up.*

make up a foursome to assemble into a team of four people. ☐ *We have three people now. Who can we get to make up a foursome?* ☐ *Let's make up a foursome and play bridge.*

make up for lost time to catch up; to go fast to balance a period of going slow or not moving. ☐ *We drove as fast as we could, trying to make up for lost time.* ☐ *Hurry. We have to make up for lost time.*

make up for someone or something **1.** to take the place of someone or something. ☐ *John can't play in the game Saturday, but I think I can make up for him.* ☐ *Do you think that this cat can make up for the one that ran away?* **2.** to compensate for someone or something someone did. ☐ *We all had to do extra work to make up for Harry, who was very tired from being out late the night before.* ☐ *We will certainly make up for what we failed to do.*

make up something to constitute something. (See also make something up.) ☐ *Two chapters make up this volume.* ☐ *Over forty freight cars made up the train.*

make up (to someone**) 1.** to apologize to someone. ☐ *It's too late to make up to me.* ☐ *I think you should go make up to Jerry.* **2.** to try to become friends with someone. ☐ *Look how the cat is making up to Richard!* ☐ *Jimmy is making up to Donna, and she doesn't even notice.*

make up (with someone**)** to reconcile with someone; to end a disagreement (with someone). ☐ *Bill and Max decided to make up.* ☐ *They made up with each other and are now very good friends.*

make use of someone or something to utilize someone or something; to do something useful with someone or something. ☐ *Can you make use of these papers?* ☐ *We were unable to make use of the items you shipped to us.*

make war (on someone or something**) 1.** *Lit.* to attack someone or something and start a war. ☐ *The small country's generals made war on the United States, hoping for foreign aid when they lost the war.* **2.** *Fig.* to actively oppose

someone or something. ☐ *The police made war on violent street crime.*

make water *Euph.* to urinate. ☐ *She's got some kind of condition where it hurts when she makes water.* ☐ *Can we stop at this here gas station? I need to make water.*

make waves *Sl.* to cause difficulty. (Often in the negative.) ☐ *Just relax. Don't make waves.* ☐ *If you make waves too much around here, you won't last long.*

make way to make progress; to move ahead. (Originally nautical. See also **make way (for** someone or something**)**.) ☐ *Is this project making way?* ☐ *A sailboat can't make way if there is no wind.*

make way (for someone or something**)** to clear a path for someone or something. ☐ *Make way for the stretcher.* ☐ *Here comes the doctor—make way!*

make with something *Sl.* to deliver something. ☐ *Come on, make with the stuff you promised!* ☐ *Make with the information, Max, or you will stay in jail even longer!* ☐ *Come on, make with the cash.* ☐ *I want to know. Come on, make with the answers!*

Make your mind up†. *Fig.* Please make a decision.; Please choose. ☐ *Henry: I don't have all day. Make up your mind. Rachel: Don't rush me.* ☐ *Bob: Make your mind up. We have to catch the plane. Mary: I'm not sure I want to go.*

Make yourself at home. *Fig.* Please make yourself comfortable in my home. (Also a signal that a guest can be less formal.) ☐ *Andy: Please come in and make yourself at home. Sue: Thank you. I'd like to.* ☐ *Bill: I hope I'm not too early. Bob: Not at all. Come in and make yourself at home. I've got a few little things to do. Bill: Nice place you've got here.*

man about town a fashionable man who leads a sophisticated life. ☐ *He prefers a nightclub to a quiet night at home—a man about town.* ☐ *Bob's too much of a man about town to go to a football game.*

a **man after my own heart** *Fig.* a man with similar tastes and preferences to mine. ☐ *You like creamed chipbeef on toast? There's a man after my own heart.*

Man does not live by bread alone. *Prov.* In order to survive, people need more than physical things like food and shelter.; People need mental or spiritual things like satisfaction and love. (Biblical.) ☐ *Alan: I'm so miserable. Jill: How can you be miserable? You've got a good place to live, plenty to eat, nice clothes. . . . Alan: But man does not live by bread alone.*

the **man in the street** *Fig.* the ordinary person. ☐ *Politicians rarely care what the man in the street thinks.* ☐ *The man in the street has little interest in literature.*

A **man is known by the company he keeps.** *Prov.* A person tends to associate with people who are like him or her. ☐ *Son, when you go away to school, spend your time with serious people; don't hang around with people who go to parties all the time. A man is known by the company he keeps.* ☐ *If you want to know what kind of person George is, look at his friends. A man is known by the company he keeps.*

a **man of few words** *Fig.* someone, not necessarily a man, who speaks concisely or not at all. ☐ *He is a man of few words, but he usually makes a lot of sense.*

a **man of the cloth** *Fig.* a clergyman. ☐ *Father Brown is a man of the cloth and is welcome at our table for dinner every Sunday.*

Man proposes, God disposes. *Prov.* People may make plans, but they cannot control the outcome of their plans. ☐ *Jill: Are you really going to be able to finish writing your novel by the end of the year? Bob: Man proposes, God disposes.*

man's best friend *Fig.* a dog; dogs in general. ☐ *Man's best friend just peed all over my shoes!*

A **man's home is his castle.** *Prov. Cliché* One can do whatever one wants to in one's own home. ☐ *Don't tell me not to go around the house in my underwear. A man's home is his castle.* ☐ *I'll play my radio loud if I want to. A man's home is his castle.*

man's inhumanity to man *Fig.* human cruelty toward other humans. ☐ *It doesn't take a war to remind us of man's inhumanity to man.*

manage with someone or something to do as well as possible with only someone or something (less than one had hoped for). ☐ *We wanted Kelly to help us, but we will manage with Larry.* ☐ *I am sure we can manage with the money that we have.*

manage without someone or something to do as well as possible without someone or something. ☐ *Carla said that she just can't manage without Jerry.* ☐ *We just can't manage without some more money.*

maneuver for something to get into position for something. ☐ *Sally is maneuvering for a shot at a promotion.* ☐ *Todd maneuvered for some attention, but they ignored him.*

maneuver someone **into** something to lure, position, or deceive someone into (doing) something. ☐ *I will see if I can maneuver him into accepting the offer.* ☐ *He was maneuvered into accepting the offer.*

maneuver someone **out of** something to trick someone out of getting or achieving something. ☐ *Are you trying to maneuver me out of the running for the job?* ☐ *The runner maneuvered her opponent out of first place.*

manna from heaven *Fig.* unexpected help or comfort. (A biblical reference.) ☐ *The arrival of the rescue team was like manna from heaven to the injured climber.* ☐ *The offer of a new job just as she had been fired was manna from heaven to Joan.*

Many a true word is spoken in jest. and **There's many a true word spoken in jest.** *Prov.* Just because something is said as a joke, it can still be true. ☐ *Fred: Why did you make a joke about my being stingy? Do you really think I'm cheap? Ellen: Of course not, don't be silly. It was just a joke. Fred: But many a true word is spoken in jest.*

many (and many)'s the time there have been many times. ☐ *Many and many's the time I warned him not to go to the swimmin' hole by himself.* ☐ *Many's the time she's forgiven her husband.*

Many are called but few are chosen. *Prov.* Many people may answer a call for something, but only a few people are finally selected. (Biblical.) ☐ *When it comes to getting into a good college, many are called but few are chosen.*

M

Many hands make light work. *Prov.* If everyone helps with a large task, it will get done easily and quickly. □ *Cleaning up the banquet room won't take long if we all help; many hands make light work.* □ *You do have a lot of dishes to wash, but you also have all of us to help you, and many hands make light work.*

map something **out†** to plot something out carefully, usually on paper. □ *I have a good plan. I will map it out for you.* □ *I will map out the plan for you.*

mar something **up†** to dent or scratch something; to harm the smooth finish of something. □ *Please don't mar the furniture up.* □ *Don't mar up my desk.*

march against someone or something to march in a demonstration against someone or something. □ *The demonstrators marched against the mayor.* □ *The citizens got together and marched against crime and injustice.*

march behind someone or something Go to **behind** someone or something.

March comes in like a lion, and goes out like a lamb. and **In like a lion, out like a lamb.** *Prov.* The month of March usually starts with cold, unpleasant weather, but ends mild and pleasant. (Either part of the proverb can be used alone.) □ *March certainly is coming in like a lion this year; there's been a snowstorm every day this week.* □ *Jill: Today is March twenty-fifth, and it's beautiful and warm outside, when just two weeks ago, everything was covered with ice. Jane: In like a lion and out like a lamb, all right.*

M

march (from some place**) (to** some place**)** to move along, walking with purposeful steps, from some place to some place. □ *The army marched from one town to another.* □ *They marched to the battlefield from town.*

march in (a) single file Go to **in (a) single file.**

march in step (with someone**)** Go to **in step (with** someone**).**

march on 1. *Lit.* to continue marching. □ *Please march on. Don't stop here; there are other parts of the parade coming along behind you.* □ *Let's march on. We have a long way to go.* **2.** *Fig.* [for time] to continue. □ *Time marches on. We are all getting older.* □ *As the day marches on, try to get everything completed.*

march out of time (with someone or something**)** Go to **out of step (with** someone or something**).**

march past someone or something to move in a file or formation past someone or something. □ *The people in the parade marched past the children standing on the curb.* □ *The soldiers marched past the general.*

march to (the beat of) a different drummer *Fig.* to believe in a different set of principles. □ *John is marching to a different drummer, and he doesn't associate with us anymore.* □ *Since Sally started marching to the beat of a different drummer, she has had a lot of great new ideas.*

mark my word(s) *Fig.* remember what I'm telling you. □ *Mark my word, you'll regret this.* □ *This whole project will fail—mark my words.*

mark someone **down†** [for a teacher] to give someone a low score. □ *He'll mark you down for misspelled words.* □ *I marked down Tom for bad spelling.*

mark someone **for life** *Fig.* to affect someone for life. □ *The tragedy marked her for life and she was never the same.* □ *She was marked for life by her brother's untimely death.*

mark someone or something **off†** and **mark** someone or something **out†** to cross off the name of someone or something. □ *They were late, so I marked them off.* □ *I marked off the late people.* □ *Could you mark that title out? It has been discontinued.*

mark someone or something **out†** Go to previous.

mark someone or something **with** something **1.** to use something with which to mark someone or something. □ *She marked one of the twins with a sticker so she could identify him later.* □ *Jill marked the ones that were sold with a wax pencil.* **2.** to place a particular kind of mark on someone or something. □ *The attendant marked the concertgoers who had paid with a rubber stamp.* □ *Frank marked the book with his initials.*

mark something **as** something to make a mark next to the name of something on a list indicating what the thing is. □ *I will mark this one as expired.* □ *This one is marked as needing repair work.*

mark something **down† 1.** *Lit.* to write something down on paper. □ *She marked the number down on the paper.* □ *She marked down the number.* **2.** *Fig.* to reduce the price of something. □ *We are going to mark all this merchandise down next Monday.* □ *We marked down the merchandise.*

mark something **in†** to write or make a mark on something, perhaps in a box or on a line. □ *I will mark an* X *in the box by your name.* □ *I'll mark in the* X.

mark something **up† 1.** to mess something up with marks. □ *Don't mark up your book!* □ *Who marked this book up?* **2.** to grade a paper and make lots of informative marks and comments on it. □ *The teacher really marked up my term paper.* □ *Why did you mark my test up so much? I hardly made any errors.* **3.** to raise the price of something. □ *The grocery store seems to mark the price of food up every week.* □ *They don't mark up the price of turkey at Thanksgiving.*

mark time *Fig.* to wait; to do nothing but wait. □ *I'll just mark time till things get better.* □ *Do you expect me to just stand here and mark time?*

***a marked man** *Fig.* to be someone, usually a male, who is in danger from harm by someone else. (*Typically: **be ~; live like ~.**) □ *Bob's a marked man. His parents found out that he's skipping school.* □ *Fred's a marked man, too. Jack is looking for him to get his money back.*

maroon someone **on** an island to strand someone on something; to abandon someone on something, such as an island. □ *The pirate captain marooned his first mate on a small island in the Caribbean.* □ *Through a navigation error, I marooned myself on a tiny island east of Guam.*

a **marriage made in heaven** and a **match made in heaven** a happy or harmonious marriage or partnership. (See also **Marriages are made in heaven.**) □ *The partnership of George and Ira Gershwin was a match made in heaven; they wrote such beautiful songs.*

Marriages are made in heaven. *Prov.* You cannot foretell who will marry whom.; Two people may love each other very much but may end up not marrying each other,

and two people who do not even know each other may marry each other in the end. ☐ *Tom and Eliza were childhood sweethearts, had a happy family, and now are celebrating their fiftieth wedding anniversary. Marriages are made in heaven.*

marry above oneself *Fig.* to marry someone in a higher social class than oneself. ☐ *They say she married above herself, but who cares?* ☐ *Scott thought it would not be possible to marry above himself.*

marry below oneself and **marry beneath** oneself *Fig.* to marry someone in a lower social class than oneself. ☐ *He married beneath himself, but he is happy, and what more is required of a marriage?* ☐ *He did not want to marry beneath himself.*

marry beneath oneself Go to previous.

Marry in haste, (and) repent at leisure. *Prov.* If you marry someone you do not know well, or decide to marry someone without first carefully considering what you are doing, you will probably regret it for a long time. ☐ *Sally wanted some time to consider Sam's proposal of marriage; she had heard the saying, "Marry in haste, and repent at leisure."*

marry into something to become a part of a family or a fortune by marriage. ☐ *She married into money, they say.* ☐ *I always wanted to marry into a large family until I found out what that means in terms of buying gifts.*

marry one's **way out of** something to get out of something, such as poverty, by marrying someone. ☐ *She was able to marry her way out of poverty but regretted it in the long run.* ☐ *Sally married her way out of one unhappy home into another one.*

marry someone **off† (to** someone**)** to manage to get someone married to someone and out of the house or family. ☐ *Her parents wanted nothing more than to marry her off to a doctor.* ☐ *They married off their children soon.*

marry up (with someone**)** *Rur.* to marry someone. ☐ *They married up in the spring.* ☐ *Jane's going to marry up with someone she met at school.*

marshal someone or something **together** to organize or gather someone or something together. ☐ *The leader marshaled all his people together in preparation for the parade.* ☐ *Let's marshal the troops together for the attack.*

marvel at someone or something *Fig.* to express wonder or surprise at someone or something. ☐ *I can only marvel at Valerie and all she has accomplished.* ☐ *We all marveled at the beauty of the new building.*

a **marvel to behold** someone or something quite exciting or wonderful to see. ☐ *Our new high-definition television is a marvel to behold.* ☐ *Mary's lovely new baby is a marvel to behold.*

mash on something to press on something, such as a button. (Southern.) ☐ *He kept mashing on the doorbell until someone responded.* ☐ *Just mash on this button if you want someone to come.*

mash something **up†** to crush something into a paste or pieces. ☐ *Mash the potatoes up and put them in a bowl.* ☐ *Mash up the potatoes and serve them to our guests.*

mash something **with** something **1.** to use something to mash something up. ☐ *Vernon mashed the potatoes with a spoon because he couldn't find the masher.* ☐ *Gerald used the heel of his shoe to mash the wasp.* **2.** to combine ingredients while mashing. ☐ *Mash the turnips with the butter.* ☐ *She mashed the potatoes with sour cream, cream cheese, and a little garlic salt.*

mask something **out†** to conceal or cover part of something from view. ☐ *The trees masked the city dump out, so it could not be seen from the street.* ☐ *The trees masked out the dump.*

masquerade as someone or something to appear disguised as someone or something; to pretend to be someone or something. ☐ *We decided to masquerade as ghosts for the party.* ☐ *Mr. Wilson, who is a bit overweight, masqueraded as Cinderella's coach.*

a **match for** someone, something, or an animal someone, something, or an animal that is the equal of someone, something, or some other animal, especially in a contest. ☐ *My older brother is no match for me; he's much weaker.* ☐ *Your horse is no match for mine in a race. Mine will always win.*

a **match made in heaven** Go to a marriage made in heaven.

match someone **against** someone else or something **against** something else to challenge someone with someone else in a contest; to challenge something with something else in a contest. ☐ *I will match my boxer against your boxer any day.* ☐ *I'll match myself against you any day!*

match someone or something **in** something to equal someone or something in some quality. ☐ *I am sure I match her in wisdom if not in grace and beauty.* ☐ *You do not match her in any way.*

match someone **(up†) (with** someone**)** and **match** something **(up†) (with** something**)** to pair people or things. ☐ *I will match Carl up with Kelly and George with Jane.* ☐ *I will match up Carl with Kelly.*

match up [for things or people] to match, be equal, or complementary. ☐ *These match up. See how they are the same length?* ☐ *Sorry, but these two parts don't match up.*

match up to something [for something] to match, be equal to, or complementary to something. ☐ *This sock does not match up to the other one.* ☐ *This one matches up to all the others.*

match wits (with someone**)** *Fig.* to enter into intellectual competition with someone. ☐ *Whenever I try to match wits with Fred, he always ends up running circles around me with his clever repartee.*

mate someone **with** someone and **mate** an animal **with** some other animal to pair or breed people or animals. ☐ *The king sought to mate his daughter with the son of a magician.* ☐ *Harry wanted to mate his guppies with June's guppies.*

mate with an animal [for an animal] to copulate with its own kind. ☐ *The gander mated with the goose in the barnyard.* ☐ *The coyote acted as if it wanted to mate with the dog.*

mate with someone to marry with someone, and presumably, to copulate with someone. ☐ *Did you meet anyone you would like to mate with and spend the rest of your life with?*

M

materialize out of nowhere Go to out of nowhere.

a **matter of life and death** *Cliché* an issue of great urgency; an issue that will decide between living and dying. ☐ *We must find a doctor. It's a matter of life and death.* ☐ *A matter of life and death demands that I return home at once.*

a **matter of opinion** the question of how good or bad someone or something is. ☐ *It's a matter of opinion how strong the company is. John thinks it's great and Fred thinks it's poor.*

matter to someone to be important to someone. ☐ *Does money really matter to you?* ☐ *Yes, it matters to me a lot.*

max out to reach one's maximum in something, such as weight in weight lifting or credit on a credit card. ☐ *Andy finally maxed out at 300 pounds.* ☐ *Randy just knew when he had maxed out. Something in his body told him to stop.*

maxed out 1. *Sl.* exhausted; tired. ☐ *I am just maxed out. I haven't been getting enough sleep.* ☐ *I had to stop work because I was too maxed out.* **2.** *Sl.* intoxicated. ☐ *Sam was maxed out and seemed happy enough to sit under the table and whimper.* ☐ *I hadn't seen Barlowe so maxed out in years. He was nearly paralyzed.*

may as well Go to might as well.

May I be excused? May I leave this place, please?; May I leave to use the toilet? ☐ *Nature calls. May I be excused?* ☐ *The student raised her hand and said, "Teacher, may I be excused?"*

M

May I help you? Go to Could I help you?; How may I help you?

May I see you again? Go to Could I see you again?

May I speak to someone? Go to Could I speak to someone?

May I take a message? Go to Could I take a message?

May I take your order (now)? Go to Could I take your order (now)?

May I tell him who's calling? Go to Could I tell him who's calling?

May I use your powder room? Go to Could I use your powder room?

Maybe some other time. and **We'll try again some other time.** a polite phrase said by a person whose invitation has just been turned down by another person. ☐ *Bill: Do you think you can come to the party? Bob: I'll have to beg off. I have another engagement. Bill: Maybe some other time.* ☐ *John: Can you and Alice come over this Friday? Bill: Gee, sorry. We have something else on. John: We'll try again some other time.*

mean business to be very, very serious. ☐ *Stop laughing! I mean business.* ☐ *I could tell from the look on her face that she meant business.*

mean by something to intend a certain meaning by words or deeds. ☐ *What do you mean by that?* ☐ *I did not mean anything special by my remarks.*

mean (for someone**) to** do something to intend (for someone) to do something. ☐ *John meant to go with us to the zoo.* ☐ *John meant for Jane to do the dishes.*

mean lean times (ahead) Go to lean times (ahead).

mean no offense not to intend to offend. (See also take no offense.) ☐ *I'm really sorry. I meant no offense.* ☐ *It was simply a slip of the tongue. He meant no offense by it.*

mean nothing (to someone**) 1.** not to make sense to someone. ☐ *This sentence means nothing to me. It isn't clearly written.* ☐ *I'm sorry. This message means nothing.* **2.** [for someone] not to have feeling for someone or something. ☐ *Do I mean nothing to you after all these years?* ☐ *Do all those years of devotion mean nothing?*

mean something **as** something to intend something to be understood as something. ☐ *Do you mean your remarks as criticism?* ☐ *I meant my comment as encouragement.*

mean something **for** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to imply something important for someone or something; to be important or meaningful for someone or something. ☐ *Are your comments supposed to mean something special for me?* ☐ *I mean these remarks for the government.* **2.** *Fig.* to intend for someone or something to have or receive something. ☐ *Do you mean this gift for me?* ☐ *I mean this gift for the entire community.*

mean something **(to** someone**) 1.** *Lit.* to make sense to someone. ☐ *Does this line mean anything to you?* ☐ *Yes, it means something.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to cause positive feelings in another person. ☐ *You mean a lot to me.* ☐ *This job means a lot to Ann.*

a **mean streak** *Fig.* a tendency for a person to do things that are mean. ☐ *I think that Wally has a mean streak that no one ever saw before this incident.*

mean to (do something**)** to intend to do something. ☐ *Did you mean to do that?* ☐ *No, it was an accident. I didn't mean to.*

mean well to intend to be nice, polite, helpful, etc., but fail in the effort. ☐ *I know you mean well, but your comments are sort of insulting.*

meaner than a junkyard dog (with fourteen sucking pups) *Rur.* cruel; eager to fight. ☐ *Don't mess with her. She's meaner than a junkyard dog with fourteen sucking pups.* ☐ *They say Jim's meaner than a junkyard dog, but really, he's a sweetheart.*

meant to be destined to exist. ☐ *Our love was meant to be!* ☐ *It was not meant to be.*

meant to be something destined or fated to be something. ☐ *Jane was meant to be a chemist.* ☐ *I was meant to be rich, but something didn't work right!*

measure someone **against** someone else or something **against** something else to compare someone with someone else; to compare something with something else. ☐ *Daniel measured his brother against the boy next door.* ☐ *We measured the new building against the older ones and found the new one lacking in many respects.* ☐ *I measured myself against Tom and found him superior in almost everything.*

measure someone **up against** someone or something to place someone up against someone or something else for the purpose of comparing size or other qualities. ☐ *Please measure Fred up against Tom and see who has the best qualifications.* ☐ *Can you measure Brian up against the mark on the wall to see how tall he is growing?*

measure something **off**† to determine the length of something. ☐ *He measured the length of the room off and wrote*

down the figure in his notebook. ☐ *Fred measured off the width of the house.* ☐ *Fred measured a few feet of string off, and cut it with a knife.*

measure something **out†** to measure and distribute something as it is being taken out, unwrapped, unfolded, etc. ☐ *Carl measured the grain out a cup at a time.* ☐ *He measured out the grain little by little.*

measure up (to someone or something**)** to compare well to someone or something. ☐ *He just doesn't measure up to Sarah in intelligence.* ☐ *This meal doesn't measure up to my expectations.*

a **Mecca for** someone *Fig.* a place that is frequently visited by a particular group of people because it is important to them for some reason. (From the city of Mecca, the religious center of Islam.) ☐ *New York City is a Mecca for theatergoers.* ☐ *St. Andrews is a Mecca for golf enthusiasts because of its famous course.*

meddle in something to intrude [oneself] into something. ☐ *I wish you wouldn't meddle in my affairs.* ☐ *Go meddle in someone else's business.*

meddle with someone or something to interfere with someone or something; to mess around with someone or something. ☐ *Please don't meddle with me. I am in a bad mood.* ☐ *Would you please stop meddling with my computer?*

mediate between someone **and** someone else to negotiate an agreement between people. ☐ *I will have to mediate between Mary and Vernon.* ☐ *No one wants to mediate between them.*

meditate on someone or something to reflect on someone or something. ☐ *Judy was instructed to meditate on a flower.* ☐ *I will meditate on that happy thought.*

***meek as a lamb** [of someone] shy, quiet, and docile. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *Only an hour after their argument, Joe went to Elizabeth and, meek as a lamb, asked her to forgive him.* ☐ *Betsy terrorizes the other children, but she's as meek as a lamb around her elders.*

meet one's **death** and **meet** one's **end** *Fig.* to die. ☐ *After 20 years, my dog finally met his death when he got hit by a bus.* ☐ *The skydiver met his end when his parachute didn't open.*

meet one's **end** Go to previous.

meet one's **match** *Fig.* to meet one's equal; to encounter someone who can match or outdo one in some activity, talent, etc. ☐ *John played tennis with Bill yesterday, and it looks as if John has finally met his match.* ☐ *Listen to Jane and Mary argue. I always thought that Jane was loud, but she has finally met her match.*

meet one's **Waterloo** *Fig.* to meet one's final and insurmountable challenge. (Alludes to the final defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo.) ☐ *The boss is being very hard on Bill. It seems that Bill has finally met his Waterloo.* ☐ *John was more than Sally could handle. She has finally met her Waterloo.*

meet someone **halfway** *Fig.* to compromise with someone. ☐ *No, I won't give in, but I'll meet you halfway.* ☐ *They settled the argument by agreeing to meet each other halfway.*

meet the requirements (for something**)** to fulfill the requirements for something. ☐ *Sally was unable to meet the requirements for the job.* ☐ *Jane met the requirements and was told to report to work the next day.*

meet up with someone or something to meet someone or something, usually by accident. ☐ *I met up with Don on the street yesterday.* ☐ *James met up with a strange accident.*

meet with someone to have a meeting with someone. ☐ *I will meet with all of them on Monday.* ☐ *When can I meet with you?*

meet with something **1.** [for someone] to experience something, such as an accident. ☐ *Poor Carlo met with a serious accident.* ☐ *Henry always feared meeting with a horrible fate.* **2.** [for someone or something] to strike or touch something. ☐ *That board is supposed to meet perfectly with the surface of the wall.* ☐ *Her head met with the top of the car a number of times during the journey.* **3.** to encounter some kind of response. ☐ *The proposal met with unexpected opposition.* ☐ *Her speech was met with universal approval.*

a **meeting of the minds** the establishment of agreement; complete agreement. ☐ *After a lot of discussion we finally reached a meeting of the minds.* ☐ *We struggled to bring about a meeting of the minds on the issues.*

a **mell of a hess** *Inf.* a hell of a mess. (A deliberate spoonerism.) ☐ *What a mell of a hess you've gotten us into this time.* ☐ *Have you ever seen such a mell of a hess?*

mellow out 1. to become less angry. ☐ *When you mellow out, maybe we can talk.* ☐ *Come on, man, stop yelling and mellow out!* **2.** to become generally more relaxed. ☐ *Gary was nearly forty before he started to mellow out a little and take life less seriously.* ☐ *After his illness, he mellowed out and seemed more glad to be alive.*

melt away to melt into a liquid. ☐ *The ice cubes melted away quickly in the intense heat.* ☐ *When the wax candles melted away, they ruined the lace tablecloth.*

melt down 1. *Lit.* [for something frozen] to melt. ☐ *The glacier melted down little by little.* ☐ *When the ice on the streets melted down, it was safe to drive again.* **2.** *Fig.* [for a nuclear reactor] to become hot enough to melt through its container. ☐ *The whole system was on the verge of melting down.*

melt in one's **mouth 1.** to taste very good. (Also can be literal.) ☐ *This cake is so good it'll melt in your mouth.* ☐ *John said that the food didn't exactly melt in his mouth.* **2.** [of meat] to be very, very tender. ☐ *My steak is so tender it could melt in my mouth.* ☐ *This filet will melt in your mouth!*

melt in something **1.** [for something] to melt to a liquid at a high temperature. ☐ *Surely the plastic cup will melt in such heat.* ☐ *This tray will melt in the oven, so keep it out of there.* **2.** [for something] to dissolve in a particular liquid. ☐ *Sugar melts in hot water easily.* ☐ *Will this substance melt in heated water?*

melt into something to melt and change into a different state. ☐ *All the ice cream melted into a sticky soup.* ☐ *The candles melted into a pool of colored wax in all the heat we had last summer.*

melt something **away†** to cause something to melt into a liquid. ☐ *The sun melted the ice away.* ☐ *The sun melted away the ice.*

M

melt something **down†** to cause something frozen to melt; to cause something solid to melt. ☐ *The rays of the sun melted the candle down to a puddle of wax.* ☐ *The heat melted down the ice.*

melt something **into** something to cause something to change its state when melting. ☐ *The ice melted into a cold liquid that we could drink.* ☐ *We melted the fat into a liquid that we could deep-fry in.*

Men are blind in their own cause. *Prov.* If you believe in something very fervently, you will not recognize the flaws in what you believe or the dangers associated with it. ☐ *Jill: Lyle is so intent on converting people to his religion, that he doesn't see that his constant preaching is alienating his friends. Jane: Men are blind in their own cause.*

Men make houses, women make homes. *Prov.* Men are often the ones who build or acquire houses for their families, but women provide the things that make a house into a home. ☐ *When William moved into his own apartment, his mother insisted on choosing and arranging the furniture and decorations for him. "Men make houses, women make homes," she said, "and I want you to have a home as nice as the one you grew up in."*

mend (one's**) fences 1.** *Lit.* to repair fences as part of one's chores. ☐ *Tom is mending fences today at the south end of the ranch.* **2.** *Fig.* to restore good relations (with someone). ☐ *I think I had better get home and mend my fences. I had an argument with my daughter this morning.* ☐ *Sally called up her uncle to apologize and try to mend fences.*

M

mend one's **ways** *Fig.* to improve one's behavior. ☐ *John used to be very wild, but he's mended his ways.* ☐ *You'll have to mend your ways if you go out with Mary. She hates people to be late.*

*****a **mental block (against** something**)** *Fig.* to have some psychological barrier that prevents one from doing something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Perry has a mental block against speaking in public.*

mention someone or something **in passing** to mention someone or something casually; to mention someone or something while talking about someone or something else. ☐ *He just happened to mention in passing that the mayor had resigned.* ☐ *John mentioned in passing that he was nearly eighty years old.*

mention someone or something **in** something **1.** to name someone or something in a particular context. ☐ *We mentioned you in regard to nominations for the congress.* ☐ *Everyone mentioned your book in the discussions.* **2.** to name someone or something in a will, lecture, story, article, etc. ☐ *They mentioned your name in the discussion.* ☐ *Uncle Herman mentioned you in his will.*

mention something **to** someone to refer to something while talking to someone. ☐ *Please mention it to your father.* ☐ *You had better not mention that to anyone.*

a **mere trifle** *Fig.* a tiny bit; a small, unimportant matter; a small amount of money. ☐ *But this isn't expensive! It costs a mere trifle!*

merge in(to something**)** to join into something. ☐ *The stream merged into the main channel of the river.*

merge someone or something **into** something and **merge** someone or something **in†** to route someone or something into something else. ☐ *They merged the marchers into the parade and no one ever knew they were late.* ☐ *We merged in the latecomers to the parade at an intersection.*

merge something **with** something else to join two things together. ☐ *The management merged the sales division with the marketing division.* ☐ *We merged the accounting department with the auditing department.*

merge with someone or something to join with someone or something. ☐ *Ted merged with Fred and they created a very profitable partnership.* ☐ *Our company merged with a larger one, and we all kept our jobs.* ☐ *This stream merges with a larger stream about two miles to the west.*

***merry as a cricket** and ***merry as the day is long** very happy and carefree. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Mary is as merry as a cricket whenever she has company come to call.* ☐ *The little children are as merry as the day is long.*

merry as the day is long Go to previous.

mesh together to fit together. ☐ *Their interests and personalities mesh together perfectly.* ☐ *Their ideas don't mesh together too well.*

mesh with something to fit with something. ☐ *Your idea just doesn't mesh with my plans.* ☐ *Currently, your proposed project doesn't mesh at all well with our long-range planning.*

mess about Go to mess around.

mess about (with something**)** Go to mess around (with something).

mess around and **mess about 1.** to waste time; to do something ineffectually. ☐ *Stop messing around and get busy.* ☐ *I wish you wouldn't mess about so much. You waste a lot of time that way.* **2.** to play [with someone] sexually. ☐ *Those two have been messing around.* ☐ *Pete was messing around with Maria during the summer.*

mess around (with something**)** and **mess about (with** something**); monkey around (with** something**) 1.** to play with or fiddle with something idly and with no good purpose. ☐ *Don't mess around with the ashtray.* ☐ *You'll break it if you don't stop messing about with it.* **2.** to experiment with something; to use and learn about something. ☐ *We had been messing about with some new video techniques when we made our discovery.* ☐ *The people in this lab are messing around with all kinds of polymers.*

mess someone **over†** *Sl.* to treat someone badly; to beat or harm someone. ☐ *Max messed Lefty over and sent him to the hospital.* ☐ *Max messed over Lefty.*

mess someone's **face up†** *Sl.* to beat someone about the face. ☐ *The champ threatened to mess the challenger's face up.* ☐ *The champ broke the challenger's nose and really did mess up his face.*

mess someone **up†** *Sl.* to rough someone up; to beat someone up. ☐ *The robbers threatened to mess Bob up if he didn't cooperate.* ☐ *John messed up Bill a little, but no real harm was done.*

mess something **up†** to make something disorderly; to create disorder in something; to throw someone's plans awry. ☐ *You really messed this place up!* ☐ *Who messed up my bed?*

mess up to make an error; to do something wrong; to **flub up**. ☐ *I hope I don't mess up on the quiz.* ☐ *You really messed up and now you're in big trouble!*

mess with someone or something and **monkey with** someone or something to bother or interfere with someone or something. ☐ *Come on, don't monkey with my new camera.* ☐ *Don't mess with me unless you want trouble.*

messed up 1. confused. ☐ *I'm sort of messed up since my divorce.* ☐ *Most kids are sort of messed up at this age.* **2.** intoxicated. ☐ *Somehow I must have got messed up. What caused it, do you think?* ☐ *Everybody at the party was too messed up to drive home.*

metamorphose into something to transform into something. ☐ *This ugly caterpillar will surely metamorphose into something beautiful.* ☐ *At about eighteen, Wally metamorphosed into a reasonably handsome young man.*

mete something **out**† to measure something out. ☐ *She meted the solution out carefully into a row of test tubes.* ☐ *She meted out the cookies to each of them.*

***method in** one's **madness** *Fig.* a purpose in what one is doing, even though it seems to be crazy. (*Typically: **be ~; have ~**.) ☐ *What I'm doing may look strange, but there is method in my madness.* ☐ *Wait until she finishes; then you'll see that she has method in her madness.*

a **middle ground** a position of compromise; a state of thinking where two opposing parties can discuss an issue politely and productively. ☐ *If we could only reach a middle ground on this issue, things wouldn't be so confrontational.*

the **middle of nowhere** a very isolated place. ☐ *I don't want to stay out here in the middle of nowhere.* ☐ *I was stranded in the middle of nowhere for an hour with a flat tire.*

might and main *Cliché* great physical strength; great force. ☐ *The huge warrior, with all his might and main, could not break his way through the castle gates.* ☐ *The incredible might and main of the sea crushed the ship against the cliff.*

might as well and **may as well** a phrase indicating that it is probably better to do something than not to do it. ☐ *Bill: Should we try to get there for the first showing of the film? Jane: Might as well. Nothing else to do.* ☐ *Andy: May as well leave now. It doesn't matter if we arrive a little bit early. Jane: Why do we always have to be the first to arrive?*

might as well be hung for a sheep as (for) a lamb *Rur.* might as well commit a large fault as a small one, since the same punishment will result. ☐ *I'll take the expensive fishing rod. My wife will be mad at me no matter how much I spend, so I might as well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb.*

might could *Rur.* might be able to. ☐ *Charlie: Can you come out with me after work? Tom: I might could. I'll have to see if my wife has other plans.* ☐ *I might could help you, if you'll tell me what's the matter.*

Might makes right. *Prov. Cliché* The stronger of two opponents will always control the situation. ☐ *Child: How come the country with the biggest army always tells the other countries what to do? Father: Might makes right.*

might(y) nigh *Rur.* very nearly. ☐ *We mighty nigh lost Mary that time she fell through the ice in the river.* ☐ *That was might nigh the worst night of my life.*

Mighty oaks from little acorns grow. Go to **Great oaks from little acorns grow.**

migrate between some place **and** some place else to change residence from one place to another, perhaps repeatedly. ☐ *These birds migrate between the north and the south.* ☐ *They migrate between their cottage in the North in the summer and their condo in Florida in the winter.*

migrate (from some place**) (to** some place**)** [for a population] to move from some place to another. ☐ *The birds all migrate from Europe to Africa.* ☐ *They migrate to Canada from South America.*

*a **mile a minute** *Fig.* very fast. (*Typically: **go ~; move ~; talk ~; travel ~**.) ☐ *She talks a mile a minute and is very hard to keep up with.*

a **milestone in** someone's **life** and an **important milestone in** someone's **life** a very important event or point in one's life. (From the [former] stone markers at the side of a road showing the distance to or from a place.) ☐ *Joan's wedding was a milestone in her mother's life.* ☐ *The birth of a child is a milestone in every parent's life.*

militate against something [for something] to work against something. ☐ *Everything you have said today militates against an early settlement to our disagreement.* ☐ *This really militates against my going to college.*

the **milk of human kindness** *Fig.* natural kindness and sympathy shown to others. (From Shakespeare's play *Macbeth, I. v.*) ☐ *Mary is completely hard and selfish—she doesn't have the milk of human kindness in her.* ☐ *Roger is too full of the milk of human kindness and people take advantage of him.*

milk someone **for** something *Fig.* to pressure someone into giving information or money. ☐ *The reporter milked the mayor's aide for information.* ☐ *The thief milked me for $20.*

mill around and **mill about** to wander or move around aimlessly within a small area. ☐ *Everyone was milling around, looking for something to do.* ☐ *The students milled about between classes.*

The **mill cannot grind with water that is past.** *Prov.* Do not waste the opportunities you now have.; Do not waste time wishing for what you had in the past. ☐ *If you want to go abroad, do it now, while you're young and have the money. The mill cannot grind with water that is past.*

*a **million miles away** *Fig.* lost in thought; [of someone] daydreaming and not paying attention. (Only one's mind is far away. *Typically: **be ~; look to be ~; seem ~**.) ☐ *He was a million miles away during the entire lecture.* ☐ *Look at her. She is a million miles away, not paying any attention to what she is doing.*

The **mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small.** *Prov.* It may take a long time, but evil will always be punished. ☐ *Jill: It really doesn't seem right that Fred can be so horrible and dishonest, but he always gets everything he wants. Jane: Be patient. The mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small.*

M

a **millstone about** one's **neck** a continual burden or handicap. ☐ *This huge and expensive house is a millstone about my neck.* ☐ *Bill's inability to control his temper is a millstone about his neck.*

mince (one's**) words** to soften the effect of one's words. ☐ *Tell me what you think, and don't mince your words.* ☐ *A frank person never minces words.*

Mind if...? Go to (Do you) mind if...?

mind one's **own business** *Fig.* to attend only to the things that concern one. ☐ *Leave me alone, Bill. Mind your own business.* ☐ *I'd be fine if John would mind his own business.*

mind one's **p's and q's.** *Prov.* to behave properly; to display good manners. ☐ *When you children go to visit Aunt Muriel, you'll have to mind your p's and q's; not like at home, where I let you do as you please.* ☐ *We'd better mind our p's and q's for this new teacher; I hear he's very strict.*

mind over matter *Fig.* [an instance where there are] intellectual powers overriding threats, difficulties, or problems. ☐ *You need to concentrate harder. Pay no attention to your surroundings. This is a case of mind over matter.*

mind the store and **watch the store** *Fig.* to take care of local matters. ☐ *Please stay here in the office and mind the store while I go to the conference.* ☐ *I had to stay home and watch the store when Ann went to Boston.*

mind you a phrase introducing something that should be taken into consideration. ☐ *He's very well dressed, but mind you, he's got plenty of money to buy clothes.* ☐ *Lisa is unfriendly to me, but mind you, she's never very nice to anyone.*

Mind your own beeswax. to mind one's own business. (Juvenile.) ☐ *You just mind your own beeswax!* ☐ *Lay off! Mind your own beeswax!*

Mind your own business. and **Get your nose out of my business.; Keep your nose out of my business.** *Fig.* Stop prying into my affairs. (Not at all polite. The expressions with *get* and *keep* can have the literal meanings of removing and keeping removed.) ☐ *Andy: This is none of your affair. Mind your own business. Sue: I was only trying to help.* ☐ *Bob: How much did you pay in federal taxes last year? Jane: Good grief, Bob! Keep your nose out of my business!* ☐ *Tom: How much did it cost? Sue: Tom! Get your nose out of my business!* ☐ *"Hey!" shrieked Sally, jerking the checkbook out of Sue's grasp. "Get your nose out of my business!"*

mine for something to dig into the ground in search of a mineral, a metal, or an ore. ☐ *The prospectors ended up mining for coal.* ☐ *What are they mining for in those hills?*

a **mine of information** *Fig.* someone or something that is full of information. ☐ *Grandfather is a mine of information about World War II.* ☐ *The new search engine is a positive mine of useful information.*

mingle in (with someone**)** to join in with someone; to mix with people. ☐ *I am going to go into the hall and mingle in with the rest of the guests.* ☐ *Ken came into the room and mingled in at once.*

mingle someone **with** someone else and **mingle** something **with** something else to mix people together; to mix things together. ☐ *Try to mingle your friends with mine.* ☐ *You had better not mingle your money with that of the corporation.*

mingle with someone to mix with people. ☐ *Try to mingle with the guests.* ☐ *I would like to get out and mingle with people more.*

minister to someone or something to take care of someone or someone's needs. ☐ *Sarah tried to minister to the people of the village.* ☐ *He sought to minister to the grief of the widow.*

minor in something to study a secondary subject in college. (Compare this with major in something.) ☐ *I minored in math in college.* ☐ *I decided to minor in history.*

the **minute** something happens the point in time at which an event happens. ☐ *I'll be inside the minute it rains.* ☐ *Call me the minute you get to town.*

a **miscarriage of justice** a wrong or mistaken decision, especially one made in a court of law. ☐ *Sentencing the old man on a charge of murder proved to be a miscarriage of justice.* ☐ *Punishing the student for cheating was a miscarriage of justice. He was innocent.*

Misery loves company. *Prov.* Unhappy people like other people to be unhappy too. ☐ *Jill: Why is Linda criticizing everybody today? Jane: Her boss criticized her this morning, and misery loves company.* ☐ *I should probably feel bad because my sister is so depressed, but I'm pretty depressed myself. Misery loves company.*

Misfortunes never come singly. *Prov.* Bad things tend to happen in groups. ☐ *I already told you that my wife lost her job. Well, misfortunes never come singly; our house was robbed last night.*

mislead someone **about** something to misrepresent something to someone. ☐ *I hope you are not trying to mislead me about the price.* ☐ *I'm afraid I misled you on this matter.*

misplace one's **trust (in** someone**)** to put trust in the wrong person; to put trust in someone who does not deserve it. ☐ *The writer misplaced his trust in his editor.* ☐ *The voters misplaced their trust in the corrupt politician.*

miss a trick *Fig.* to miss an opportunity or chance. (Typically with the negative.) ☐ *She hardly ever misses a trick.* ☐ *Mr. Big never misses a trick.* ☐ *How did a smart guy like you miss a trick like that?*

A **miss is as good as a mile.** *Prov.* Almost having done something is the same as not having done it at all, since in both cases the thing does not get done. ☐ *We only missed the train by one minute? Well, a miss is as good as a mile.*

miss out (on something**)** and **lose out (on** something**)** to fail to participate in something; to fail to take part in something. ☐ *I'm sorry I missed out on the ice cream.* ☐ *I lost out on getting in the class photo because I was sick that day.*

miss (something**) by a mile** *Fig.* to fail to hit something by a great distance; to land wide of the mark. ☐ *Ann shot the arrow and missed the target by a mile.* ☐ *"Good grief, you missed by a mile," shouted Sally.*

miss the boat 1. *Lit.* to miss out (on something); to be ignorant (of something). ☐ *Pay attention, John, or you'll miss the boat and not learn algebra.* ☐ *Tom really missed*

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the boat when it came to making friends. **2.** *Fig.* to have made an error; to be wrong. ☐ *If you think you can do that, you have just missed the boat.* ☐ *The guy's missed the boat. He's a lunkhead.*

miss the point to fail to understand the important part of something. ☐ *I'm afraid you missed the point. Let me explain it again.* ☐ *You keep explaining, and I keep missing the point.*

mission in life one's purpose in life; the reason for which one lives. ☐ *Bob's mission in life is to make money.* ☐ *My mission in life is to help people live in peace.*

mist over and **mist up** [for glass] to fog up; [for glass] to develop a coating of water vapor so that one cannot see. ☐ *The windshield misted over and we could hardly see out.* ☐ *The glass misted up and we had to wipe it off.*

mist up Go to previous.

mistake someone **for** someone else and **mix** someone **up with** someone else to confuse someone with someone else; to think that one person is another person. ☐ *I'm sorry. I mistook you for John.* ☐ *Tom is always mistaking Bill for me. We don't look a thing alike, though.* ☐ *Try not to mix Bill up with Bob, his twin.*

mistake something **for** something else and **mix** something **up with** something else to confuse two things with each other. ☐ *Please don't mix this idea up with that one.* ☐ *I mistook my book for yours.*

mix and match 1. to assemble a limited number of items, usually clothing, in a number of different ways. ☐ *Alice learned to mix and match her skirts, blouses, and sweaters so that she always could be attractively dressed on a limited budget.* ☐ *Gary always bought black, blue, and gray trousers and shirts so he could mix and match without too many bad combinations.* **2.** to select a number of items from an assortment, often in order to get a quantity discount. (As opposed to getting a quantity discount for buying a lot of only one item.) ☐ *The candles were 25 percent off, and you could mix and match colors, sizes, and length.* ☐ *I found a good sale on shirts. They were four for fifty dollars, and the store would let you mix and match.*

mix in (with someone or something**)** to mix or combine with people or substances. ☐ *The band came down from the stage and mixed in with the guests during the break.* ☐ *The eggs won't mix in with the shortening!*

mix it up (with someone**)** to fight with someone; to quarrel with someone. ☐ *Wilbur and Walt mixed it up for a while, and then things calmed down.* ☐ *Richard came out of the shop and began to mix it up with Walt.*

mix someone or something **into** something and **mix** someone or something **in†** to combine someone or something into something. ☐ *We will try to mix the new people into the group.* ☐ *We will mix in the new people a few at a time.*

mix someone **up†** to confuse someone. ☐ *Please don't ask questions now; you'll mix me up!* ☐ *You mixed up the speaker with your question.*

mix someone **up† in** something to get someone involved in something. ☐ *Please don't mix me up in this problem.* ☐ *Walter mixed up his daughter in the sordid affair.*

mix someone **up with** someone else Go to **mistake** someone **for** someone else.

mix something **up†** to bring something into disorder; to throw something into a state of confusion. ☐ *Don't mix up the papers on my desk.* ☐ *He mixes up things in his eagerness to speak.*

mix something **up† (with** something**) 1.** to mix or stir something using a mixing or stirring device. ☐ *He mixed the batter up with a spoon.* ☐ *First, mix up the batter.* **2.** to combine substances and mix them together. ☐ *Please mix the egg up with the sugar first.* ☐ *Please mix up the egg with the sugar.*

mix something **up with** something else Go to **mistake** something **for** something else.

mix with someone or something to mix socially with someone or a group. ☐ *Tom dislikes Bill and Ted so much that he could never mix with them socially.* ☐ *She finds it difficult to mix with friends.*

mix with something [for a substance] to combine with a substance. ☐ *Will this pigment mix with water?* ☐ *Water will not mix with oil.*

a **mixed bag** a varied collection of people or things. (Refers originally to a bag of game brought home after a day's hunting.) ☐ *The new students in my class are a mixed bag—some bright, some positively stupid.* ☐ *The furniture I bought is a mixed bag. Some of it is antique and the rest is quite contemporary.*

***mixed feelings (about** someone or something**)** uncertainty about someone or something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I have mixed feelings about Bob. Sometimes I think he likes me; other times I don't.* ☐ *I have mixed feelings about my trip to England. I love the people, but the climate upsets me.*

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***mixed up in** something involved in something, especially something wrong or illegal. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *The youth has had problems ever since he got mixed up in a group of boys that stole a car.*

***mixed up with** someone else involved with another person, possibly romantically. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I hear that Sam is mixed up with Sally.* ☐ *Who is Jerry mixed up with now?*

moan about something to complain about something. ☐ *What are you moaning about?* ☐ *I am not moaning about anything.*

moan something **out†** to say something in a moan. ☐ *The injured woman moaned the name of her assailant out.* ☐ *She moaned out the name.*

moan with something to groan because of pain or pleasure. ☐ *The patient moaned with pain and fear.* ☐ *Ken moaned with pleasure.*

mock something **up†** to make a model or simulation of something. ☐ *The engineers mocked the new car design up for the managers to see.* ☐ *They mocked up the new car design.*

model someone **on** someone and **model** something **on** something to use something as a pattern for something; to use someone as a pattern for someone. ☐ *I will model my house on the house we saw in the Mediterranean.* ☐ *She tried to model herself on her mother.*

model something **in** something to make a model of something in a particular substance. ☐ *She modeled the figure in clay.* ☐ *I modeled a bear in modeling clay.*

model something **on** something Go to **model** someone **on** someone.

Moderation in all things. *Prov.* Do not do anything too much or too little. ☐ *Felicia always ate sparingly. "Moderation in all things," she told herself.* ☐ *Jane: I think you watch too much TV. Jill: So you think I shouldn't watch any? Jane: No, just watch a reasonable amount. Moderation in all things.*

modulate to a (different**) key** to change from one musical key to another by means of a musical transition. ☐ *Suddenly, the organist modulated to a key that was too high for most of the singers.* ☐ *I will have to modulate to a lower key before I start the next hymn.*

moist around the edges intoxicated. ☐ *Charlie is more than moist around the edges. He is soused.* ☐ *Didn't that guy seem a little moist around the edges?*

mold something **out of** something and **mold** something **from** something to form something, using a pliable substance, such as clay, plastic, wet concrete, etc. ☐ *She molded a small turtle out of the moist clay.* ☐ *Elaine molded a turtle from the clay.*

the **moment everyone has been waiting for** Go to the **big moment.**

the **moment of truth** *Fig.* the point at which someone has to face the reality of a situation. ☐ *The moment of truth is here. Turn over your exam papers and begin.* ☐ *Now for the moment of truth when we find out whether we have got planning permission or not.*

Monday's child is fair of face. *Prov.* A child born on Monday will be good-looking. (This comes from a rhyme that tells what children will be like, according to which day they are born: "Monday's child is fair of face, / Tuesday's child is full of grace, / Wednesday's child is full of woe, / Thursday's child has far to go, / Friday's child is loving and giving, / Saturday's child works hard for a living, / But a child that is born on the Sabbath day / Is blithe and bonny, good and gay.") ☐ *Joan is so pretty, she must be a Monday's child. Monday's child is fair of face.*

Money burns a hole in someone's **pocket.** An expression decribing someone who spends money as soon as it is earned. ☐ *Sally can't seem to save anything. Money burns a hole in her pocket.* ☐ *If money burns a hole in your pocket, you never have any for emergencies.*

Money does not grow on trees. *Prov.* It is not easy to get money. (Implies that the person you are addressing spends money too easily.) ☐ *Child: Can I have ten dollars to go to the movies? Father: Ten dollars?! Money doesn't grow on trees.*

money from home 1. easily gotten money. (Underworld.) ☐ *There is nothing to a simple con job like this. It's money from home.* ☐ *This job is like taking candy from a kid. It's money from home.* **2.** something as welcome as long-awaited money from home. ☐ *This cool drink is money from home right now.* ☐ *Having you visit like this is like getting money from home, Mary.*

Money is no object. and **Expense is no object.** *Fig.* It does not matter how much something costs. ☐ *Please show me your finest automobile. Money is no object.* ☐ *I want the finest earrings you have. Don't worry about how much they cost because expense is no object.*

Money is power. *Prov.* If you have money, you can get things and do things. ☐ *Emily wanted a career that would make her a lot of money, since money is power.*

Money is the root of all evil. and The **love of money is the root of all evil.** *Prov.* People do many evil things in order to get rich. (Biblical. Compare this with **Idleness is the root of all evil.**) ☐ *Fred: I know I could make more money if I just knew the right things to invest in. Ellen: Don't worry so much about money. It's the root of all evil, after all.* ☐ *As the newspapers continued to report the dastardly things the wealthy young banker had done to become even wealthier, people shook their heads and remarked, "The love of money is the root of all evil."*

Money talks. *Fig.* Money gives one power and influence to help get things done or get one's own way. ☐ *Don't worry. I have a way of getting things done. Money talks.* ☐ *I can't compete against rich old Mrs. Jones. She'll get her way because money talks.*

monkey business and **funny business** silliness; dishonest tricks. ☐ *That's enough monkey business. Now, settle down.* ☐ *Stop the funny business. This is serious!*

Monkey see, monkey do. *Prov.* Children imitate what they see other people doing. ☐ *I don't let my children watch TV programs that show kids being disrespectful to their elders. I know what would happen if I did: monkey see, monkey do.*

monkey suit a tuxedo. (Jocular. Possibly in reference to the fancy suit worn by an organ-grinder's monkey.) ☐ *Do I have to wear a monkey suit to dinner?* ☐ *All the men except me wore monkey suits at dinner on the cruise.*

monkey with someone or something Go to **mess with** someone or something.

months running Go to **days running.**

mooch (something**) from** someone to beg something from someone. ☐ *Can I mooch a match from you?* ☐ *Go mooch some money from Fred.* ☐ *Why do you always mooch from people?*

moon about someone or something and **moon over** someone or something *Fig.* to pine or grieve about someone or something. ☐ *Stop mooning about your cat. Cats always come back eventually.* ☐ *Jill is still mooning over Robert.*

moon something **away**† *Fig.* to waste time pining or grieving. ☐ *Don't moon the whole year away!* ☐ *You have mooned away half the year. Now pull yourself together!*

mop something **down**† to clean a surface with a mop. ☐ *Please mop this floor down now.* ☐ *Please mop down this floor.*

mop something **off**† to wipe the liquid off something. ☐ *Please mop the counter off with paper towels.* ☐ *Mop off the counter.*

mop something **up**† to clean up something, such as a spill, with a mop or with a mopping motion. ☐ *Please mop this mess up.* ☐ *I will mop up this mess.*

mop something **up**† **with** something to clean or remove something from something else using a mop, rag, towel,

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etc. □ *I can mop the mess up with this old rag mop.* □ *She will mop up the mess with the rag.*

mop the floor up† with someone to overwhelm and physically subdue someone; to beat someone. □ *Stop talking like that, or I'll mop the floor up with you!* □ *Did you hear that? He threatened to mop up the floor with me!*

mop up (after someone or something**) 1.** *Lit.* to clean up with a mop a sloppy mess made by someone or something. □ *I am the one who has to mop up after the mess you made!* **2.** *Fig.* to rectify a problem that someone or something has created. □ *You made a fuss in the conference and upset everyone. I spent hours mopping up after you in private meetings with all in attendance.*

mope around to go about in a depressed state. □ *Since her dog ran away, Sally mopes around all day.* □ *Don't mope around. Cheer up!*

a **mopping-up operation** a clean-up operation; the final stages in a project where the loose ends are taken care of. □ *It's all over except a small mopping-up operation.* □ *The mopping-up operation from the hurricane should cost just under twenty million.*

moralize about someone or something to utter moral platitudes about someone or something. □ *There is no point in moralizing about Carlo. He can't be changed.* □ *Why are you moralizing about the election? The people are always right.*

more and more an increasing amount; additional amounts. □ *As I learn more and more, I see how little I really know.* □ *Dad seems to be smoking more and more lately.*

more dead than alive *Fig.* exhausted; in very bad condition; near death. (Almost always an exaggeration.) □ *We arrived at the top of the mountain more dead than alive.* □ *The marathon runners stumbled one by one over the finish line, more dead than alive.*

more fun than a barrel of monkeys and **as much fun as a barrel of monkeys** *Cliché* a great deal of fun. (Compare this with as funny as a barrel of monkeys.) □ *Roger always makes me laugh! He is as much fun as a barrel of monkeys.* □ *The circus was more fun than a barrel of monkeys.*

More haste, less speed. Go to Make haste slowly.

more often than not *Fig.* usually. □ *These flowers will live through the winter more often than not.* □ *This kind of dog will grow up to be a good watchdog more often than not.*

more or less somewhat; approximately; a phrase used to express vagueness or uncertainty. □ *Henry: I think this one is what I want, more or less. Clerk: A very wise choice, sir.* □ *I spent more or less a half hour waiting for my flight to depart.*

More power to you! Well done!; You really stood up for yourself!; You really did something for your own benefit! (The stress is on *to*, and the *you* is usually "ya.") □ *Bill: I finally told her off, but good. Bob: More power to you!* □ *Sue: I spent years getting ready for that job, and I finally got it. Mary: More power to you!*

more's the pity *Fig.* it is a great pity or shame; it is sad. (Sometimes with *the*.) □ *Jack can't come, more's the pity.* □ *Jane had to leave early, more's the pity.*

more someone or something **than** one **can shake a stick at** *Rur.* a lot; too many to count. □ *There were more snakes than you could shake a stick at.* □ *There are lots of flowers in the field—more than one can shake a stick at.*

more something **than Carter has (liver) pills** *Fig.* a great deal of something. (Older; refers to a product called *Carter's Little Liver Pills*.) □ *Why he's got more problems than Carter has pills!* □ *Bobby has more marbles than Carter has liver pills!*

more than one **bargained for** more than one thought one would get. (Usually in reference to trouble or difficulty.) □ *When Betsy brought home the sweet little puppy for a companion, she got more than she bargained for. That animal has cost her hundreds of dollars in bills.* □ *I got more than I bargained for when I took this job.*

more than one **can bear** and **more than** one **can take; more than** one **can stand** more of something, such as trouble or something bad, than a person can endure. □ *This tragic news is more than I can bear!* □ *I've heard enough of this horrid music. It's more than I can stand.*

more than you('ll ever) know a great deal, more than you suspect. □ *Bob: Why did you do it? Bill: I regret doing it. I regret it more than you know.* □ *John: Oh, Mary, I love you. Mary: Oh, John, I love you more than you'll ever know.*

the **more the merrier** *Cliché* the more people there are, the happier the situation will be. □ *Of course you can have a ride with us! The more the merrier.* □ *The manager hired a new employee even though there's not enough work for all of us now. Oh, well, the more the merrier.*

more (to something**) than meets the eye** *Fig.* [there are] hidden values or facts regarding something. □ *There is more to that problem than meets the eye.* □ *What makes you think that there is more than meets the eye?*

The **more you get, the more you want.** and The **more you have, the more you want.** *Prov.* People are never satisfied with what they have. □ *You may think that you'll be content being department supervisor, but power is like anything else—the more you have, the more you want.*

The **more you have, the more you want.** Go to previous.

the **morning after (the night before)** a hangover; the feelings associated with having drunk too much alcohol. □ *Do worries about the morning after keep you from having a good time at parties?* □ *She's suffering from the morning after the night before.*

Morning dreams come true. *Prov.* If you dream something in the morning, it will really happen. (According to a superstition.) □ *As I was sleeping through the sound of my alarm clock this morning, I dreamed I was late to work. That morning dream definitely came true.*

most of all of greatest importance; more than any other. (Compare this with least of all.) □ *I wanted to go to that museum most of all. Why can't I go?* □ *There are many reasons why I didn't use my car today. Most of all, it's a lovely day for walking.*

motherhood and apple pie *Fig.* an often parodied sentiment expressed about allegedly quintessential elements of American home life. □ *Fred is so old-fashioned. Everything about old times is good to him. He's all motherhood and apple pie.*

motion (for) someone **to** do something to give someone a hand signal to do something. ☐ *The minister motioned the organist to begin playing.* ☐ *I motioned Ken to raise the curtain so the play could begin.* ☐ *Sally motioned for the waiter to bring the check.* ☐ *I will motion to the usher and try to get him to come over here and help us.*

motion someone **aside**† to give a hand signal to someone to move aside. (See also **motion** someone **to one side**.) ☐ *He motioned her aside and had a word with her.* ☐ *I motioned aside the guard and asked him a question.*

motion someone **away from** someone or something to give a hand signal to someone to move away from someone or something. ☐ *She motioned me away from Susan.* ☐ *The police officer motioned the boys away from the wrecked car.*

motion someone **to one side** and **motion** someone **to the side** to give someone a hand signal to move to the side of something, such as the road. (Very similar to **motion** someone **aside**.) ☐ *The cop motioned her to the side of the road.* ☐ *Claire motioned Fred to one side, where she spoke to him.*

motion to someone to make some sort of hand signal to a person. ☐ *Did you motion to me? What do you want?* ☐ *I did not motion to you.*

mound something **up**† to form something into a mound. ☐ *Mound the dirt up around the base of the shrub.* ☐ *Please mound up the leaves around the rosebushes.*

mount something **against** someone or something to create or instigate something against someone or something. ☐ *The prosecutor mounted a questionable case against Robert.* ☐ *The state mounted a very complex case against the company.*

mount something **on** something to place or attach something onto something. ☐ *Mount the butterflies on plain white paper.* ☐ *Sue mounted her favorite stamps on a display board.*

mount up 1. to get up on a horse. ☐ *Mount up and let's get out of here!* ☐ *Please mount up so we can leave.* **2.** [for something] to increase in amount or extent. ☐ *Expenses really mount up when you travel.* ☐ *Medical expenses mount up very fast when you're in the hospital.*

mourn for someone or something and **mourn over** someone or something to grieve for someone or something. ☐ *Everyone will mourn for you when you go.* ☐ *We all mourned over the end of the holiday.* ☐ *There is no point in mourning over your cat. It won't come back.*

The **mouse that has but one hole is quickly taken.** *Prov.* It is dangerous to always depend on just one thing, because if it fails you, you will not have any alternatives. ☐ *Don't put all your money in a single bank account. The mouse that has but one hole is quickly taken.*

a **mouth full of South** *Sl.* a southern accent. ☐ *You sure do have a mouth full of South.* ☐ *I just love to hear a man with a mouth full of South.*

mouth off to speak out of turn; to backtalk. ☐ *If you mouth off, I will ground you for three weeks.* ☐ *Don't mouth off at me, buster!*

mouth on someone to inform the authorities on someone; to tattle on someone. ☐ *Max mouthed on his accomplice and got him arrested.* ☐ *You had better not mouth on me!*

a **movable feast 1.** *Lit.* a religious holiday that is on a different date from year to year. ☐ *Easter is the best known movable feast.* **2.** *Fig.* a meal that is served in motion or with different portions of the meal served at different locations. (Jocular or a complete misunderstanding of ① but in wide use.) ☐ *We enjoyed a real movable feast on the train from Washington to Maimi.*

move a mile a minute Go to **a mile a minute.**

move about Go to **move around.**

move ahead of someone or something to advance beyond someone or something. ☐ *All my coworkers are moving ahead of me in salary. What am I doing wrong?* ☐ *The police moved ahead of the parade, pushing back the crowd.*

move along to continue to move; to start moving out of the way. (Often a command.) ☐ *The crowd moved along slowly.* ☐ *Please just move along. There is nothing to see here.*

move around and **move about** to move here and there a bit; to stir; to walk around a bit. ☐ *Stay where you are. Don't move around at all!* ☐ *I wish you would stop moving about.*

move as one Go to **as one.**

move aside to step or move out of the way. ☐ *Please move aside.* ☐ *Could you please move aside so we can get this cart through?*

move at a fast clip Go to **at a fast clip.**

move at a good clip Go to **at a good clip.**

move away (from someone or something**) 1.** to withdraw from someone or something. ☐ *Please don't move away from me. I like you close by.* ☐ *I have to move away from the smoking section.* ☐ *There was too much smoke there, so I moved away.* **2.** to move, with one's entire household, to another residence. ☐ *Timmy was upset because his best friend had moved away.* ☐ *They moved away just as we were getting to know them.*

move back (from someone or something**)** to move back and away. (Often a command.) ☐ *Please move back from the edge.* ☐ *Please move back!*

move beyond someone or something Go to **beyond** someone or something.

move clear of something Go to **clear of** something.

move close to someone or something Go to **close to** someone or something.

move down to move oneself farther down a line of things. ☐ *Someone else needs to sit on this bench. Please move down.* ☐ *Could you move down a little so we can have some more room?*

move for something to make a parliamentary or legal motion in favor of something. ☐ *I move for dismissal of the case against my client.* ☐ *My lawyer moved for a recess of the trial.*

move forward with something to advance with something; to make progress with something. ☐ *Let us try to move forward with this matter at once.* ☐ *I want to move forward with the project at a fast pace.*

move (from some place**) (to** some place**)** to travel from one place to another. ☐ *The whole family moved from Denver to Chicago.* ☐ *We moved to the country.*

move heaven and earth to do something *Fig.* to make a major effort to do something. ☐ *"I'll move heaven and earth to be with you, Mary," said Bill.* ☐ *I had to move heaven and earth to get there on time.*

move in for the kill Go to close in for the kill.

move in (on someone**)** to come to live with someone. ☐ *My brother moved in on me without even asking.* ☐ *I don't mean to move in on you. I just need a place for a few days.*

move in (on someone or something**) 1.** *Lit.* to move closer to someone or something; to make advances or aggressive movements toward someone or something. (See also move in (on someone).) ☐ *The crowd moved in on the frightened guard.* ☐ *They moved in slowly.* **2.** *Fig.* to attempt to take over or dominate someone or something. ☐ *The police moved in on the drug dealers.* ☐ *Max tried to move in on the rival gang's territory.*

move in the fast lane Go to in the fast lane.

move in with someone to take up residence with someone. ☐ *Sally moved in with Sam.* ☐ *Jimmy moved in with his brother and shared expenses.*

move into full swing Go to in full swing.

move into high gear Go to in full swing; in high gear.

move in(to something**) 1.** *Lit.* [for someone] to come to reside in something or some place. ☐ *I moved into a new apartment last week.* ☐ *When did the new family move in?* **2.** *Lit.* to enter something or some place. ☐ *The whole party moved into the house when it started raining.* ☐ *All the children just moved in and brought the party with them.* **3.** *Fig.* to begin a new line of activity. ☐ *After failing at real estate, he moved into house painting.* ☐ *It looked like he could make some money, so he moved into the stock market with his assets.*

move like stink Go to like stink.

move like the wind Go to like the wind.

move off campus Go to off campus.

move off (from someone or something**)** to move away from someone or something. ☐ *The doctor moved off from the patient, satisfied with her work.* ☐ *The officer stopped for a minute, looked around, and then moved off.*

move off (to the side) with someone Go to off (to the side) with someone.

move on to continue moving; to travel on; to move along and not stop or tarry. ☐ *Move on! Don't stop here!* ☐ *Please move on!*

move on someone to attempt to pick up someone; to attempt to seduce someone. ☐ *Don't try to move on my date, old chum.* ☐ *Harry is trying to move on Tiffany. They deserve each another.*

move on something to do something about something. ☐ *I will move on this matter only when I get some time.* ☐ *I have been instructed to move on this and give it the highest priority.*

move on (to something**)** to change to a different subject or activity. ☐ *Now, I will move on to a new question.* ☐ *That is enough discussion on that point. Let's move on.*

move out (from under someone or something**)** Go to out (from under someone or something).

move out (of some place**) 1.** to leave a place; to leave; to begin to depart. (Especially in reference to a large number of persons or things.) ☐ *The crowd started to move out of the area about midnight.* ☐ *They had moved out by one o'clock.* **2.** to leave a place of residence permanently. ☐ *We didn't like the neighborhood, so we moved out of it.* ☐ *We moved out because we were unhappy.*

move over to move a bit [away from the speaker]. ☐ *Move over. I need some space.* ☐ *Please move over. Part of this space is mine.*

move someone or something **around** to move someone or something from place to place. ☐ *I wish that the army would stop moving me around. I have moved ten times in eight years.* ☐ *Let's move the furniture around and see how this room looks.*

move someone or something **away (from** someone or something**)** to cause someone or something to withdraw from someone or something. ☐ *Move Billy away from Tommy so they will stop fighting.* ☐ *Move the cake away from Billy.*

move someone or something **back (from** someone or something**)** to cause someone or something to move back and away from someone or something. ☐ *Please move your child back from the lawn mower.* ☐ *Move everyone back from the street.*

move someone or something **down**† to cause someone or something to move farther down or along [something]. ☐ *Move Tom down a few seats. We need more space here.* ☐ *Move down all these chairs. We need more space.*

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move someone or something **forward** to cause someone or something to advance. ☐ *Move her forward. She is too far back.* ☐ *Please move the chair forward.*

move someone or something **into** something and **move** someone or something **in**† to cause someone or something to enter something or some place. ☐ *We moved Carla into the spare room.* ☐ *We found a vacant room and moved in the piano.*

move someone or something **off ((from)** someone or something**)** and **move** someone or something **off ((of)** someone or something**)** to remove someone or something from on top of someone or something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *The referee moved the wrestler off from his fallen opponent.* ☐ *I moved the beam off of the leg of the man.*

move someone or something **on** to cause someone or something to move onward or out of the way. ☐ *Please move those people on. They are in the way.* ☐ *The officers worked hard to move the crowd on.*

move someone or something **out (of** some place**)** to cause someone to depart or leave; to carry someone or something out of a place. ☐ *Move those people out of here. They are crowding up the room.* ☐ *Please move all that stuff out.*

move someone or something **out of the way** Go to out of the way.

move someone or something **over** to cause someone or something to move a little way away. ☐ *Move Tom over a little bit. He is taking too much space.* ☐ *Would you move your foot over a little?*

move someone or something **to** something to make someone or something shift toward something. ☐ *Can you move*

your foot to the right a little? ☐ *Would you move yourself to the right?*

move someone or something **up** to cause someone or something to go higher or more forward. ☐ *She is too far down. Move her up one step.* ☐ *Would you move the sofa up a little? It is too far back.*

move someone **to tears** to bring someone to the point of crying. ☐ *The story moved me to tears.* ☐ *As she recounted the accident, she moved herself to tears.*

move someone **up**† to advance or promote someone. ☐ *We are ready to move you up. You have been doing quite well.* ☐ *It will be years before they move up the new people.*

move to some place to move one's household to some place, perhaps permanently. ☐ *When we retired, we moved to Arizona.* ☐ *I hope we can move to a larger house.*

move toward someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to move in the direction of someone or something. ☐ *The car is moving toward Roger!* **2.** *Fig.* to tend to favor a particular conclusion. ☐ *We are moving toward making the final decision.*

move up to advance; to go higher. ☐ *Isn't it about time that I move up? I've been an office clerk for over a year.* ☐ *I had hoped that I would move up faster than this.*

move up in the world and **come up in the world** *Fig.* to advance (oneself) and become successful. ☐ *The harder I work, the more I move up in the world.* ☐ *Keep your eye on John. He's really coming up in the world.*

move up into something to advance into something. ☐ *I moved up into administration and I like it fine.* ☐ *When I move up into management, I will get a bigger office.*

move up through something to advance through something. ☐ *He moved up through the ranks at a very rapid pace.* ☐ *He moved up through every level of management to become CEO.*

move up (to something**)** to advance to something; to purchase a better quality of something. ☐ *We are moving up to a larger car.* ☐ *There are too many of us now for a small house. We are moving up.*

move within earshot (of something**)** Go to within earshot (of something).

move within range Go to within range.

move within range (of something**)** Go to within range (of something).

movers and shakers people who get things done; organizers and managers. ☐ *The movers and shakers in this firm haven't exactly been working overtime.* ☐ *Who are the movers and shakers around here?*

Moving three times is as bad as a fire. *Prov.* If you move your household three times, you will lose or damage as many things as a fire in your house would have destroyed or damaged. ☐ *Fred: The company is transferring me again. Ellen: But we can't make another move! Moving three times is as bad as a fire.*

mow someone or something **down**† to cut, knock, or shoot someone or something down. ☐ *The speeding car almost mowed us down.* ☐ *The car mowed down the pedestrian.*

Mr. Nice Guy a friendly, forgiving fellow. ☐ *You'll find that I am Mr. Nice Guy as long as you play fair with me.* ☐ *Oh, my boss is Mr. Nice Guy. He'll give me the day off, I'm sure.*

Mr. Right the one man who is right for a woman to marry. ☐ *Some day Mr. Right will come along and sweep you off your feet.* ☐ *I'm tired of waiting for Mr. Right. Where is Mr. Maybe?*

much ado about nothing *Cliché* a furor over something unimportant. (The name of a Shakespeare play.) ☐ *All this arguing is much ado about nothing.*

much in evidence *Cliché* very visible or evident. ☐ *John was much in evidence during the conference.* ☐ *Your influence is much in evidence. I appreciate your efforts.*

Much obliged. *Rur.* Thankful and owing a debt of gratitude. ☐ *A: Sit down, Elmer, and have a drink on me. B: Much obliged.*

much of a muchness too much of something that there is generally a lot of. ☐ *All this talk about e-commerce and business-2-business is too much of a muchness.*

***much sought after** *Cliché* wanted or desired very much. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *This kind of crystal is much sought after. It's very rare.* ☐ *Sally is a great singer. She's much sought after.*

muck something **up**† to ruin something. ☐ *I should never have trusted Jim with the repair work. He was bound to muck it up.* ☐ *I asked her to take over for me while I was gone, and she really mucked it up.* ☐ *She mucked up the whole deal.*

muddle along to progress in confusion; to continue awkwardly. ☐ *I will just have to muddle along as best I can until things get straightened out.* ☐ *The project muddled along until the new manager got hold of it.*

muddle around to work inefficiently. ☐ *I can't get anything done today. I'm just muddling around.* ☐ *Jed is not doing his job well. He is muddling around and getting nothing done.*

muddle something **up**† to mix something up; to make something confusing. ☐ *You really muddled the language of this contract up.* ☐ *Who muddled up the wording?*

muddle through (something**)** to manage to get through something awkwardly. ☐ *We hadn't practiced the song enough, so we just muddled through it.* ☐ *We didn't know what we were meant to do, so we muddled through.*

muddled (up) intoxicated. ☐ *I've had a little too much muddler, I think. Anyway, I'm muddled.* ☐ *Larry is too muddled up to drive.*

muddy something **up**† *Lit.* **1.** to make water muddy; to stir up the mud in water, as at the bottom of a pond or river. ☐ *Don't muddy the water up. It will clog our filters.* ☐ *Don't muddy up the water.* **2.** *Fig.* to make something unclear. ☐ *You have really muddied this issue up. I thought I understood it.* ☐ *You sure muddied up this issue.*

muddy the water *Fig.* to make something less clear; to make matters confusing; to create difficulty where there was none before. ☐ *Things were going along quite smoothly until you came along and muddied the water.* ☐ *The events of the past month have muddied the water as far as our proposed joint venture is concerned.*

muff one's **lines** Go to fluff one's lines.

muffle something **up**† to deaden or stifle a sound. ☐ *Betty tried to muffle the sounds up, but everyone heard what was going on.* ☐ *She muffled up the sounds.*

M

mulct something **out of** someone to cheat something away from someone. ☐ *Are you trying to mulct my inheritance out of me?* ☐ *Max tried to mulct every last cent out of his victim.*

mull something **over**† to think about something; to ponder or worry about something. ☐ *That's an interesting idea, but I'll have to mull it over.* ☐ *I'll mull over your suggestions and reply to you next week.*

multiply by something to use the arithmetic process of multiplication to expand numerically a certain number of times. ☐ *To get the amount of your taxes, multiply by .025.* ☐ *Can you multiply by sixteens?*

multiply something **by** something to use the arithmetic process of multiplication to expand numerically a particular number a certain number of times. ☐ *Multiply the number of dependents you are claiming by one thousand dollars.* ☐ *Multiply 12 by 16 and tell me what you get.*

a **multitude of sins** *Fig.* many kinds of sins or errors. ☐ *The term* offensive *covers a multitude of sins.*

Mum's the word. *Fig.* a pledge not to reveal a secret or to tell about something or someone. ☐ *"Mum's the word," said Jane to ease Mary's mind about her secret.*

munch out *Sl.* to overeat. ☐ *I can't help it. Whenever I see french fries, I just have to munch out.* ☐ *I try not to munch out more than once a week.*

mung something **up**† *Sl.* to mess something up. ☐ *Don't mung it up this time.* ☐ *The team munged up the play, and the coach blasted them but good.*

murder on something very destructive or harmful to something. ☐ *Running a marathon is murder on your knees.* ☐ *This dry weather is murder on my crops.*

Murder will out. *Prov.* Murder will always be discovered.; A bad deed will be found out. ☐ *Horace thought he had disposed of his victim in such a way that no one would ever discover his crime, but murder will out.*

murmur against someone or something to grumble about someone or something. ☐ *Everyone was murmuring against the manager.* ☐ *The citizens will begin murmuring about the government soon.*

murmur at someone or an animal to say something softly or indistinctly to someone or an animal. ☐ *Stop murmuring at me. Speak up!* ☐ *Gene sat alone, murmuring at his favorite cat for over an hour.*

muscle in (on someone or something**)** to try forcefully to displace someone or take over someone's property, interests, or relationships. ☐ *Are you trying to muscle in on my scheme?* ☐ *If you try to muscle in, you'll be facing big trouble.*

muscle someone **out of** something and **muscle** someone **out**† to force someone out of something; to push someone out of something. (Can be physical or by coercion.) ☐ *Are you trying to muscle me out of my job?* ☐ *The younger people are muscling out the older ones.*

muse over someone or something to reflect or meditate on someone or something. ☐ *We were just now musing over Sarah and the way she has changed.* ☐ *Tom is so strange. I was musing over his behavior just yesterday.*

mushroom into something *Fig.* to grow suddenly into something large or important. ☐ *The question of pay suddenly mushroomed into a major matter.* ☐ *The unpaid bill mushroomed into a nasty argument and, finally, a court battle.*

music to someone's **ears** *Fig.* a welcome sound to someone; news that someone is pleased to hear. ☐ *A: Here's your paycheck for this month. B: Ah, that's music to my ears!*

muss someone or something **up**† to put someone or something into disarray. ☐ *Don't muss me up!* ☐ *You mussed up my hair.* ☐ *I'm afraid I mussed myself up a little.*

muster out of something to be discharged from military service. ☐ *He mustered out of the service before his time was up.* ☐ *I want to know how I can muster out too.*

muster something **up**† to call up some quality, such as courage. ☐ *Do you think you can muster enough courage up to do the job?* ☐ *Can you muster up enough strength to do the job?*

mutiny against someone or something **1.** to rebel against a ship's captain or the captain's authority. ☐ *The crew mutinied against the officers.* ☐ *They know better than to mutiny against an authority as great as that held by Captain Bligh.* **2.** to rebel against someone or something. ☐ *It does no good to mutiny against the professor.* ☐ *The students mutinied against the school's administration.*

mutter about someone or something to grumble or complain about someone or something. ☐ *Are you muttering about me? What is your complaint?* ☐ *Why is everyone muttering about the food here? It is excellent.*

mutter something **about** someone or something to say something softly and indistinctly about someone or something. ☐ *I heard him mutter something about being late.* ☐ *Sharon is muttering something about Dave. What does she mean?*

mutter something **under** one's **breath** Go to under one's breath.

My cup runneth over. *Prov.* I have received so many benefits that I cannot contain them all. (Said when you feel overcome because many good things have happened to you.) ☐ *This week, I finished paying off my mortgage, my arthritis improved, and my first grandchild was born. My cup runneth over.* ☐ *Janet was speechless with happiness when she saw how many of her friends and relatives had joined together to give her a surprise party. "My cup runneth over," she finally said.*

My foot! *Inf.* I do not believe it!; Like hell! (An exclamation of contradiction.) ☐ *Your prices are the best in town, my foot! I know two places cheaper.* ☐ *She's going to marry you? My foot!*

(My) goodness (gracious)! a general expression of interest or mild amazement. ☐ *Bill: My goodness! The window is broken! Andy: I didn't do it! Bill: Who did, then?* ☐ *"Goodness! I'm late!" said Kate, glancing at her watch.* ☐ *"Goodness gracious! Are you hurt?" asked Sue as she helped the fallen student to his feet.*

my gut tells me (that) my instincts tell me that. (This refers to one's *gut reaction* or *gut response.*) ☐ *My gut tells me that her idea is a sound one.* ☐ *This looks good on paper, but my gut tells me that it is all wrong.*

(My) heavens! *Inf.* a mild exclamation of surprise or amazement. ☐ *Bill: Heavens! The clock has stopped. Bob: Don't you have a watch?* ☐ *Sally: The police are parked in*

M

our driveway, and one of them is getting out! Mary: My heavens!

My house is your house. and **Our house is your house.** *Fig.* a polite expression said to make a guest feel at home. (From the Spanish phrase *Mi casa, su casa.*) □ *Bill: Hello, Tom. Tom (entering): So nice you can put me up for the night. Bill: My house is your house, make yourself at home.* □ *Mary: Come in, you two. Bill: Thanks. Sue: Yes, thank you. Mary: Well, what can I get you? My house is your house.*

(My,) how time flies. 1. Time has gone by quickly, it is time for me to go. □ *Bill: Look at the clock! Mary: How time flies! I guess you'll be going. Bill: Yes, I have to get up early.* □ *John: My watch says it's nearly midnight. How time flies! Jane: Yes, it's late. We really must go.* **2.** Time passes quickly. (Said especially when talking about how children grow and develop.) □ *"Look at how big Billy is getting," said Uncle Michael. "My, how time flies."* □ *Tom: It seems it was just yesterday that I graduated from high school. Now I'm a grandfather. Mary: My, how time flies.*

My lips are sealed. *Fig.* I will tell no one this secret or this gossip. □ *Mary: I hope you don't tell anyone about this. Alice: Don't worry. My lips are sealed.* □ *Bob: Don't you dare tell her I told you. Bill: My lips are sealed.*

My(, my). an expression of mild surprise or interest. □ *Fred: My, my! How you've grown, Bill. Bill: Of course! I'm a growing boy. Did you think I would shrink?* □ *Doctor: My, my, this is interesting. Jane: What's wrong? Doctor: Nothing that a little exercise won't fix.*

my one and only one's spouse or lover. (See also the one and only.) □ *Look at the time. I've got to get home to my one and only.* □ *You're my one and only. There is no one else for me.*

My pleasure. 1. You're welcome.; It is my pleasure to do so. (From *It's my pleasure.* There is a stress on both words.) □ *Mary: Thank you for bringing this up here. Bill: My pleasure.* □ *Jane: Oh, Doctor, you've really helped Tom. Thank you so much! Doctor: My pleasure.* **2.** Happy to meet you.; Happy to see you. □ *Sally: Bill, meet Mary, my cousin. Bill: My pleasure.*

M

Nn

nag at someone **(about** someone or something**)** to pester someone about someone or something. ☐ *Don't keep nagging at me about her.* ☐ *Stop nagging at me!*

nail someone **down**† **(on** something**)** Go to **pin** someone **down**† **(on** something**)**.

nail someone's **ears back**† *Fig.* to scold someone severely. ☐ *I'm going to nail your ears back for doing that!* ☐ *Who's going to nail back my ears?*

nail someone**('s hide) to the wall** Go to next.

nail someone **to a cross** and **nail** someone**('s hide) to the wall** *Fig.* to punish or scold someone severely. (Literally, to crucify someone or to nail someone's skin to the wall like that of a captured animal.) ☐ *That guy was really mad. He really nailed you to a cross.* ☐ *She must hate your guts. She sure nailed your hide to the wall.*

nail something **back**† to secure something back out of the way by nailing it. ☐ *Please nail the shutters back so they won't bang against the house.* ☐ *I'll nail back the shutters.*

nail something **down**† **1.** to secure something down by nailing it. ☐ *Please nail the floorboard down or someone will trip over it.* ☐ *I'll nail down these floorboards.* **2.** Go to **pin** something **down**.

nail something **into** something to drive a nail or something similar into something. ☐ *She nailed the hanger into the wall to hold the picture up.* ☐ *Please nail in this tack.*

nail something **onto** something and **nail** something **to** something; **nail** something **on**† to attach something onto something by nailing. ☐ *Suzy nailed the hose bracket onto the side of the house.* ☐ *She nailed on the bracket.* ☐ *Laura nailed the bracket to the wall.*

nail something **up**† **1.** to put something up, as on a wall, by nailing. ☐ *Please nail this up.* ☐ *I'll nail up this picture for you.* **2.** to nail something closed; to use nails to secure something from intruders. ☐ *Sam nailed the door up so no one could use it.* ☐ *Who nailed up the door? I can't get in!*

***naked as a jaybird** *Cliché* naked; bare. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *Two-year-old Matilda escaped from her nurse, who was bathing her, and ran out naked as a jaybird into the dining room.* ☐ *Uncle John sometimes spends a whole day walking around his house as naked as a jaybird.*

*****the **naked eye** the human eye, unassisted by optics, such as a telescope, microscope, or spectacles. (*Typically: **appear to** ~**; look to** ~**; see with** ~**; visible to** ~.) ☐ *I can't see the bird's markings with the naked eye.* ☐ *The scientist could see nothing in the liquid with the naked eye, but with the aid of a microscope, she identified the bacteria.* ☐ *That's how it appears to the naked eye.*

the **naked truth** the complete, unembellished truth. ☐ *Sorry to put it to you like this, but it's the naked truth.* ☐ *I can take it. Just tell me the naked truth.*

the **name of the game** *Inf.* the way things are; the way things can be expected to be. ☐ *The name of the game is money, money, money.* ☐ *I can't help it. That's the name of the game.*

name someone **after** someone else and **name** someone **for** someone else to give someone (usually a baby) the name of another person. ☐ *We named our baby after my aunt.* ☐ *My parents named me for my grandfather.*

name someone **as** something to select someone as something. ☐ *The mayor named Karen as corporate council.* ☐ *The president named himself as chairman of the new committee.*

name someone **for** someone else Go to **name** someone **after** someone else.

name someone or something **for** someone or something to name someone or something, using the name of someone or something, in any combination. ☐ *I named her for the beauty of the rising sun.* ☐ *They named the mountain for the first person to see it.*

Name your poison. Go to **What'll it be?**

narrow something **down**† **(to** people or things**)** to reduce a list of possibilities from many to a selected few. ☐ *We can narrow the choice down to green or red.* ☐ *We narrowed down the choice to you or Paul.*

narrow squeak *Fig.* a success almost not achieved; a lucky or marginal success; a problem almost not surmounted. ☐ *That was a narrow squeak. I don't know how I survived.* ☐ *Another narrow squeak like that and I'll give up.*

Nature abhors a vacuum. *Prov.* If there is a gap, something will fill it. ☐ *Jill: As soon as the beggar who used to work that corner left, another one showed up. Jane: Nature abhors a vacuum.*

a **nature stop** *Fig.* a stop to use the toilet, especially during road travel. ☐ *I think I need a nature stop when it's convenient.* ☐ *I left my comb back at the last nature stop.*

nause someone **out**† *Sl.* to make someone ill; to disgust someone. (From *nauseate.*) ☐ *That's awful. I bet it nauses Jennifer out.* ☐ *This day naused out everybody I know.* ☐ *He naused himself out just thinking of the accident.*

near at hand close or handy (to someone). ☐ *Do you have a pencil near at hand?* ☐ *My dictionary isn't near at hand.*

The **nearer the church, the farther from God.** *Prov.* Church officials, or people who live near the church, are not truly pious. ☐ *Jill: I think our pastor is an evil man. Jane: I didn't think evil men could be pastors. Jill: Of course they can! The nearer the church, the farther from God.*

nearly jump out of one's **skin** Go to **(almost) jump out of** one's **skin**.

***neat as a pin** *Cliché* neat and orderly. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *Brad is such a good housekeeper; his apartment is always as neat as a pin.* ☐ *Joanne certainly is well-organized. Her desk is neat as a pin.*

N

Necessity is the mother of invention. *Prov.* When people really need to do something, they will figure out a way to do it. ☐ *When the fan belt on Linda's car broke in the middle of the desert, Linda used her stockings as a replacement. Necessity is the mother of invention.*

Necessity knows no law. *Prov.* If you are desperate, you may have to do illegal things. ☐ *I'm an honest person by nature, but I lost my job, and my kids needed food and clothes, and it seemed like the best way to get money was to deal in illegal drugs. Necessity knows no law.*

neck and neck *Fig.* exactly even, especially in a race or a contest. ☐ *John and Tom finished the race neck and neck.* ☐ *Mary and Ann were neck and neck in the spelling contest. Their scores were tied.*

neck with someone to engage in amorous kissing and caressing with someone. ☐ *Ted is over there necking with Molly.* ☐ *Molly is necking with Ted and thinking of Ken.*

need a firm hand Go to a firm hand.

need a helping hand Go to a helping hand.

need a pick-me-up Go to a pick-me-up.

need doing and **need (to be)** done [is] required to be done. (The second form, although widespread, is considered by some to be less standard than the first.) ☐ *This chair needs fixing.* ☐ *This chair needs fixed.*

need I remind you that... and **need I remind you of...** a phrase that introduces a reminder. (A little haughty or parental.) ☐ *Bill: Need I remind you that today is Friday? Bob (sarcastically): Gee, how else would I have known?* ☐ *John: Need I remind you of our policy against smoking in the office? Jane: Sorry, I forgot.*

N

Need I say more? Is it necessary for me to say any more? ☐ *Mary: There's grass to be mowed, weeds to be pulled, dishes to be done, carpets to be vacuumed, and there you sit! Need I say more? Tom: I'll get right on it.* ☐ *"This project needs to be finished before anyone leaves tonight," said Alice, hovering over the office staff. "Need I say more?"*

need so bad one **can taste it** Go to so bad one can taste it.

need some elbow room Go to some elbow room.

need some shut-eye Go to some shut-eye.

need something **like a hole in the head** not to need something at all. ☐ *I need a house cat like I need a hole in the head!* ☐ *She needs another car like she needs a hole in the head.*

need something **yesterday** *Inf.* to require something in a very big hurry. ☐ *Yes, I'm in a hurry! I need it yesterday!* ☐ *When do I need it? Now! Now! No, I need it yesterday!*

need (to be) done Go to need doing.

needle someone **about** someone or something to pester or bother someone about someone or something. ☐ *Please don't needle me about Jane.* ☐ *Stop needling me about eating out.*

needless to say It is so obvious that it doesn't need to be said, but.... ☐ *Needless to say, I should have spent more time on the report, but I just didn't have it.*

Needs must when the devil drives. *Prov.* When you are desperate, you must do things you ordinarily would not do. ☐ *We're going to have to get an enormous loan to pay for your mother's surgery. I hate to go into debt, but needs must when the devil drives.*

neglect to do something to fail to do something. ☐ *I hope you do not neglect to lock the door.* ☐ *He neglected to water the plants.*

negotiate (with someone or something**) (over** someone or something**)** and **negotiate (with** someone or something**) (about** someone or something**)** to bargain with someone or a group about someone or something. ☐ *We decided to negotiate with them over the terms of the contract.* ☐ *We want to negotiate with them about the cost of the goods.* ☐ *They refused to negotiate with our purchasing agent.*

neighbor on something to be directly adjacent to something. ☐ *Our house neighbors on a park.* ☐ *The park neighbors on a stretch of beach.*

Neither a borrower nor a lender be. *Prov.* It is difficult to be friends with someone who owes you money or with someone to whom you owe something, so it is better not to borrow or lend in the first place. ☐ *After losing several of my favorite books because I didn't have the nerve to insist that my friends return them, I learned that it is best to neither a borrower nor a lender be.*

Neither can I. I cannot do that either. (Any subject pronoun can be used in place of *I.*) ☐ *Bill: No matter what they do to them, I just can't stand sweet potatoes! Bob: Neither can I.* ☐ *John: Let's go. I cannot tolerate the smoke in here. Jane: Neither can I.*

neither does someone [does] not either. ☐ *Susan does not own a cat, and neither does Mary.* ☐ *Bill doesn't want to see a movie tonight, and neither do I.*

neither fish nor fowl *Cliché* not any recognizable thing. ☐ *The car that they drove up in was neither fish nor fowl. It must have been made out of spare parts.* ☐ *This proposal is neither fish nor fowl. I can't tell what you're proposing.*

neither here nor there *Cliché* of no consequence or meaning; irrelevant and immaterial. ☐ *Whether you go to the movie or stay at home is neither here nor there.* ☐ *Your comment—though interesting—is neither here nor there.*

***(neither) hide nor hair** *Cliché* no sign or indication of someone or something. (*Typically: **find ~; see ~**.) ☐ *We could find neither hide nor hair of him. I don't know where he is.* ☐ *There has been no one here. We found neither hide nor hair.*

***neither rhyme nor reason** *Cliché* without logic, order, or planning. (Describes something disorganized. *Typically: **be ~; have ~**.) ☐ *There seems to be neither rhyme nor reason to Gerald's filing system.* ☐ *The novel's plot had neither rhyme nor reason.*

nerves of steel *Fig.* very steady nerves; great patience and courage. ☐ *I was scared to death, but Fred, who has nerves of steel, faced the thugs bravely.*

a **(nervous) breakdown** *Fig.* a physical and mental collapse brought on by great anxiety over a period of time. ☐ *After month after month of stress and strain, Sally had a nervous breakdown.*

nest in something to build a nest in something and live in it. ☐ *Some mice nested in a corner of the garage.* ☐ *The birds nested in the eaves.*

nest together to fit together or within one another compactly. □ *These mixing bowls nest together.* □ *I want some of those Russian wooden dolls that nest together.*

nestle down (in something**)** to settle down in something; to snuggle into something, such as a bed. □ *They nestled down in their warm bed.* □ *Please nestle down and go to sleep.*

nestle (up) against someone or something and **nestle up (to** someone or something**)** to lie close to someone or something; to cuddle up to someone or something. □ *The kitten nestled up against its mother.* □ *The shivering puppy nestled up to Kathy.*

never a dull moment [it's] always exciting around here. (Describes an exciting or hectic situation.) □ *Every time I visit Jean, she has dozens of things planned for us to do: parties and theaters to attend, restaurants to try, scenic places to see. Never a dull moment.* □ *Alan: How was work today? Jane: First of all, my boss called me in to yell at me. Then I had to fire one of my subordinates. And then my desk chair broke when I sat down on it. Never a dull moment.*

Never ask pardon before you are accused. *Prov.* Do not apologize for something if nobody knows that you did it, because by apologizing, you are admitting that you did it. □ *Alan: Should I apologize to Jane for losing the necktie she gave me? Jane: Wait and see if she asks you what happened to the necktie. Never ask pardon before you are accused.*

never fear do not worry; have confidence. □ *I'll be there on time—never fear.* □ *I'll help you, never fear.*

Never halloo till you are out of the woods. *Prov.* Do not rejoice until you are certain that your problems are over. □ *Jill: Now that I have a full-time job, I'm certain to be able to pay all my debts. Jane: But it's just a temporary job; it may not last long. Never halloo till you are out of the woods.*

Never in a thousand years! Go to Not in a thousand years!

never in my life an emphatic expression showing the depth of the speaker's feelings. □ *Sally: Never in my life have I seen such a mess! John: Well, it's always this way. Where have you been all this time? Sally: I just never noticed before, I suppose.* □ *Sue: Never will I go to that hotel again! Never in my life! Bob: That bad, huh? Sue: Yes! That bad and worse!*

Never make a threat you cannot carry out. *Prov.* You should not threaten to do something you cannot do; otherwise, people will not believe you are serious when you threaten. □ *Bill: If you don't stop being rude to me, I'll have you fired! Jane: You're not my boss. Never make a threat you cannot carry out.*

Never mind! Forget it!; It's not important! □ *Sally: What did you say? Jane: Never mind! It wasn't important.* □ *John: I tried to get the book you wanted, but they didn't have it. Shall I try another store? Mary: No, never mind.*

Never say die. *Prov.* Do not give up. □ *Jill: I don't think I can finish this project in time. Jane: Never say die.* □ *Alan: It's no use. I can't make my checkbook balance. Jane: Never say die!*

Never speak ill of the dead. *Prov.* You should not say bad things about dead people. □ *Your Uncle Phil had a lot of faults, but there's no reason to talk about them now that he's gone. Never speak ill of the dead.* □ *I hate to speak ill of the dead, but Amy was a mean woman, God rest her soul.*

Never tell tales out of school. *Prov.* Do not tell secrets; do not gossip. □ *Fred: I just learned something really scandalous about the president of our company. Ellen: Well, I don't want to hear it. You shouldn't tell tales out of school.*

Never trouble trouble till trouble troubles you. *Prov.* If you think something might cause trouble, leave it alone and wait until it actually causes trouble. □ *Ellen: My daughter's teacher is going to be troublesome, I can tell. Maybe I should go to the school and talk to her. Jane: Why not wait till she actually does something? Never trouble trouble till trouble troubles you.*

never would have guessed 1. never would have thought something to be the case. (Not used in other tenses.) □ *He was the one who did it? I never would have guessed.* □ *I never would have guessed that he wanted the job. He kept it a very good secret.* **2.** knew it all the time because it was so obvious. (Sarcastic. Not used in other tenses.) □ *I never would have guessed that he wanted the job. He only begged and begged for it.* □ *Now she wants to go back home? I never would have guessed! She has been homesick for days.*

New brooms sweep clean. and A **new broom sweeps clean.** *Prov.* Someone who is new in a particular job will do a very good job at first, to prove how competent he or she is. □ *Jill: That new supervisor is awfully strict. Jane: New brooms sweep clean.* □ *The new teacher immediately flunked three of the laziest students. "A new broom sweeps clean," one of the students shrugged.*

new kid on the block 1. *Lit.* a child who has just moved to a certain neighborhood. □ *The new kid on the block turned out to be a really good baseball player.* **2.** *Fig.* the newest person in a group. □ *I'm just the new kid on the block. I've only been working here for a month.*

a **new lease on life** *Cliché* a renewed and revitalized outlook on life. □ *Getting the job offer was a new lease on life.* □ *When I got out of the hospital, I felt as if I had a new lease on life.*

new one on someone something that one has not heard before and that one is not ready to believe. □ *Bob's talk of poverty is a new one on me. He always seems to have plenty of money.* □ *The firm's difficulties are a new one on me. I thought that it was doing very well.*

Next question. *Inf.* That is settled, let's move on to something else. (Usually a way of evading further discussion.) □ *Mary: When can I expect this construction noise to stop? Bob: In about a month. Next question.* □ *Bill: When will the board of directors raise the dividend again? Mary: Oh, quite soon. Next question.*

next to nothing *Fig.* hardly anything; almost nothing. □ *This car's worth next to nothing. It's full of rust.* □ *I bought this antique chair for next to nothing.*

next to someone or something near to someone or something; adjacent to someone or something. □ *I live next to a bank.* □ *Please sit next to me.*

the **next world** *Euph.* life after death. □ *We will meet in the next world.* □ *He believed he had made contact with spirits from the next world.*

N

nibble at something to take tiny bites of some kind of food. ☐ *The children nibbled at their dinner because they had eaten too much candy.* ☐ *Stop nibbling at that candy.*

nibble away at something to eat at something in tiny bits; to erode away tiny bits of something. ☐ *The waves nibbled away at the base of the cliff, year after year.* ☐ *The mice nibbled away at the huge wheel of cheese.*

nice and some quality [being or having] enough of some quality; adequately; sufficiently. ☐ *It is nice and cool this evening.* ☐ *I think your steak is nice and done now, just the way you like it.*

a **nice break** Go to a lucky break.

Nice going! and **Good job!; Good going!; Nice job!** **1.** *Inf.* That was done well. ☐ *John: Well, I'm glad that's over. Sally: Nice going, John! You did a good job.* ☐ *Tom: Nice job, Bill! Bill: Thanks, Tom!* **2.** *Fig.* That was done poorly. (Sarcastic.) ☐ *Fred: I guess I really messed it up. Bill: Nice job, Fred! You've now messed us all up! Fred: Well, I'm sorry.* ☐ *"Nice going," frowned Jane, as Tom upset the bowl of potato chips.*

Nice guys finish last. *Prov.* You will never be able to get what you want by being kind and considerate. ☐ *The unscrupulous salesman advised his trainees, "Don't worry if you have to lie about the product to get the customer to buy it. Nice guys finish last."*

Nice job! Go to Nice going!

Nice meeting you. It is nice to have met you. (Said when leaving someone whose acquaintance you have just made.) ☐ *I must go now, Fred. Nice meeting you.* ☐ *Well, nice meeting you. I must get home now.*

N

Nice place you have here. Your home is nice. (A compliment paid by a guest. The word *place* might be replaced with *home, house, room, apartment,* etc.) ☐ *Jane came in and looked around. "Nice place you have here," she said.* ☐ *Bob: Come in. Welcome. Mary: Nice place you have here. Bob: Thanks. We like it.*

Nice weather we're having. 1. *Lit.* Isn't the weather nice? (Sometimes used to start a conversation with a stranger.) ☐ *Bill: Nice weather we're having. Bob: Yeah. It's great.* ☐ *Mary glanced out the window and said to the lady sitting next to her, "Nice weather we're having."* **2.** *Fig.* Isn't this weather bad? (Sarcastic.) ☐ *Bill: Hi, Tom. Nice weather we're having, huh? Tom: Yeah. Gee, it's hot!* ☐ *Mary: Nice weather we're having! Sally: Sure. Lovely weather for ducks.*

nick something **up**† to make little dents or nicks in something, ruining the finish. ☐ *Someone nicked the kitchen counter up.* ☐ *Who nicked up the coffeepot?*

nickel-and-dime someone **(to death)** *Fig.* to make numerous small monetary charges that add up to a substantial sum. ☐ *Those contractors nickel-and-dimed me to death.* ☐ *Just give me the whole bill at one time. Don't nickel-and-dime me for days on end.*

niggle about something to make constant petty complaints about something. ☐ *Please don't niggle about little things like this. This is just not important.* ☐ *Let's not niggle about it.*

niggle (over something**) (with** someone**)** to have a petty disagreement over some minor thing. ☐ *Stop niggling over this with me!* ☐ *I don't want to niggle with you over this.*

night and day Go to day and night.

a **night on the town** a night of celebrating (at one or more places in a town). ☐ *Did you enjoy your night on the town?* ☐ *After we got the contract signed, we celebrated with a night on the town.*

night owl *Fig.* someone who stays up at night; someone who works at night. ☐ *My roommate is a night owl and usually reads until 5:00 A.M.* ☐ *A few night owls stayed at the café all night long.*

a **night person** *Fig.* someone who is more alert and active at night than in the daytime. (Compare this with a day person.) ☐ *I'm really not efficient until after supper. I am the quintessential night person.*

a **nine days' wonder** *Fig.* something that is of interest to people only for a short time. ☐ *Don't worry about the story about you in the newspaper. It'll be a nine days' wonder and then people will forget.* ☐ *The elopement of Bob and Anne was a nine days' wonder. Now people never mention it.*

nine times out of ten *Fig.* usually; almost always. ☐ *Nine times out of ten people will choose coffee rather than tea.*

nineteen to the dozen *Prov.* very rapidly or energetically. ☐ *Whenever I get together with my cousins, we always gossip away nineteen to the dozen.* ☐ *While Alan got the other ingredients, Jane was chopping up potatoes nineteen to the dozen.*

nine-to-five job a job with normal daytime hours. ☐ *I wouldn't want a nine-to-five job. I like the freedom I have as my own boss.* ☐ *I used to work nights, but now I have a nine-to-five job.*

nip and tuck *Fig.* almost even; almost tied. ☐ *The horses ran nip and tuck for the first half of the race. Then my horse pulled ahead.* ☐ *In the football game last Saturday, both teams were nip and tuck throughout the game.*

nip at someone or something to bite at someone or something. ☐ *The dog nipped at the visitor, but didn't cause any real harm.* ☐ *A small dog nipped at my heels.*

nip something **in the bud** *Fig.* to put an end to something before it develops into something larger. (Alludes to destroying a flower bud before it blooms.) ☐ *I wanted to nip that little romance in the bud.* ☐ *The whole idea was nipped in the bud.*

nip something **off (of)** something and **nip** something **off**† to clip or cut something off something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Let me nip a few blossoms off the rosebush.* ☐ *I nipped off a few blossoms and made a bouquet.*

no big deal and **no biggie** *Inf.* [of something] not difficult or troublesome. ☐ *Don't worry. It's no big deal to wash the car.* ☐ *No problem. It's no biggie.*

no biggie Go to previous.

no buts about it Go to no ifs, ands, or buts (about it).

No can do. *Inf.* It can't be done.; I can't do it. ☐ *Sorry, John. No can do. I can't sell you this one. I've promised it to Mrs. Smith.* ☐ *Bill: Please fix this clock today. Bob: No can do. It'll take a week to get the parts.*

No comment. I have nothing to say on this matter. ☐ *Q: When did you stop beating your dog? A: No comment.* ☐

Q: Georgie, did you chop down the cherry tree? A: No comment.

no contest 1. *Lit.* [in games] a situation where one team fails to appear for a competition. ☐ *It was declared no contest because the opposing team was stuck in traffic out on the expressway.* **2.** *Fig.* a situation where the winner-to-be of a contest is obvious even before holding the contest. ☐ *It was no contest. The wrestler was so big and strong that no one could have defeated him.*

no dice *Inf.* no; not possible. ☐ *When I asked about a loan, he said, "No dice."* ☐ *No. It can't be done, no dice.*

no doubt a transitional or interpretative phrase strengthening the rest of a previous sentence. ☐ *Sue: Mary is giving this party for herself? Rachel: Yes. She'll expect us to bring gifts, no doubt.* ☐ *Mary: All this talk about war has my cousin very worried. Sue: No doubt. At his age, I don't wonder.*

no earthly reason no conceivable reason. ☐ *There is no earthly reason for your rude behavior.* ☐ *I can think of no earthly reason why the repairs should cost so much.*

no end of something an endless supply of something. ☐ *Have some candy. I have no end of chocolate drops.* ☐ *I've had no end of trouble ever since I bought this car.*

No fair! *Inf.* That isn't fair! ☐ *Bill: No fair! You cheated! Bob: I did not!* ☐ *"No fair," shouted Tom. "You stepped over the line!"*

no flies on someone *Fig.* someone is not slow; someone is not wasting time. (On the image of flies not being able to land on someone moving fast.) ☐ *Of course I work fast. I go as fast as I can. There are no flies on me.* ☐ *There are no flies on Robert. He does his work very fast and very well.*

no go *Inf.* negative; inopportune. (This is hyphenated before a nominal.) ☐ *We're in a no-go situation.* ☐ *Is it go or no go?*

no great shakes *Inf.* someone or something that is not very good. (There is no affirmative version of this.) ☐ *Your idea is no great shakes, but we'll try it anyway.* ☐ *Ted is no great shakes when it comes to brains.*

no hard feelings and **not any hard feelings** *Fig.* no anger or resentment. ☐ *I hope you don't have any hard feelings.* ☐ *No, I have no hard feelings.*

No harm done. It is all right. No one or nothing has been harmed. ☐ *It's okay. No harm done.* ☐ *A: I am sorry I stepped on your toe. B: No harm done.*

no holds barred *Fig.* with no restraints. (Alludes to a wrestling match in which all holds are legal.) ☐ *I intend to argue it out with Mary, no holds barred.* ☐ *When Ann negotiates a contract, she goes in with no holds barred and comes out with a good contract.*

no ifs, ands, or buts (about it) and **no buts about it** *Fig.* absolutely no discussion, dissension, or doubt about something. ☐ *I want you there exactly at eight, no ifs, ands, or buts about it.* ☐ *This is the best television set available for the money, no buts about it.*

no joke a serious matter. ☐ *It's no joke when you miss the last train.* ☐ *It's certainly no joke when you have to walk home.*

No kidding! 1. *Inf.* You are not kidding me, are you? (An expression of mild surprise.) ☐ *Jane: I got elected vice president. Bill: No kidding! That's great!* **2.** *Inf.* Everyone already knows that! Did you just find that out? (Sarcastic.) ☐ *Sue: It looks like taxes will be increasing. Tom: No kidding! What do you expect?* ☐ *Alice: I'm afraid I'm putting on a little weight. Jane: No kidding!*

no laughing matter a serious issue or problem. ☐ *Be serious. This is no laughing matter.* ☐ *This disease is no laughing matter. It's quite deadly if not treated immediately.*

No lie? *Inf.* You are not lying, are you? ☐ *Bill: A plane just landed on the interstate highway outside of town! Tom: No lie? Come on! It didn't really, did it? Bill: It did too! Tom: Let's go see it!* ☐ *Bob: I'm going to take a trip up the Amazon. Sue: No lie?*

No man can serve two masters. *Prov.* You cannot work for two different people, organizations, or purposes in good faith, because you will end up favoring one over the other. (Biblical.) ☐ *Al tried going to school and working, both full-time, but soon discovered that he could not serve two masters.*

no matter how you slice it *Fig.* no matter what your perspective is; no matter how you try to portray something. ☐ *No matter how you slice it, the results of the meeting present all sorts of problems for the office staff.*

no matter what (happens) in any event; without regard to what happens (in the future). ☐ *We'll be there on time, no matter what.* ☐ *No matter what happens, we'll still be friends.*

No more than I have to. an answer to the greeting question "What are you doing?" ☐ *Bob: Hey, Fred. What you been doing? Fred: No more than I have to.* ☐ *Sue: Hi, Bill. How are you? Bill: Okay. What have you been doing? Sue: No more than I have to.*

N

No news is good news. Not hearing any news signifies that nothing is wrong. ☐ *Fred: I wonder if Jill is doing all right in her new job. Jane: No news is good news.* ☐ *Jane: I'm worried about my sister. She hasn't called me for months. Alan: No news is good news, right?*

No, no, a thousand times no! *Fig.* Very definitely, no! (Jocular.) ☐ *Bob: Here, have some sweet potatoes. Bill: No, thanks. Bob: Oh, come on! Bill: No, no, a thousand times no!* ☐ *Sue: The water is a little cold, but it's invigorating. Come on in. Bill: How cold? Sue: Well, just above freezing, I guess. Come on in! Bill: No, no, a thousand times no!*

no nonsense without any tricks, deceit, or wasting of time. (Hyphenated before nominals.) ☐ *Let's have no nonsense while we are rehearsing the presentation!* ☐ *Elton is a no-nonsense kind of guy.*

No offense meant. I did not mean to offend [you]. (See also No offense taken.) ☐ *Mary: Excuse that last remark. No offense meant. Susan: It's okay. I was not offended.*

No offense taken. I am not offended [by what you said]. (See also No offense meant.) ☐ *Pete: Excuse that last remark. I did not want to offend you. Tom: It's okay. No offense taken.*

No one is indispensable. *Prov.* Anyone may become unnecessary; anyone may lose his or her job. ☐ *Fred: You can't fire me. I'm absolutely necessary to this company. Nancy: No one is indispensable, Fred.* ☐ *The housekeeper was sure that her employer would always need her, but she discovered when she was let go that no one is indispensable.*

No pain, no gain. *Fig.* If you want to improve, you must work so hard that it hurts. (Associated with sports and physical exercise.) □ *Player: I can't do any more push-ups. My muscles hurt. Coach: No pain, no gain.* □ *Come on, everybody! Run one more lap! No pain, no gain!*

no point in something no purpose in doing something. □ *There is no point in locking the barn door now that the horse has been stolen.* □ *There's no point is crying over spilled milk.*

no problem Go to no sweat.

no questions asked no inquiries [to be] made to find out who did something. □ *Fines at the library will be suspended, no questions asked, for all late books returned during the first week of July.*

No rest for the wicked. *Fig.* It's because you are wicked that you have to work hard. (Usually jocular.) □ *A: I can't seem to ever get all my work done. B: No rest for the wicked.*

no sale no. □ *I wanted to go to Florida for the holidays, but my father said, "No sale."* □ *No sale. You can't do it.*

no salesman will call a phrase indicating that no salesman will visit or contact you if you make an inquiry about a product. □ *All inquiries are confidential and no salesman will call.*

no shortage of something lots of something; plenty of something. □ *Oh, don't worry about that. I have no shortage of money!* □ *We've no shortage of fried chicken, so help yourself.*

No siree(, Bob)! *Inf.* Absolutely no! (Not necessarily said to a male, and rarely to any Bob.) □ *Bill: Do you want to sell this old rocking chair? Jane: No siree, Bob!* □ *Bill: You don't want sweet potatoes, do you? Fred: No siree!*

N

no skin off someone's **nose** Go to next.

no skin off someone's **teeth** and **no skin off** someone's **nose** *Fig.* no difficulty for someone; no cause for concern to someone. □ *It's no skin off my nose if she wants to act that way.* □ *She said it was no skin off her teeth if we wanted to sell the house.*

no soap *Inf.* no. □ *I can't do it. No soap.* □ *No soap, I don't lend anyone money.*

no sooner said than done an expression indicating that something has been done quickly and obediently. □ *Jill: Can I help you out? Jane: Yes! Put these files in alphabetical order. Jill: No sooner said than done.* □ *The service at the hotel was really remarkable. Everything we asked for was no sooner said than done.*

no spring chicken *Fig.* a person well past youth; an old person. □ *That actress is no spring chicken, but she does a pretty good job of playing a twenty-year-old girl.* □ *Jane: How old do you think Robert is? Jill: Well, he's certainly no spring chicken.*

no stress *Inf.* no problem; no bother. □ *Don't worry, man, no stress.* □ *Relax. No stress. It doesn't bother me at all.*

no sweat and **no problem** *Inf.* no difficulty; do not worry. □ *Of course I can have your car repaired by noon. No sweat.* □ *You'd like a red one? No problem.*

No, thank you. and **No, thanks.** a phrase used to decline something. □ *Bob: Would you care for some more coffee? Mary: No, thank you.* □ *John: Do you want to go downtown tonight? Jane: No, thanks.*

no thanks to you I cannot thank you for what happened, because you did not cause it.; I cannot thank you for your help, because you did not give it. □ *Bob: Well, despite our previous disagreement, he seemed to agree to all our demands. Alice: Yes, no thanks to you. I wish you'd learn to keep your big mouth shut!* □ *Jane: It looks like the picnic wasn't ruined despite the fact that I forgot the potato salad. Mary: Yes, it was okay. No thanks to you, of course.*

no trespassing do not enter. (Usually seen on a sign. Not usually spoken.) □ *The sign on the tree said, "No Trespassing." So we didn't go in.* □ *The angry farmer chased us out of the field shouting, "Get out! Don't you see the 'No Trespassing' sign?"*

no two ways about it no choice about it; no other interpretation of it. (Note the form *there's* rather than *there are.*) □ *You have to go to the doctor whether you like it or not. There's no two ways about it.* □ *This letter means you're in trouble with the tax people. There's no two ways about it.*

No way! *Inf.* No! □ *Me join the Army? No way!* □ *She can't do that. No way!*

No way, José! *Inf.* No! (An elaboration of *No. José* is pronounced with an initial *H.*) □ *Bob: Can I borrow a hundred bucks? Bill: No way, José!* □ *Sally: Can I get you to take this nightgown back to the store for me and get me the same thing in a slightly smaller size? Bob: No way, José!*

no wonder [something is] not surprising. □ *No wonder the baby is crying. She's wet.* □ *It's no wonder that plant died. You watered it too much.*

nobody's fool *Fig.* a sensible and wise person who is not easily deceived. □ *Mary is nobody's fool. She watches out for people who might try to cheat her.* □ *Anne may seem as though she's not very bright, but she's nobody's fool.*

***the nod** *Fig.* someone's choice for a position or task. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) □ *The manager is going to pick the new sales manager. I think Ann will get the nod.* □ *I had the nod for captain of the team, but I decided not to do it.*

nod at someone to make a motion to someone with one's head indicating a greeting, agreement, or something else. □ *I nodded at Fred, but I really didn't agree.* □ *Molly nodded at Fred, and Fred, knowing she wanted to leave the party, went for their coats.* □ *When she offered him some ice cream, he only nodded. She thought he was rude and decided not to give him any.*

A **nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse.** *Prov.* You cannot get people to take a hint if they are determined not to. □ *Jill: I keep hinting to the boss that I deserve a raise, but he doesn't seem to get the point. Jane: I'm not surprised. A nod's as good as a wink to a blind horse.*

nod off to fall asleep, usually while sitting up. □ *Jack nodded off during the minister's sermon.* □ *Father always nods off after Sunday lunch.*

noise something **about** and **noise** something **abroad; noise** something **around** to spread around a secret; to gossip something around. □ *Now don't noise it about, but I am going to Houston next week to see my girl.* □ *Please don't noise this abroad.* □ *Stop noising that gossip around.*

nominate someone **as** something to suggest someone to be the candidate to serve as something. □ *I would like to*

nominate Karen as our representative. ☐ *She nominated herself as the one most likely to do the job.*

nominate someone **for** something to suggest someone as a candidate for a particular office. ☐ *I will nominate Carolyn for president.* ☐ *You cannot nominate yourself for this office.*

nominate someone **to** something to suggest someone to become a member of a group. ☐ *I am the one who nominated her to the board.* ☐ *The president nominated herself to the position of chairman of the board.*

None but the brave deserve the fair. *Prov.* Only a courageous and gallant man deserves a beautiful woman.; Only the best deserves the best. ☐ *Stop making excuses and just call Gina. None but the brave deserve the fair.*

none of someone's **beeswax** *Inf.* none of someone's business. (Jocular.) ☐ *It's none of your beeswax. I'm not telling.* ☐ *You'll never know. The answer is none of your beeswax.*

none of someone's **business** not of someone's concern. (A gentle rebuke.) ☐ *Q: When are you going to leave for home? A: None of your business.* ☐ *How I managed to afford all this is none of your business.*

None of your lip! *Fig.* Shut up!; I don't want to hear anything from you about anything! ☐ *A: You are being a real nuisance about the broken window. B: None of your lip! Just help me clean it up.*

none other than *Cliché* the very [person]. (Expresses surprise.) ☐ *The new building was opened by none other than the president.* ☐ *Bob's wife turned out to be none other than my cousin.*

none the wiser not knowing any more in spite of events or exposure to facts. ☐ *I was none the wiser about black holes after the lecture. It was a complete waste of time.* ☐ *Anne tried to explain the situation tactfully to Bob, but in the end, he was none the wiser.*

***none the worse for wear** *Fig.* no worse because of use or effort. (See also the worse for wear. *Typically: **be ~; become ~; look ~**.) ☐ *I lent my car to John. When I got it back, it was none the worse for wear.* ☐ *I had a hard day today, but I'm none the worse for wear.*

none too something not very something; not at all something. ☐ *The towels in the bathroom were none too clean.* ☐ *It was none too warm in their house.*

noodle around to wander around; to fiddle around with something. ☐ *I couldn't find the instructions so I spent the afternoon noodling around, trying to find out how it worked.* ☐ *I noodled around until I found the right address.*

noodle over something *Inf.* to think about something. ☐ *Let's noodle over this problem for a bit and discuss it at our next meeting.*

nose about (for someone or something**)** and **nose around (for** someone or something**)** to search here and there to find someone or something. ☐ *We spent an hour nosing about for a newspaper.* ☐ *I will nose around for someone to help you.* ☐ *We nosed about for a while, but found no one.*

nose around (something**)** to pry into something; to snoop around something. ☐ *I caught her nosing around my desk.* ☐ *Wally is always nosing around.*

nose in(to something**)** [for a boat or other vehicle] to move or be moved into something or some place carefully, nose first. ☐ *The captain nosed into the channel, and our journey had begun.* ☐ *He nosed in and we sailed on.*

nose out (of something**)** to move cautiously out of something or some place, nose first. ☐ *She nosed out of the little room, hoping she hadn't been observed.* ☐ *She nosed out quickly and stealthily.*

nose someone or a group **out†** to defeat someone or something by a narrow margin. (Alludes to a horse winning a race "by a nose.") ☐ *Karen nosed Bobby out in the election for class president by one vote.* ☐ *Our team nosed out the opposing team in last Friday's game.*

nose something **out of** something and **nose** something **out†** **1.** *Lit.* [for an animal] to force something out of something gently and cautiously. (As if pushing with the nose.) ☐ *The cat nosed her kitten out of the corner.* ☐ *The cat nosed out her kittens where we could see them.* ☐ *She nosed them out.* **2.** *Fig.* to move something cautiously out of something or some place, nose first. ☐ *Todd nosed the car out of the parking place carefully.* ☐ *He nosed out the car with skill.* ☐ *Ted nosed it out.*

nose something **(out†) (onto** something**)** to drive or push something carefully out onto the surface of something, nose first. ☐ *I nosed the car out onto the highway, looking both ways.* ☐ *She nosed out the car.*

nosh on something to make a snack of something. ☐ *After Thanksgiving, we noshed on turkey for three days.* ☐ *Who's been noshing on the chocolate cake?*

not a bit none at all; not at all. ☐ *Am I unhappy? Not a bit.* ☐ *I don't want any mashed potatoes. Not a bit!*

Not a chance! *Inf.* There is no chance at all that something will happen. (A variation of (There is) no chance.) ☐ *Sally: Do you think our team will win today? Mary: Not a chance!* ☐ *Jane: Can I have this delivered by Saturday? Clerk: Not a chance!*

not a clue Go to next.

not a glimmer (of an idea) and **not a clue** *Fig.* no idea. ☐ *A: Where's the subway? B: Sorry. Not a glimmer of an idea.* ☐ *How long till we're there? Not a clue.*

not a hope in hell Go to not have a snowball's chance in hell.

not a kid anymore *Fig.* no longer in one's youth. ☐ *You can't keep partying all weekend, every weekend. You're not a kid anymore.* ☐ *Kathy: Bill is just as wild as ever, I hear. Jane: Bill needs to realize that he's not a kid anymore.*

not a living soul *Fig.* nobody. (See some of the possible variations in the examples.) ☐ *I won't tell anybody—not a living soul.* ☐ *I won't tell a living soul.*

not a moment to spare and **without a moment to spare** just in time; with no extra time. ☐ *Hurry, hurry! There's not a moment to spare!* ☐ *I arrived without a moment to spare.*

not able See the expressions listed at can't as well as those listed below.

not able to call one's **time** one's **own** too busy; so busy as not to be in charge of one's own schedule. ☐ *It's been so busy around here that I haven't been able to call my time my own.* ☐ *She can't call her time her own these days.*

N

not able to get something **for love or money** *Fig.* not able to get something at any price; completely unable to get something. ☐ *Oranges were so scarce last winter that you couldn't get them for love or money.* ☐ *I wanted to go to the concert, but I was not able to get a ticket for love or money.*

not able to go on unable to continue (doing something—even living). (*Not able to* is often expressed as *can't.*) ☐ *I just can't go on this way.* ☐ *Before her death, she left a note saying she was not able to go on.*

not able to help something unable to prevent or control something. (*Not able to* is often expressed as *can't.*) ☐ *I'm sorry about being late. I wasn't able to help it.* ☐ *Bob can't help being boring.*

not able to make anything out of someone or something unable to understand someone or something. (*Not able to* is often expressed as *can't*. The *anything* may refer to something specific, as in the first example.) ☐ *I can't make sense out of what you just said.* ☐ *We were not able to make anything out of the message.*

not able to make head or tail of something *Fig.* not able to understand something at all. ☐ *I couldn't make head or tail of the professor's geology lecture this morning.* ☐ *Can you help me fill out my tax forms? I can't make head or tail of the instructions.*

not able to see the forest for the trees *Cliché* allowing many details of a situation to obscure the situation as a whole. (*Not able to* is often expressed as *can't.*) ☐ *The solution is obvious. You missed it because you can't see the forest for the trees.* ☐ *She suddenly realized that she hadn't been able to see the forest for the trees.*

N

not able to stomach someone or something and **cannot stomach** someone or something *Fig.* not to be able to put up with someone or something; not to be able to tolerate or endure someone or something. ☐ *Jane cannot stomach violent movies.* ☐ *The sensitive student could not stomach a lot of ridicule.*

not able to wait to have to go to the bathroom urgently. (Also more broadly literal.) ☐ *Mom, I can't wait.* ☐ *Driver, stop the bus! My little boy can't wait.*

Not again! *Inf.* I cannot believe that it happened again! ☐ *Mary: The sink is leaking again. Sally: Not again! Mary: Yes, again.* ☐ *Fred: Here comes Tom with a new girlfriend. Sue: Not again!*

not agree with someone [for food] to make someone ill; [for something that one has eaten] to give one stomach distress. ☐ *Fried foods don't agree with Tom.* ☐ *I always have onions in my garden, but I never eat them. They just don't agree with me.*

not all something **is cracked up to be** and **not what** something **is cracked up to be** *Fig.* not as good as something is said to be. (Not always in the negative.) ☐ *This isn't a very good pen. It's not all it's cracked up to be.* ☐ *Is this one all it's cracked up to be?*

not all there *Fig.* not mentally adequate; crazy or silly. ☐ *Sometimes I think you're not all there.* ☐ *Be nice to Sally. She's not all there.*

Not always. a conditional negative response. (See examples.) ☐ *John: Do you come here every day? Jane: No, not always.* ☐ *John: Do you find that this condition usually clears up by itself? Doctor: Not always.*

not amount to a hill of beans Go to not worth a hill of beans.

not any hard feelings Go to no hard feelings.

Not anymore. The facts you mentioned are no longer true.; A previous situation no longer exists. ☐ *Mary: This cup of coffee you asked me to bring you looks cold. Do you still want it? Sally: Not anymore.* ☐ *Tom: Do the Wilsons live on Maple Street? Bob: Not anymore.*

not as young as one **used to be** *Fig.* getting old. ☐ *Aunt Lila isn't as young as she used to be. She can't take a lot of trips anymore.* ☐ *Don't walk so fast! I'm not as young as I used to be. It takes me awhile to catch up.*

not at all and **not in the least** certainly not; absolutely not. ☐ *No, it doesn't bother me—not at all.* ☐ *I'm not complaining. Not me. Not in the least.*

Not bad (at all). 1. [Someone or something is] quite satisfactory. ☐ *Bill: How do you like your new teacher? Jane: Not bad.* ☐ *Bob: Is this pen okay? Bill: I guess. Yeah. Not bad.* **2.** [Someone or something is] really quite good. (The person or thing can be named, as in the examples.) ☐ *John: How do you like that new car of yours? Mary: Not bad. Not bad at all.* ☐ *Tom: This one looks great to me. What do you think? Sue: It's not bad.*

not bat an eye Go to next.

not bat an eyelid and **not bat an eye** *Fig.* to show no signs of distress even when something bad happens or something shocking is said. ☐ *Sam didn't bat an eyelid when the mechanic told him how much the car repairs would cost.* ☐ *The pain of the broken arm must have hurt Sally terribly, but she did not bat an eyelid.*

not believe one's **ears** *Fig.* not believe the news that one has heard. ☐ *I couldn't believe my ears when Mary said I won the first prize.*

not believe one's **eyes** *Fig.* not to believe what one is seeing; to be shocked or dumbfounded at what one is seeing. ☐ *I walked into the room and I couldn't believe my eyes. All the furniture had been stolen!* ☐ *When Jimmy opened his birthday present, he could hardly believe his eyes. Just what he wanted!*

not born yesterday *Fig.* experienced; knowledgeable in the ways of the world. ☐ *I know what's going on. I wasn't born yesterday.* ☐ *Sally knows the score. She wasn't born yesterday.*

not breathe a word (about someone or something**)** and **not breathe a word of it** *Fig.* to keep a secret about someone or something. ☐ *Don't worry. I won't breathe a word about this matter.* ☐ *Please don't breathe a word about Bob and his problems.* ☐ *Don't worry. I won't breathe a word of it.*

not breathe a word of it Go to previous.

not buy something *Fig.* not accept something (to be true). ☐ *You may think so, but I don't buy it.* ☐ *The police wouldn't buy his story.*

not by a long shot *Fig.* not by a great amount; not at all. ☐ *Did I win the race? Not by a long shot.* ☐ *Not by a long shot did she complete the assignment.*

not care two hoots about someone or something and **not give two hoots about** someone or something; **not give a hang about** someone or something; **not give a hoot about** someone or something *Inf.* not to care at all about someone or something. □ *I don't care two hoots about whether you go to the picnic or not.* □ *She doesn't give a hoot about me. Why should I care?* □ *I don't give a hang about it.*

not dry behind the ears Go to wet behind the ears.

not enough room to swing a cat *Rur.* not very much space. □ *Their living room was very small. There wasn't enough room to swing a cat.* □ *How can you work in a small room like this? There's not enough room to swing a cat.*

not exchange more than some number of **words with** someone Go to exchange no more than some number of words with someone.

not feel like oneself Go to next.

not feeling oneself and **not feel like** oneself *Fig.* to feel upset, troubled, or disturbed in some way. □ *I'm sorry I said what I said. I'm not feeling myself today.*

not for a moment not at all; not even for a short amount of time; never. □ *I don't want you to leave. Not for a moment!* □ *I could not wish such a horrible punishment on anyone. Not for a moment!*

not for all the tea in China *Fig.* not even if you rewarded me with all the tea in China; not for anything at all. □ *No I won't do it—not for all the tea in China.*

not for (anything in) the world and **not for love nor money; not on your life** *Fig.* not for anything (no matter what its value). (Note the variation in the examples. The order of *love nor money* is fixed.) □ *I won't do it for love nor money.* □ *He said he wouldn't do it—not for the world.*

not for hire [of a taxi] not available to take new passengers. □ *The taxi was going to pick someone up at a nearby hotel and was not for hire.* □ *The taxi had a lighted sign that said it was not for hire.*

not for love nor money Go to not for (anything in) the world.

Not for my money. Not as far as I'm concerned. (Has nothing to do with money or finance.) □ *Sue: Do you think it's a good idea to build all these office buildings in this part of the city? Mary: Not for my money. That's a real gamble.* □ *John: We think that Fred is the best choice for the job. Do you think he is? Mary: Not for my money, he's not.*

not for publication not to be talked about openly; secret. □ *Please tell no one about this. It's not for publication.* □ *This report is not for publication, so keep it to yourself.*

not get one's **hopes up** *Fig.* [one] should not expect something to happen; [one] should not start hoping that something will happen. □ *The rain could stop so we can go to the beach, but you should not get your hopes up.*

not give a hang about someone or something Go to not care two hoots about someone or something.

not give a tinker's damn *Fig.* not to care at all. (A *tinker's damn* or *dam* may be a worthless curse from a tinker or a small dam or barrier used to contain molten metal.) □ *I don't give a tinker's damn whether you go or not!*

not give anyone the time of day *Fig.* to ignore someone (usually out of dislike). □ *Mary won't speak to Sally. She won't give her the time of day.* □ *I couldn't get an appointment with Mr. Smith. He wouldn't even give me the time of day.*

not give it another thought not to worry about something anymore. (A polite way of accepting someone's apology.) □ *It's okay. Please don't give it another thought.* □ *You should not give it another thought. No one was bothered at all.*

not give two hoots about someone or something Go to not care two hoots about someone or something.

not going to win any beauty contests *Fig.* homely; ugly. □ *Fred isn't going to win any beauty contests, but he's smart and considerate and he does well at his job.* □ *This old truck of mine is not going to win any beauty contests, but I wouldn't trade it for anything.*

not grow on trees *Fig.* not to be abundant; not to be expendable. (Usually said about money.) □ *I can't afford that. Money doesn't grow on trees, you know.* □ *Don't waste the glue. That stuff doesn't grow on trees, you know.*

not have a care in the world *Fig.* free and casual; unworried and carefree. □ *I really feel good today—as if I didn't have a care in the world.* □ *Ann always acts as if she doesn't have a care in the world.*

not have a leg to stand on *Fig.* [for an argument or a case] to have no support. □ *You may think you're in the right, but you don't have a leg to stand on.* □ *My lawyer said I didn't have a leg to stand on, so I shouldn't sue the company.*

not have a snowball's chance in hell and **not a hope in hell** *Inf.* a very poor chance. (Usually in the negative.) □ *She doesn't have a snowball's chance in hell of getting it done on time.* □ *I know I don't have a hope in hell, but I'll try anyway.*

not have a stitch of clothes (on) *Fig.* naked. □ *He walked through the house and didn't have a stitch of clothes on.*

not have all one's **marbles** *Fig.* not to have all one's mental capacities. □ *John acts as if he doesn't have all his marbles.* □ *I'm afraid that I don't have all my marbles all the time.*

not have anything to do with someone or something Go to have nothing to do with someone or something.

not have anything to do with something Go to have something to do with something.

not have the heart to do something *Fig.* to be too compassionate to do something. □ *I just don't have the heart to tell him the bad news.*

not hold a candle to someone or something Go to next.

not hold a stick to someone or something and **not hold a candle to** someone or something *Fig.* not to be nearly as good as someone or something. □ *Sally is much faster than Bob. Bob doesn't hold a stick to Sally.* □ *This TV doesn't hold a candle to that one. That one is much better.*

not hold water 1. *Lit.* [of a container] not able to contain water without leaking. □ *This old wading pool won't hold water any longer.* **2.** *Fig.* not able to be proved; not correct or true. □ *Jack's story won't hold water. It sounds*

too unlikely. ☐ *The police's theory will not hold water. The suspect has an ironclad alibi.*

not hold with something *Rur.* to disagree with something; to not tolerate something. ☐ *I don't hold with what you are saying.* ☐ *We don't hold with that kind of thing around here.*

not hurt a flea *Fig.* not to harm anything or anyone, even a tiny insect. (Also with other forms of negation.) ☐ *Ted would not even hurt a flea. He could not have struck Bill.* ☐ *Ted would never hurt a flea, and he would not hit anyone as you claim.*

Not if I see you first. Go to next.

Not if I see you sooner. and **Not if I see you first.** *Inf.* a response to I'll see you later. (This means you will not see me if I see you first, because I will avoid you.) ☐ *Tom: See you later. Mary: Not if I see you sooner.* ☐ *John: Okay. If you want to argue, I'll just leave. See you later. Mary: Not if I see you first.*

Not in a thousand years! and **Never in a thousand years!** *Fig.* No, never! ☐ *John: Will you ever approve of her marriage to Tom? Sue: No, not in a thousand years!* ☐ *Mary: Will all this trouble ever subside? John: Never in a thousand years!*

Not in my book. *Fig.* Not according to my views. (Compare this with Not for my money.) ☐ *John: Is Fred okay for the job, do you think? Mary: No, not in my book.* ☐ *Sue: My meal is great! Is yours good, too? Bob: Not in my book.*

not in the least Go to not at all.

not in the same league with someone or something not nearly as good as someone or something. ☐ *John isn't in the same league with Bob at tennis.* ☐ *This house isn't in the same league with our old one.*

not just whistling Dixie *Rur.* not talking nonsense. (Alludes to a song titled "Dixie.") ☐ *Man, you are right! You're not just whistling Dixie.* ☐ *When you say she is wrong, you're not just whistling Dixie.*

not know beans (about someone or something**)** *Inf.* to know nothing about someone or something. ☐ *Bill doesn't know beans about flying an airplane.* ☐ *When it comes to flying, I don't know beans.*

not know enough to come in out of the rain *Fig.* to be very stupid. ☐ *Bob is so stupid he doesn't know enough to come in out of the rain.* ☐ *You can't expect very much from somebody who doesn't know enough to come in out of the rain.*

not know from nothing *Inf.* to be stupid, innocent, and naive. (This *nothing* is not replaced with *something.* Usually used with *don't,* as in the examples.) ☐ *Old John—he don't know from nothing.* ☐ *What do you expect from somebody who don't know from nothing?*

not know if one **is coming or going** Go to not know whether one is coming or going.

not know one's **own strength** not to realize how destructive or harmful one's strength can be. ☐ *I didn't mean to hurt you. I guess I don't know my own strength.* ☐ *He might break the door down by accident. He doesn't know his own strength and could end up pushing too hard against the door.*

not know someone **from Adam** *Fig.* not to know someone by sight at all. ☐ *I wouldn't recognize John if I saw him up close. I don't know him from Adam.* ☐ *What does she look like? I don't know her from Adam.*

not know the first thing about someone or something *Fig.* not to know anything about someone or something. ☐ *I don't know the first thing about flying an airplane.* ☐ *She doesn't know the first thing about John.*

not know what to make of someone or something not to understand someone or something; not to be able to interpret something or the actions of someone. ☐ *We really don't know what to make of his request.*

not know where to turn and **not know which way to turn** to have no idea about what to do (about something). ☐ *I was so confused I didn't know where to turn.* ☐ *We needed help, but we didn't know which way to turn.*

not know whether one **is coming or going** and **not know if** one **is coming or going** *Fig.* to be very confused. ☐ *I'm so busy that I don't know if I'm coming or going.* ☐ *You look as if you don't know whether you're coming or going.*

not know which end is up *Inf.* not to be alert and knowledgeable. ☐ *Don't try to hustle me, sister. You think I don't know which end is up?* ☐ *Poor Jed doesn't even know which end is up.*

not know which way to turn Go to not know where to turn.

not let someone **catch** someone doing something and **not want to catch** someone doing something an expression that scolds someone who has done something wrong. (The idea is that the person ought not to do the wrong thing again, not that the person simply avoid getting caught.) ☐ *How many times have I told you not to play ball in the house? Don't let me catch you doing that again.* ☐ *If I've told you once, I've told you a thousand times: Don't do that! I don't want to catch you doing it again!*

not let the grass grow under one's **feet** *Fig.* not to stay in one place for a long time; to be always on the move. ☐ *He is always doing something. He never lets the grass grow under his feet.* ☐ *I have always thought that I ought not to let the grass grow under my feet.* ☐ *Jane: Last night I told Alan that we needed a new bookshelf, and he had built one by the time I got home today. Jill: Boy, he doesn't let the grass grow under his feet.*

not lift a finger (to help someone**)** and **not lift a hand (to help** someone**)** *Fig.* to do nothing to help someone. (The *someone* is *anyone* with the negative.) ☐ *They wouldn't lift a finger to help us.* ☐ *Can you imagine that they wouldn't lift a finger?* ☐ *Sally refused to lift a hand to help her own sister.*

not lift a hand (to help someone**)** Go to previous.

Not likely. *Inf.* That is probably not so; that probably will not happen. ☐ *Mary: Is it possible that you'll be able to fix this watch? Sue: Not likely, but we can always try.* ☐ *Sally: Will John show up on time, do you think? Bob: Not likely.*

not long for this world *Fig.* about to die. ☐ *Our dog is nearly twelve years old and not long for this world.* ☐ *I'm so tired. I think I'm not long for this world.*

not made of money *Fig.* [of a person] not having a lot of money; not having an unlimited supply of money. ☐ *I can't afford a car like that. I'm not made of money you know.*

☐ *There is only so much they can pay. They're not made of money.*

not miss a thing Go to next.

not miss much 1. and **not miss a thing** *Inf.* not to miss observing any part of what is going on. (Usually with *do* as in the examples.) ☐ *Ted doesn't miss much. He is very alert.* ☐ *The puppy doesn't miss a thing. He sees every move you make.* **2.** *Inf.* not to miss experiencing something that really was not worth experiencing anyway. (Usually with *do* as in the examples.) ☐ *I missed the big sales meeting last week, but I understand I didn't miss much.* ☐ *Bill: I didn't see that new movie that is showing at the theater. Tom: You didn't miss much; it was pretty bad.*

not miss something **for love nor money** Go to next.

not miss something **for the world** and **not miss** something **for love nor money** *Fig.* would not miss something for any reason at all. ☐ *Of course I'll be at your wedding. I wouldn't miss it for the world.*

not move a muscle to remain perfectly motionless. ☐ *Be quiet. Sit there and don't move a muscle.* ☐ *I was so tired I couldn't move a muscle.*

not on any account Go to on no account.

not one iota not even a tiny bit. ☐ *I won't give you any at all! Not one iota!* ☐ *I did not get one iota of encouragement from any of those people.*

not one's **cup of tea** *Fig.* not one's choice or preference. (Used to describe an activity you do not enjoy. Can sound somewhat affected.) ☐ *You three visit the museum without me. Looking at fussy old paintings is not my cup of tea.* ☐ *Going to church, Mary said, was not her cup of tea.*

not one's **place** not one's role to do something. ☐ *It was not my place to criticize my boss.* ☐ *It was not Bill's place to ask the questions; it's my project.*

not open one's **mouth** and **not utter a word** *Fig.* not to say anything at all; not to tell something (to anyone). ☐ *Don't worry, I'll keep your secret. I won't even open my mouth.* ☐ *Have no fear. I won't utter a word.*

not playing with a full deck Go to a few cards shy of a full deck.

not put (a lot) of stock in something Go to take no stock in something.

not put it past someone to think that someone would not dare to do something. ☐ *He might run away from school. I wouldn't put it past him.* ☐ *I wouldn't put it past Roger to arrive unannounced.*

Not right now, thanks. No for the present. (It is hoped that one will be asked again later. Usually used for a [temporary] refusal of a serving of food or drink. There is an implication that more will be wanted later.) ☐ *Waiter: Do you want some more coffee? Mary: Not right now, thanks.* ☐ *John: Can I take your coat? Sue: Not right now, thanks. I'm still a little chilly.*

not see any objection (to something**)** Go to see no objection (to something).

not set foot somewhere not to go somewhere. ☐ *I wouldn't set foot in John's room. I'm very angry at him.* ☐ *He never set foot here.*

not shed a tear *Fig.* not to show any emotion even when something is very sad. ☐ *At his uncle's funeral, he didn't shed a tear. They never got along.*

not show one's **face** not to appear somewhere; not to go to some place. ☐ *After what she said, she had better not show her face around here again.* ☐ *If I don't say I'm sorry, I'll never be able to show my face again.*

not sleep a wink not to sleep at all. ☐ *I couldn't sleep a wink last night.* ☐ *Ann hasn't been able to sleep a wink for a week.*

not so hot *Inf.* not very good. ☐ *The service here is not so hot. This restaurant is highly overrated.*

not take no for an answer *Fig.* not to accept someone's refusal. (A polite way of being insistent.) ☐ *Now, you must drop over and see us tomorrow. We won't take no for an answer.* ☐ *I had to go to their party. They just wouldn't take no for an answer.*

not take stock in something Go to take no stock in something.

not tell a (living) soul not to reveal something to anyone. ☐ *You secret is safe with me. I won't tell a living soul.* ☐ *Promise you won't tell a soul, but I'm engaged.*

not to put too fine a point on it *Fig.* a phrase introducing a fine or important point, apologetically. ☐ *Rachel: Not to put too fine a point on it, Mary, but you're still acting a little rude to Tom. Mary: I'm sorry, but that's the way I feel.* ☐ *John: I think, not to put too fine a point on it, you ought to do exactly as you are told. Andy: And I think you ought to mind your own business.*

not to touch a drop *Fig.* not to drink any of something, usually alcohol. ☐ *He pledged not to touch a drop all weekend, but he broke his pledge on Friday night.*

Not to worry. *Inf.* Please do not worry. ☐ *Bill: The rain is going to soak all our clothes. Tom: Not to worry, I put them all in plastic bags.* ☐ *Sue: I think we're about to run out of money. Bill: Not to worry. I have some more travelers checks.*

Not (too) much. a response to greeting inquiries into what one has been doing. ☐ *John: What have you been doing? Mary: Not much.* ☐ *Sue: Been keeping busy? What are you up to? Bob: Not too much. Sue: Yeah. Me too.*

not too shabby 1. *Inf.* nice; well done. (With emphasis on *shabby*.) ☐ *Is that your car? Not too shabby!* ☐ *That play was not too shabby.* **2.** *Inf.* very shabby; very poor indeed. (With emphasis on *too*. Sarcastic.) ☐ *Did you see that shot she missed? Not too shabby!* ☐ *What a way to treat someone. Not too shabby!*

not touch someone or something **with a ten-foot pole** *Cliché* not to have anything to do with someone or something. (Always negative.) ☐ *No, I won't hire Fred. I wouldn't touch him with a ten-foot pole.* ☐ *I wouldn't touch that job with a ten-foot pole.*

not trouble one's **(pretty) (little) head about** something *Rur.* not to worry about something. (Considered demeaning by many.) ☐ *Don't you trouble your little head about that. I'll take care of it.* ☐ *You shouldn't trouble your head about it. Everything will turn out fine.*

not under any circumstances Go to under no circumstances.

N

not up to scratch and **not up to snuff** *Fig.* not adequate. ☐ *Sorry, your paper isn't up to scratch. Please do it over again.* ☐ *The performance was not up to snuff.*

not up to snuff Go to previous.

not utter a word Go to not open one's mouth.

not want to catch someone doing something Go to not let someone catch someone doing something.

not what something **is cracked up to be** Go to not all something is cracked up to be.

not with it not able to think clearly; not able to understand things. ☐ *Lisa's mother is not really with it anymore. She's going senile.* ☐ *Tom's not with it yet. He's only just come around from the anesthetic.*

not worth a damn *Inf.* worthless. ☐ *This pen is not worth a damn.* ☐ *When it comes to keeping score, she's not worth a damn.*

not worth a dime and **not worth a red cent** worthless. ☐ *This land is all swampy. It's not worth a dime.* ☐ *This pen I bought isn't worth a dime. It has no ink.*

not worth a hill of beans and **not amount to a hill of beans; not worth a plugged nickel; not worth beans** *Fig.* worthless. ☐ *Your advice isn't worth a hill of beans.* ☐ *This old cow isn't worth a plugged nickel.*

not worth a red cent Go to not worth a dime.

not worth mentioning 1. not important enough to require a comment. ☐ *There are others, but they are not worth mentioning.* ☐ *A small number of books hint at the phenomenon, but they aren't worth mentioning.* **2.** [of an error or wrong] not worth apologizing for. ☐ *This isn't a problem at all. It's not worth mentioning.* ☐ *No need to apologize to me. No harm done. It's not worth mentioning.*

N

not worth one's **while** not worth bothering with; not worth spending time on. ☐ *It's not worth my while to discuss it with you.* ☐ *Don't bother trying to collect money from them. It isn't worth your while.*

not worth the paper it's printed on Go to next.

not worth the paper it's written on and **not worth the paper it's printed on** *Fig.* [of a document] meaningless or without authority; of no value. ☐ *That contract isn't worth the paper it's written on. All the signatures are forged.* ☐ *Don't take a check from that guy. It's not worth the paper it's written on.*

not worth the trouble not important enough to require a comment or any effort. ☐ *Don't bother with it. It isn't worth the trouble.* ☐ *There is no point in trying to get the spot out of the carpet. It isn't worth the trouble.*

a **notch above (**someone or something**)** and a **notch better than (**someone or something**)** *Fig.* a little higher in quality than someone or something. ☐ *This latest candidate we interviewed seems a notch above the rest, so let's hire her.* ☐ *That telescope is a notch better than the others in terms of magnification.*

a **notch below (**someone or something**)** *Fig.* a little lower in quality than someone or something. ☐ *I believe that this wine is a notch below the one we had with the fish.*

notch something **up**† to count up something; to add up or score something. ☐ *We notched yet another victory up in our efforts to regain the trophy.* ☐ *Well, it looks like we notched up another victory.*

note something **down**† to write down a note about something. ☐ *Please note these words down.* ☐ *Note down the following facts.*

***noted for** something *Fig.* famed for something; memorable for something. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *We were all noted for our polite manners.* ☐ *The restaurant was noted for its traditional fare.* ☐ *Tom was noted far and wide for his excellent pies and cakes.*

nothing but only; just. ☐ *Jane drinks nothing but milk.* ☐ *Dave buys nothing but expensive clothes.*

nothing but skin and bones and **(all) skin and bones** *Fig.* very thin or emaciated. ☐ *Bill has lost so much weight. He's nothing but skin and bones.* ☐ *Look at Bill. He's just skin and bones.* ☐ *That old horse is all skin and bones. I won't ride it.*

Nothing comes of nothing. *Prov.* If you contribute nothing, you will get nothing. ☐ *Jill: Why are you so depressed today? Jane: No reason. Jill: There has to be a reason. Nothing comes of nothing.* ☐ *I'm not surprised you did so poorly in school; you haven't been putting in any effort. Nothing comes of nothing.*

Nothing doing! *Inf.* I will not permit it!; I will not participate in it! ☐ *John: Can I put this box in your suitcase? Bill: Nothing doing! It's too heavy now.* ☐ *Sue: We decided that you should drive us to the airport. Do you mind? Jane: Nothing doing! I've got work to do.*

nothing down requiring no down payment. ☐ *You can have this car for nothing down and $140 a month.* ☐ *I bought a winter coat for nothing down and no payments due until February.*

Nothing for me, thanks. I do not want any of what was offered. (Typically to decline a serving of food or drink.) ☐ *Waiter: Would you care for dessert? Bob: Nothing for me, thanks.* ☐ *Bob: We have beer and wine. Which would you like? Mary: Nothing for me, thanks.*

Nothing is certain but death and taxes. *Prov.* Everything in life is unpredictable, except that you can be sure you will die and you will have to pay taxes. (You can also refer to *death and taxes* as the only certain things in life.) ☐ *Son: I can't believe how much tax money is being withheld from my paycheck! Father: Welcome to adult life, where nothing is certain but death and taxes.*

Nothing is certain but the unforeseen. *Prov.* You cannot foresee what will happen. ☐ *Jill: Now that we've got a new boss, this is certain to be a nicer place to work. Jane: Nothing is certain but the unforeseen.*

Nothing is given so freely as advice. *Prov.* People will give you advice more willingly than they give you anything else. ☐ *Although no one in my family was willing to give me a loan, they all had suggestions about how I could get the money from elsewhere. Nothing is given so freely as advice.* ☐ *Don't hesitate to ask people what they think you ought to do. Nothing is given so freely as advice.*

Nothing much. *Inf.* not much; hardly anything; nothing of importance. (Often a reply to a greeting asking what one has been doing.) ☐ *John: Hey, man! How's by you? Bob: Hiya! Nothing much.* ☐ *Bill: What have you been doing? Tom: Nothing much.*

nothing of the kind 1. no; absolutely not. ☐ *I didn't tear your jacket—nothing of the kind!* ☐ *Did I break your vase? Nothing of the kind!* **2.** nothing like that. ☐ *That's not true. We did nothing of the kind!* ☐ *She did nothing of the kind! She wasn't even there!*

nothing short of something more or less the same as something bad; as bad as something. ☐ *His behavior was nothing short of criminal.* ☐ *Climbing those mountains alone is nothing short of suicide.*

Nothing so bad but (it) might have been worse. *Prov.* Although bad things do happen, they are not as bad as other things you can imagine that might have happened. ☐ *Joan: This is like a nightmare! My house burned down—I lost everything! Nancy: At least you and your family are safe. Nothing so bad but might have been worse.* ☐ *My bicycle tire blew out, but at least it blew out within walking distance of a repair shop. Nothing so bad but it might have been worse.*

Nothing succeeds like success. *Prov.* If you have succeeded in the past, you will continue to be successful in the future. ☐ *After Alan's brilliant courtroom victory, everyone wanted to be his client. Nothing succeeds like success.*

nothing to be sneezed at Go to nothing to sneeze at.

nothing to boast about not worth bragging about; mediocre. ☐ *In high school, my grades were acceptable, but they were nothing to boast about.* ☐ *Jill: Does this town have a good library? Nancy: It's nothing to boast about.*

nothing to choose from no choice; no choice in the selection; not enough of something to make a choice. ☐ *I went to the store looking for new shoes, but there was nothing to choose from.* ☐ *By the time I got around to selecting a team of helpers, there was nothing to choose from.*

Nothing to it! It is very easy! ☐ *Look, anybody can do it! Nothing to it!* ☐ *Changing a lightbulb is easy. Nothing to it!*

nothing to sneeze at and **nothing to be sneezed at** *Fig.* nothing small or unimportant. ☐ *It's not a lot of money, but it's nothing to sneeze at.* ☐ *Our house isn't a mansion, but it's nothing to sneeze at.* ☐ *A few thousand dollars is nothing to be sneezed at!*

nothing to speak of not many; not much. ☐ *John: What's happening around here? Bill: Nothing to speak of.* ☐ *Mary: Has there been any rain in the last week? Sally: Nothing to speak of.*

nothing to write home about *Fig.* mediocre; not as good as you expected. ☐ *I went to that new restaurant last night. It's nothing to write home about.* ☐ *Jill: I went to see a movie last night. Jane: How was it? Jill: Nothing to write home about.*

nothing upstairs *Fig.* no brains; stupid. ☐ *Tom is sort of stupid. You know—nothing upstairs.* ☐ *I know what's wrong with you. Nothing upstairs.*

Nothing ventured, nothing gained. If you do not take risks, you will never accomplish anything. ☐ *Bill: Should I ask my boss for a promotion? Jane: Nothing ventured, nothing gained.* ☐ *I think I'll audition for a part in that play. Nothing ventured, nothing gained.*

notify someone **about** someone or something to inform someone about someone or something. ☐ *Please notify the insurance company about the accident.* ☐ *I have to notify the doctor about Ed, who is ill.*

notify someone **of** something to inform someone about something. ☐ *Can you notify my parents of my arrival at the airport?* ☐ *We were notified of it last night.*

now and then sometimes; occasionally. (See also (every) now and then.) ☐ *I like to go to a movie now and then.* ☐ *We visit my parents now and then, but we rarely see our other relatives.*

Now hear this! Pay attention to what is going to be said! (In the manner of an announcement over a public address system, especially in the military.) ☐ *Now hear this! You have to turn off the television and go to bed!* ☐ *Now hear this! Now hear this! Everyone is ordered to abandon ship.*

now, now *Inf.* a calming and consoling phrase that introduces good advice. ☐ *"Now, now, don't cry," said the mother to the tiny baby.* ☐ *Jane: I'm so upset! Andy: Now, now, everything will work out all right.*

***now or never** at this time and no other. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *This is your only chance, John. It's now or never.* ☐ *I decided that it was now or never, and jumped.*

now then a sentence opener indicating that a new topic is being opened or that the speaker is getting down to business. (Expressions such as this often use intonation to convey the connotation of the sentence that is to follow. The brief intonation pattern accompanying the expression may indicate sarcasm, disagreement, caution, consolation, sternness, etc.) ☐ *"Now then, where's the pain?" asked the doctor.* ☐ *Mary: Now then, let's talk about you and your interests. Bob: Oh, good. My favorite subject.* ☐ *Sue: Now then, what are your plans for the future? Alice: I want to become a pilot.* ☐ *"Now then, what did you have in mind when you took this money?" asked the police investigator.*

Now what? and **What now?** *Inf.* What is going to happen now?; What kind of new problem has arisen? ☐ *The phone rang again, and Tom said, rising from the chair, "Now what?"* ☐ *Bob: There's a serious problem—sort of an emergency—in the mail room. Sue: What now? Bob: They're out of stamps or something silly like that.*

(Now,) where was I? I was interrupted, so please help me remember what I was talking about. (The emphasis is on *was*.) ☐ *Now, where was I! I think I lost my place.* ☐ *Q: Where was I? A: You had just described the War of 1812.*

Now you're cooking (with gas)! *Inf. Fig.* Now you are doing what you should be doing! ☐ *As Bob came to the end of the piece, the piano teacher said, "Now you're cooking with gas!"* ☐ *Tom (painting a fence): How am I doing with this painting? Any better? Jane: Now you're cooking. Tom: Want to try it?*

Now you're talking! *Inf.* Now you are saying the right things. ☐ *Tom: I won't put up with her behavior any longer. I'll tell her exactly what I think of it. Bill: Now you're talking!* ☐ *John: When I get back to school, I'm going to study harder than ever. Mother: Now you're talking!*

nowhere near not nearly. ☐ *We have nowhere near enough wood for the winter.* ☐ *They're nowhere near ready for the game.*

N

no-win situation a situation where there is no correct or satisfactory solution. ☐ *The general was too weak to fight and too proud to surrender. It was a no-win situation.* ☐ *The huge dog my father gave us as a gift eats too much. If we get rid of the dog, my father will be insulted. If we keep it, we will go broke buying food for it. This is a classic no-win situation.*

nudge someone or something **aside**† to push or bump someone or something out of the way. ☐ *We nudged the old man aside and went on ahead.* ☐ *She nudged aside the cat to make room on the sofa.*

null and void *Cliché* without legal force; having no legal effect. ☐ *The court declared the law to be null and void.* ☐ *The millionaire's will was null and void because it was unsigned.*

number in something to total up to a certain figure. ☐ *The birds numbered in the thousands.* ☐ *These pesky ants number in the hundreds. Let's move to another picnic table.*

a **number of** things or people some things or people, in an indefinite amount. ☐ *I subscribe to a number of different magazines.* ☐ *A number of people are here now.*

number off (by something**)** to say a number in a specified sequence when it is one's turn. ☐ *Please number off by tens.* ☐ *Come on, number off!*

number someone or something **among** something to include someone or something in a group of something. ☐ *I number her among my best friends.* ☐ *I number this product among the most popular developed during the past year.*

number someone **with** something to include someone in a list of people. ☐ *I number Clara Wilson with the all-time greats.* ☐ *Todd numbered himself with the top athletes at the school.*

N

nurse a grudge (against someone**)** *Fig.* to keep resenting and disliking someone over a period of time. (Usually implies that it has been an unreasonably long time.) ☐ *Sally is still nursing a grudge against Mary.* ☐ *How long can anyone nurse a grudge?*

nurse someone **back to health** to care for a sick person until good health returns. ☐ *Sally was glad to help nurse her mother back to health.* ☐ *She nursed her children back to health when they all had the flu.*

nurse someone or an animal **along**† to aid or encourage the well-being or return to health of someone or an animal. (See also **nurse** something **along**.) ☐ *She nursed the old man along for a few years until he died.* ☐ *She nursed along the invalid.* ☐ *The vet nursed the horse along for the rest of the night.* ☐ *He nursed himself along with chicken noodle soup and hot baths until the virus ran its course.*

nurse someone **through (**something**)** to care for a sick person during the worst part of a sickness or recovery. ☐ *There was no one there to nurse him through the worst part of his illness.* ☐ *It was a horrible ordeal, but John nursed her through.*

nurse something **along**† *Fig.* to manage something with care and thrift. (See also **nurse** someone or an animal **along**.) ☐ *The board of directors agreed to nurse the firm along for a while and then sell it.* ☐ *She nursed along the failing business until it was showing a profit.*

a **nut case** *Fig.* a crazy person; an irrational person. ☐ *Bob is acting stranger and stranger. He is turning into a real nut case.*

nut up *Sl.* to go crazy. (See also **crack up**.) ☐ *I knew I would nut up if I didn't quit that job.* ☐ *I almost nutted up at the last place I worked.*

nuts about someone or something Go to **crazy about** someone or something.

nuts and bolts 1. *Fig.* the mundane workings of something; the basics of something. (See also **get down to the nuts and bolts**.) ☐ *I want you to learn how to write well. You have to know the nuts and bolts of writing.* ☐ *She's got a lot of good, general ideas, but when it comes to the nuts and bolts of getting something done, she's no good.* **2.** *Sl.* the subject of psychology in college. ☐ *I took a class in nuts and bolts and didn't learn anything at all about what makes me tick.* ☐ *Tom is flunking nuts and bolts because he won't participate in the required "experiments."*

Nuts to you! *Inf.* Go away!; **Drop dead!** ☐ *Well, nuts to you! You are just plain rude!* ☐ *Nuts to you! I will NOT lend you money!*

nuttier than a fruitcake Go to next.

***nutty as a fruitcake** and **nuttier than a fruitcake** crazy. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *Don't pay any attention to John; he's nutty as a fruitcake.* ☐ *Mary's schemes for making money are nuttier than a fruitcake.*

nuzzle up against someone or something and **nuzzle up (to** someone or something**)** [for an animal] to rub its nose against someone or something; to rub against someone or something, softly, in the manner of rubbing the nose against someone or something; to snuggle up to someone or something. (*Nuzzle* is related to *nose*.) ☐ *The dog nuzzled up against my leg, wanting to be friends.* ☐ *The dog nuzzled up to me and licked my hand.*

Oo

object to someone or something to disapprove of someone or something. □ *I object to him as your choice.* □ *I object to your opinion.*

obligate someone **to** someone or something to force someone to do something for someone or something. □ *This contract obligates you to the company for five years!* □ *I don't wish to obligate myself to anyone.*

oblige someone **by** something to accommodate someone by doing something. □ *Please oblige me by closing the window.* □ *Would you oblige me by accompanying me to the dance?*

oblige someone **to** do something to require someone to do something. □ *You are obliged to arrive on time and enter by the side door.* □ *The lateness of the hour obliged Tony to enter by the back door.*

oblige someone **with** something to accommodate someone with something. □ *He obliged her with a willing attitude.* □ *Please oblige me with a big piece of cake.*

obliterate someone or something **from** something to destroy or wipe out someone or something from something. □ *Karen obliterated the writing from the wall.* □ *Max set out to obliterate Lefty "Fingers" Moran from the face of the earth.*

***obsessed with** someone or something preoccupied with someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) □ *Kathy was obsessed with the kitten.* □ *Roger was obsessed with Kathy.*

obstinate as a mule Go to stubborn as a mule.

obtain something **for** someone or something to get or receive something for someone or something. □ *I promised I would obtain a pet for Becky.* □ *I obtained a new part for the vacuum cleaner.*

occupy oneself **by** something to keep busy by doing something. □ *Don't worry. I can occupy myself by knitting or sewing.* □ *While waiting, I occupied myself by knitting a scarf.*

occupy someone **with** something to keep someone busy with something. □ *Can you occupy the child with this toy?* □ *Here, occupy yourself with this crossword puzzle.*

occur before someone's **time** Go to before someone's time.

occur to someone [for an idea or thought] to come into someone's mind. □ *It occurred to me that you might be hungry after your long journey.* □ *Would it ever occur to you that I want to be left alone?*

oceans of someone or something and an **ocean of** someone or something a very large amount of something. □ *The naughty student was in oceans of trouble.* □ *After a week of vacation, there was an ocean of work to do.*

odd man out an unusual or atypical person or thing. □ *I'm odd man out because I'm not wearing a tie.* □ *You had better learn to use the new system software unless you want to be odd man out.*

the **odd** something an extra or spare something; a chance something. □ *The tailor repaired the odd loose button on my shirt.* □ *When I travel, I might buy the odd trinket or two, but I never spend much money.*

odds and ends miscellaneous things. □ *There were lots of odds and ends in the attic, but nothing of real value.* □ *I had the whole house cleaned out except for a few odds and ends that you might want to keep.*

the **odds are against** one [for fate] to be against one generally. □ *You can give it a try, but the odds are against you.* □ *I know the odds are against me, but I wish to run in the race anyway.*

the **odds-on favorite** the most popular choice of a wager. □ *Fred is the odds-on favorite for president of the board of trustees.*

odor of sanctity *Fig.* an atmosphere of excessive holiness or piety. □ *I hate their house. There's such an odor of sanctity with Bibles and holy pictures everywhere.* □ *The huge, medieval Gothic cathedral had a distinct odor of sanctity.*

of a single mind (about someone or something**)** Go to of one mind (about someone or something).

***of age** old enough to marry, buy alcohol, or to sign legal agreements. (*Typically: **be ~; come ~**.) □ *Now that Mary is of age, she can buy her own car.* □ *When I'm of age, I'm going to get married and move to the city.*

Of all things! Can you imagine?; Imagine that! (Usually said about something very strange.) □ *She wore jeans to the dance. Of all things!* □ *Billy, stop eating the houseplant! Of all things!*

of benefit (to someone**)** serving someone well; to the good of someone. □ *I can't believe that this proposal is of benefit to anyone.* □ *Oh, I'm sure you'll find the new health plan to be of benefit.*

of course yes; certainly; for sure. □ *Sally: Are you ready to go? Bob: Of course. Sally: Then let's go.* □ *Jane: Are you coming with us? John: Of course. I wouldn't miss this for the world.* □ *"And you'll be there, of course?" asked Alice.* □ *"I would be happy to help, of course," confided Tom, a little insincerely.*

of interest (to someone**)** interesting to someone. □ *These archived files are no longer of any interest.* □ *This is of little interest to me.*

of late lately. □ *Have you seen Sally of late?* □ *We haven't had an opportunity to eat out of late.*

of mature years *Euph.* old. □ *My employer is a man of mature years.* □ *The professor, a woman of mature years, is planning to retire at the end of the school term.*

of no avail Go to to no avail.

of one mind (about someone or something**)** and **of a single mind (about** someone or something**)** in agreement

about someone or something. □ *You will have to attend one of the state universities. Your father and I are of a single mind about this.*

of one's **own accord** and **of** one's **own free will** by one's own choice, without coercion. □ *I wish that Sally would choose to do it of her own accord.* □ *I'll have to order her to do it because she won't do it of her own free will.*

of service (to someone**)** helping someone; serving someone. □ *Good morning, madam. May I be of service to you?* □ *Welcome to the Warwick Hotel. May I be of service?*

of the first water *Fig.* of the finest quality. □ *This is a very fine pearl—a pearl of the first water.* □ *Tom is of the first water—a true gentleman.*

of the old school Go to from the old school.

of the persuasion that... holding a belief that something is true or is in existence. □ *Anne is of the persuasion that supports that candidate for mayor.* □ *The paranoid was of the persuasion that aliens lived among us.*

of two minds (about someone or something**)** *Fig.* holding conflicting opinions about someone or something; being undecided about someone or something. □ *I am of two minds about whether I should go to the convention.*

off again, on again Go to on again, off again.

off and on Go to on and off.

off and running 1. *Lit.* [of horses, dogs, or people] having started racing. □ *It's a beautiful day at the races, and, yes, they're off and running!* **2.** *Fig.* started up and going. □ *The car was finally loaded by 9:30, and we were off and running.* □ *The construction of the building was going to take two years, but we were off and running, and it appeared we would finish on schedule.*

off artist Go to (rip-)off artist.

O

***off base 1.** *Lit.* [of a runner in baseball] not having a foot touching the base. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) □ *The runner was off base but the first baseman didn't tag him out.* **2.** *Fig.* unrealistic; inexact; wrong. *Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) □ *I'm afraid you're off base when you state that this problem will take care of itself.* □ *You're way off base if you think I was to blame!*

***off campus** not located or present on the grounds of a college or university. (*Typically: **be ~; live ~; move ~**.) □ *Tom has an apartment off campus.* □ *The dean is off campus and cannot be reached.*

off center not exactly in the center or middle. □ *The arrow hit the target a little off center.* □ *The picture hanging over the chair is a little off center.*

off chance slight possibility. □ *I need your phone number on the off chance I need more help.* □ *There's an off chance that we might be hiring next month.*

***off course 1.** *Lit.* not going in the right direction. (*Typically: **be ~; drift ~; get ~**.) □ *The ship is off course and may strike the reef!* **2.** *Fig.* not following the plan correctly. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) □ *The project is off course and won't be finished on time.* □ *I am off course and doing poorly.*

off duty not working at one's job. (The opposite of on duty.) □ *I'm sorry, I can't talk to you until I'm off duty.* □ *The police officer couldn't help me because he was off duty.*

off like a shot away [from a place] very quickly. □ *He finished his dinner and was off like a shot.* □ *The thief grabbed the lady's purse and was off like a shot.*

***off on a sidetrack** *Fig.* on a digression; discussing a topic that is not the main topic. (Alludes to a train waiting on a siding. *Typically: **be ~; get ~; get** someone **~**.) □ *Anne got off on a sidetrack and never returned to her topic.* □ *The ineffective committee got off on one sidetrack after another.*

off on someone or something in a rage about someone or something; on a tirade about someone or something. □ *Are you off on Sally again? Why can't you leave her alone?*

***off (on** something**) 1.** incorrect in one's planning or prediction. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) □ *I was off on my estimates a little bit.* □ *I guess I was off too much.* **2.** to have started on something, such as a task or a journey. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) □ *What time should we be off on our trip?* □ *We should be off by dawn.* □ *I'm off on my diet again.* **3.** *Sl.* to get high on some kind of drug. □ *Max likes to get off on marijuana.*

***off on the right foot (with** someone or something**)** and ***off to a good start (with** someone or something**)** *Fig.* starting out correctly; beginning something carefully and cautiously. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) □ *This time, I want to get off on the right foot with him.* □ *I tried to get off to a good start with my new job.*

***off on the wrong foot** and ***off to a bad start** *Fig.* starting something (such as a friendship) with negative factors. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) □ *Bill and Tom got off on the wrong foot. They had a minor car accident just before they were introduced.* □ *Let's work hard to be friends. I hate to get off on the wrong foot.*

***off** one's **game** *Fig.* not able to play a sport as well as normal. (*Typically: **be ~; put** one **~; throw** one **~**.) □ *I'm a little tired, and that generally puts me off my game.*

off one's **nut** Go to next.

***off** one's **rocker** and ***off** one's **nut; *off** one's **trolley** *Fig.* crazy; silly. (*Typically: **be ~; go ~**.) □ *Sometimes, Bob, I think you're off your rocker.* □ *Good grief, John. You're off your nut.*

off one's **trolley** Go to previous.

off season not in the busy time of the year. □ *We don't have much to do off season.* □ *Things are very quiet around here off season.*

off someone or something **goes** someone or something is leaving. (Said on the departure of someone or something.) □ *It's time to leave. Off I go.* □ *Sally looked at the airplane taking off and said, "Off it goes."*

off the air not broadcasting (a radio or television program). □ *The radio audience won't hear what you say when you're off the air.* □ *When the performers were off the air, the director told them how well they had done.*

off the beaten path Go to next.

***off the beaten track** and ***off the beaten path** *Fig.* away from the frequently traveled routes. (*Typically: **be ~; go ~; travel ~**.) □ *We found a nice little Italian restaurant off the beaten track.*

***off the hook** *Fig.* freed from an obligation. (Alludes to a fish freeing itself from a fishhook. *Typically: **be ~;**

get ~; get someone **~; let** someone **~**.) ☐ *Thanks for getting me off the hook. I didn't want to attend that meeting.* ☐ *I couldn't get myself off the hook no matter what I tried.*

off the mark *Fig.* not quite exactly right. ☐ *Her answer was a little off the mark.* ☐ *You were off the mark when you said we would be a little late to the party. It was yesterday, in fact!*

off the record *Fig.* unofficial; informal. (Of comments to the press that one does not want reported.) ☐ *This is off the record, but I disagree with the mayor on this matter.* ☐ *Although her comments were off the record, the newspaper published them anyway.*

off the shelf *Fig.* ready made for purchase; not custom-made. (Hyphenated when prenominal.) ☐ *I generally buy off-the-shelf clothing. I am a perfect size eight.*

off the subject not concerned with the subject being discussed. ☐ *I got off the subject and forgot what I was supposed to be talking about.* ☐ *The speaker was off the subject, telling about his vacation in Hawaii.*

off the track 1. Go to off the (beaten) track. **2.** *Fig.* [of comments] irrelevant and immaterial. ☐ *I'm afraid you're off the track, John. Try again.* ☐ *I'm sorry. I was thinking about dinner, and I got off the track.*

***off the wagon 1.** *Fig.* drinking liquor after a period of abstinence. (*Typically: **be ~; fall ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Poor John fell off the wagon again. Drunk as a skunk.* ☐ *He was off the wagon for a year the last time before he sobered up.* **2.** *Fig.* back on drugs after a period of abstinence. (*Typically: **be ~; fall ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Wilbur is off the wagon and shooting up again.* ☐ *He can't be off the wagon, because he has never stopped using, even for a day.*

off to a bad start Go to off on the wrong foot.

***off (to a flying start)** *Fig.* having a very successful beginning to something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *The new business got off to a flying start with those export orders.* ☐ *We shall need a large donation from the local citizens if the charity is to get off to a flying start.*

off to a good start (with someone or something**)** Go to off on the right foot (with someone or something).

off to a running start with a good, fast beginning, possibly a head start. ☐ *I got off to a running start in math this year.* ☐ *The horses got off to a running start.*

off to one side beside something; (moved) slightly away from something. ☐ *Our garden has roses in the middle and a spruce tree off to one side.* ☐ *He took me off to one side to tell me the bad news.*

off to the races *Fig.* an expression characterizing the activity or excitement that is just beginning; [we are] leaving for something interesting or exciting. ☐ *The tour bus is out in front waiting and we've said goodbye to everyone. Looks like we're off to the races.*

***off (to the side) with** someone moving aside with someone to discuss something. (*Typically: **get ~; go ~; move ~; step ~**.) ☐ *I got off with Charles and we discussed the contract.* ☐ *I moved off to the side with the client and explained the offer a little better.*

***off topic** not on the topic of discussion; far from the general subject of a discussion; not part of the purpose of a particular communication channel, such as an Internet newsgroup. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; get** someone **~**.) ☐ *The boys in the back of the room just love to get the teacher off topic.*

Off with you! Go away!; Get going! (Formal or pompous.) ☐ *Off with you! We've had enough of your banter!*

***off (work)** and **off from work; off of work 1.** having left one's work at the end of the day. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *What time do you get off from work?* ☐ *I get off work about five o'clock.* ☐ *She gets off from work later than I do.* **2.** absent from one's work with permission. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I think I can get off of work so I can go to the doctor.* ☐ *Sorry, I can't join you. Things are busy at the office, and I can't get off.*

offend against someone or something to anger or affront someone or something. ☐ *We do not wish to offend against anyone.* ☐ *He didn't realize that he offended against their cultural values.*

offend someone **with** something to anger or affront someone with something. ☐ *Don't offend us with your bad jokes.* ☐ *I offended Ralph with my constant niggling.*

offer a helping hand Go to a helping hand.

*****an **offer** one **cannot refuse** *Cliché* a very attractive offer. (*Typically: **give** one **~; make ~; make** one **~**.) ☐ *He made me an offer I could not refuse, so I sold him my car.*

offer something **for** something to suggest a certain amount of money as a purchase price for something. ☐ *I'll offer you ten bucks for that watch.* ☐ *They offered me very little for my car.*

offer something **to** someone **(as** something**)** to propose giving something to someone as a gift, peace offering, payment, etc. ☐ *They offered us a bunch of flowers as a peace offering.* ☐ *As an apology, I offered a gift to the hostess.*

offer something **up† (to** someone or something**)** to give something to someone or something as a mark of devotion, thanks, etc. ☐ *We offered our gratitude up to the ruler.* ☐ *We offered up our gratitude to the queen.*

officiate (as something**) (at** something**)** to serve as an official or moderator at some event. ☐ *They asked me to officiate as a judge at the contest.* ☐ *Laura will officiate as parade marshal.*

off-key [of music or singing] off pitch; out of tune. ☐ *She always sings off-key and makes the rest of the choir sound like baying hounds.*

off-kilter Go to out of kilter.

off-limits Go to out-of-bounds.

off-line not connected to a computer, by direct connection or via the telephone system, etc. (Compare this with online.) ☐ *When he's off-line he's sort of lost.* ☐ *The system was off-line all day, so we could get nothing done.*

off-the-cuff *Fig.* spontaneous; without preparation or rehearsal. ☐ *Her remarks were off-the-cuff, but very sensible.* ☐ *I'm not very good at making speeches off-the-cuff.*

off-the-wall *Fig.* odd; silly; unusual. ☐ *Why are you so off-the-wall today?* ☐ *This book is strange. It's really off-the-wall.*

O

ogle (at) someone or something to stare at someone or something, usually with amorous or erotic relish. ☐ *Don't just stand there and ogle at me!* ☐ *Stop ogling at those magazines.*

Oh, boy. 1. *Inf.* Wow! (Usually **Oh, boy!** An exclamation. It has nothing to do with boys.) ☐ *Bill: Oh, boy! An old-fashioned circus!* ☐ *"Oh, boy!" shouted John. "Dinner smells great! When do we eat?"* **2.** *Inf.* I dread this!; This is going to be awful! ☐ *"Oh, boy!" moaned Fred, as his old car stalled out, "Here we go again."* ☐ *Doctor: It looks like something fairly serious. Jane: Oh, boy. Doctor: But nothing modern medicine can't handle.*

Oh, sure (someone or something **will)!** *Inf.* a sarcastic expression claiming that someone or something will do something or that something will happen. ☐ *Andy: Don't worry. I'll do it. Rachel: Oh, sure you will. That's what you always say.* ☐ *Bob: I'll fix this fence the first chance I get. Mary: Oh, sure. When will that be? Next year?*

Oh, ye of little faith. *Fig.* You who trust no one. (Jocular; the word *ye* is an old form of *you* used in the Bible.) ☐ *You thought I wouldn't show up on time? Oh, ye of little faith.*

Oh, yeah? *Inf.* Is that what you think? (Rude and hostile.) ☐ *Tom: You're getting to be sort of a pest. Bill: Oh, yeah? Tom: Yeah.* ☐ *Bob: This sauce tastes bad. I think you ruined it. Bill: Oh, yeah? What makes you think so? Bob: My tongue tells me!*

oil someone's **palm** Go to **grease** someone's **palm.**

oink out *Sl.* to overeat. ☐ *I oink out every time we have chocolate cake.* ☐ *This Thursday starts a four-day weekend, and I plan to oink out every day.*

***old as Methuselah** very old. (Of a person; refers to a biblical figure held to have lived to be 969. *Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Old Professor Stone is as old as Methusehah but still gets around with a cane.*

O

***old as the hills** very old; ancient. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *That's not a new joke; it's as old as the hills!* ☐ *Our family custom of eating black-eyed peas on New Year's Day is old as the hills.*

old battle-axe a bossy old woman. ☐ *She is such an old battle-axe. I'll bet she's hell to live with.*

old college try a valiant effort. ☐ *Will made the old college try, but that wasn't enough to get the job done.*

old enough to be someone's **father** Go to next.

old enough to be someone's **mother** and **old enough to be** someone's **father** as old as someone's parents. (Usually a way of saying that a person is too old.) ☐ *You can't go out with Bill. He's old enough to be your father!* ☐ *He married a woman who is old enough to be his mother.*

Old habits die hard. *Prov.* People find it difficult to change their accustomed behavior. ☐ *Joan retired last year, but she still gets up as early as she used to when she had to go to work. Old habits die hard.*

an **old hand at** doing something someone who is experienced at doing something. ☐ *The maid was an old hand at polishing silver.* ☐ *Bob is an old hand at training dogs.*

old hat *Fig.* old-fashioned; outmoded. ☐ *That's a silly idea. It's old hat.* ☐ *Hardly anybody uses typewriters anymore. That's just old hat.*

*the **(old) heave-ho** the act of throwing someone out; the act of firing someone. (From nautical use, where sailors used *heave-ho* to coordinate hard physical labor. One sailor called "Heave-ho," and all the sailors would pull at the same time on the *ho*. *Typically: **get ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I wanted to complain to the management, but they called a security guard and I got the old heave-ho. That's right. They threw me out!* ☐ *They fired a number of people today, but I didn't get the heave-ho.*

the **old one-two** a series of two punches delivered quickly, one after another. ☐ *Tom gave Bill the old one-two, and the argument was ended right there.* ☐ *Watch out for Tom. He's a master of the old one-two.*

An **old poacher makes the best gamekeeper.** *Prov.* The best person to guard something is someone who knows all about how to steal it, so he or she can anticipate what thieves might do. ☐ *We should hire the computer hacker to design computer security systems. An old poacher makes the best gamekeeper.*

*an **old warhorse** a performance piece that is performed often. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~; perform ~; play ~**.) ☐ *The symphony orchestra played a few old warhorses and then some ghastly contemporary stuff that will never again see the light of day.*

an **old wives' tale** *Fig.* a myth or superstition. ☐ *You really don't believe that stuff about starving a cold do you? It's just an old wives' tale.*

omit someone or something **from** something to leave someone or something out of something. ☐ *You omitted Carol from the list.* ☐ *I think that you omitted our company from the bidding.* ☐ *She omitted herself from the list of participants.*

***on a diet** trying to lose weight by eating less food or specific foods. (*Typically: **be ~; go ~; put** someone **~; stay ~**.) ☐ *I didn't eat any cake because I'm on a diet.* ☐ *I'm getting too heavy. I'll have to go on a diet.* ☐ *I have a lot of trouble staying on a diet.*

***on a first-name basis (with** someone**)** knowing someone very well; good friends with someone. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I'm on a first-name basis with John.* ☐ *John and I are on a first-name basis.*

***on a fool's errand** *Fig.* involved in a useless journey or task. (*Typically: **be ~; go ~**.) ☐ *Bill went for an interview, but he was on a fool's errand. The job had already been filled.* ☐ *I was sent on a fool's errand to buy some flowers. I knew the shop would be closed by then.*

on a lark Go to **for a lark.**

on a moment's notice Go to **at a moment's notice.**

***on a pedestal** *Fig.* elevated to a position of honor or reverence. (Alludes to honoring someone on display on a pedestal like a statue. *Typically: **place** someone **~; put** someone **~**.) ☐ *He puts his wife on a pedestal. She can do no wrong in his opinion.* ☐ *I was just doing my job. There is no point in placing me on a pedestal!*

***on a power trip** exercising power and authority, especially unduly. (*Typically: **be ~; be off ~; go ~; have ~**.) ☐ *Old Molly is off on a power trip again. She loves ordering everyone about.*

on a roll in the midst of a series of successes. ☐ *Don't stop me now. I'm on a roll.* ☐ *Things are going great for Larry. He's on a roll now.*

on a shoestring *Fig.* with a very small amount of money. ☐ *We lived on a shoestring for years before I got a good-paying job.* ☐ *John traveled to Florida on a shoestring.*

***on a silver platter** *Fig.* using a presentation [of something] that is appropriate for a very formal setting. (*Typically: **give** something **to** someone **~; present** something **~; serve** something **~; want** something **~**.) ☐ *Aren't paper plates good enough for you? You want dinner maybe on a silver platter?*

***on a string** *Fig.* under control, as one would control a marionette. (*Typically: **get** someone **~; have** someone **~; keep** someone **~**.) ☐ *She keeps him on a string so he won't get involved with other women.*

on a tight leash 1. *Lit.* [of an animal] on a leash, held tightly and close to its owner. ☐ *I keep my dog on a tight leash so it won't bother people.* **2.** *Fig.* under very careful control. ☐ *My father keeps my brother on a tight leash.* ☐ *We can't do much around here. The boss has us all on a tight leash.* **3.** *Sl.* addicted to some drug. ☐ *Wilbur is on a tight leash. He has to have the stuff regularly.* ☐ *Gert is kept on a tight leash by her habit.*

***on a wing and a prayer** *Fig.* to arrive or fly in with one's plane in very bad condition. (Sometimes used fig. of other vehicles. *Typically: **come (in) ~; arrive ~**.) ☐ *Finally we could see the plane through the smoke, coming in on a wing and a prayer.*

on account [money paid or owed] on a debt. ☐ *I paid twelve dollars on account last month. Wasn't that enough?* ☐ *I still have $100 due on account.*

on active duty in battle or ready to go into battle. (Military.) ☐ *The soldier was on active duty for ten months.* ☐ *That was a long time to be on active duty.*

on advance notice Go to with advance notice.

on again, off again and **off again, on again** uncertain; indecisive. ☐ *I don't know about the picnic. It's on again, off again. It depends on the weather.* ☐ *Jane doesn't know if she's going to look for a new job. She's off again, on again about it.*

on all fours on one's hands and knees. ☐ *I dropped a contact lens and spent an hour on all fours looking for it.* ☐ *The baby can walk, but is on all fours most of the time anyway.*

on and off and **off and on** occasionally; erratically; now and again. ☐ *I feel better off and on, but I'm not well yet.* ☐ *He only came to class on and off.*

on any account for any purpose; for any reason; no matter what. ☐ *On any account, I'll be there on time.* ☐ *This doesn't make sense on any account.*

on approval for examination, with the privilege of return. ☐ *I ordered the merchandise on approval so I could send it back if I didn't like it.* ☐ *Sorry, you can't buy this on approval. All sales are final.*

on average Go to on the average.

on behalf of someone Go to in behalf of someone.

on bended knee kneeling, as in supplication. (The verb form is obsolescent and occurs now only in this phrase.) ☐ *Do you expect me to come to you on bended knee and ask you for forgiveness?* ☐ *The suitors came on bended knee and begged the attention of the princess.*

on board 1. *Lit.* aboard (on or in) a ship, bus, airplane, etc. ☐ *Is there a doctor on board? We have a sick passenger.* ☐ *When everyone is on board, we will leave.* **2.** *Fig.* employed by someone; working with someone. ☐ *Our company has a computer specialist on board to advise us about the latest technology.* ☐ *Welcome to the company, Tom. We're all glad you're on board now.*

on Broadway *Fig.* located in the Broadway theater district in New York City; performed in the Broadway theater district. (Regarded as having the best of American stage productions.) ☐ *Our musical is the best thing on Broadway!* ☐ *I want to be a star on Broadway someday.*

on call ready to serve when called. ☐ *I live a very hard life. I'm on call twenty hours a day.* ☐ *I'm sorry, but I can't go out tonight. I'm on call at the hospital.*

on campus located or being on the grounds of a college or university. ☐ *Do you live on campus or off campus?* ☐ *I don't think that Lisa is on campus right now.*

on cloud nine *Fig.* very happy. ☐ *When I got my promotion, I was on cloud nine.* ☐ *When the check came, I was on cloud nine for days.*

on consignment [of goods] having been placed in a store for sale, with payments made for the goods by the operator of the store only if they are sold. ☐ *The artist placed his work in a gallery on consignment.* ☐ *I will attempt to sell your clothing on consignment.*

***on course 1.** *Lit.* going in the right direction or on the right route. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; stay ~**.) ☐ *We are on course and should arrive at our port about noon.* **2.** *Fig.* following the plan correctly. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; stay ~**.) ☐ *Is the project on course?* ☐ *Nothing I am doing is exactly on course right now.*

on credit using credit; buying something using credit. ☐ *I tried to buy a new suit on credit, but I was refused.* ☐ *The Smiths buy everything on credit and are very much in debt.*

on dangerous ground Go to on shaky ground.

on dead center 1. *Lit.* at the exact center of something. ☐ *The arrow hit the target on dead center.* ☐ *When you put the flowers on the table, put them on dead center.* **2.** *Fig.* exactly correct. ☐ *Mary is quite observant. Her analysis is on dead center.* ☐ *My estimate wasn't on dead center, but it was very close to the final cost.*

on deck 1. *Lit.* on the deck of a boat or a ship. ☐ *Everyone except the cook was on deck when the storm hit.* ☐ *Just pull up the anchor and leave it on deck.* **2.** *Fig.* ready (to do something); ready to be next (at something). ☐ *Ann, get on deck. You're next.* ☐ *Who's on deck now?*

on duty at work; currently doing one's work. (The opposite of off duty.) ☐ *I can't help you now, but I'll be on duty in about an hour.* ☐ *Who is on duty here? I need some help.*

on earth and **in creation; in the world** *Fig.* really; indeed; in fact. (Used as an intensifier after *who, what, when, where, how*.) ☐ *What on earth do you mean?* ☐ *How in creation do you expect me to do that?* ☐ *Who in the world do you think you are?*

O

on easy street *Fig.* in a state of financial independence and comfort. ☐ *I want to live on easy street when I grow up.* ☐ *When I get this contract signed, I'll be on easy street.*

on edge 1. *Lit.* on something's own edge. ☐ *Can you stand a dime on edge?* ☐ *You should store these crates on edge, not lying flat.* **2.** *Fig.* nervous. (As if one were balanced as in ①. See also on the edge.) ☐ *I have really been on edge lately.* ☐ *Why are you so on edge?*

on fire 1. *Lit.* burning; being burned with flames. ☐ *Help! My car is on fire!* ☐ *That house on the corner is on fire!* **2.** *Sl.* very attractive or sexy. ☐ *She is really on fire!* ☐ *Look at those jet-set people! Each one of them is just on fire.* **3.** *Fig. Inf.* doing very well; very enthusiastic. ☐ *Jill's new book is really on fire. Everyone is buying it.* ☐ *Fred is on fire in his new job. He'll get promoted in no time.*

on foot [running or walking] using the feet. ☐ *My car won't work so I have to travel on foot.* ☐ *We go everywhere around the campus on foot.*

on good terms (with someone**)** friendly with someone; able to interact well and be friends with someone. ☐ *Bill is on good terms with the people he works with.* ☐ *We are not on very good terms and don't speak to each other much.*

on hold 1. *Lit.* waiting; temporarily halted. ☐ *The building project is on hold while we try to find money to complete it.* ☐ *We put our wedding plans on hold until we finished school.* **2.** *Fig.* left waiting on a telephone line. ☐ *I hate to call up someone and then end up on hold.* ☐ *I waited on hold for ten minutes when I called city hall.*

on horseback on the back of a horse. ☐ *Anne rode on horseback across the field.* ☐ *Because they loved horses, the couple decided to marry on horseback.*

on ice 1. *Lit.* stored or preserved on ice or under refrigeration. ☐ *I have a lot of root beer on ice for the picnic.* ☐ *All the soft drinks are on ice.* **2.** *Fig.* [action on someone or something] suspended or left hanging. ☐ *I was on ice for over a month while the matter was being debated.* ☐ *This matter should be on ice for a while.*

O

on impulse after having had an impulse or sudden thought. ☐ *On impulse, Bob decided to buy a car.* ☐ *I didn't need a cellular telephone. I just bought it on impulse.*

on in years Go to up in years.

***on its feet** *Fig.* organized and functioning; started up and functioning. (*Typically: **get** something **~; have** something **~; put** something **~**.) ☐ *Trying to get this company on its feet is harder than I thought.* ☐ *What will it take to put this company on its feet again?*

on land on the ground; on the land and not at sea or in the air. ☐ *The flight was rough and I feel better now that I am back on land.* ☐ *When I am at sea, I feel more relaxed than when I am on land.*

on loan (from someone or something**)** [of possession] temporarily granted by someone or some group. ☐ *This lovely painting is on loan from the Kimble Museum for the rest of the year.*

on location [of a movie] being filmed in a place distant from the studio. ☐ *This movie was shot on location in Ontario.* ☐ *The actress went on location in Spain for her latest film.*

on medication taking medicine for a current medical problem. ☐ *I can't drive the car since I am on medication.* ☐ *He is on medication and hopes to be well soon.*

on moral grounds considering reasons of morality. ☐ *He complained about the television program on moral gounds. There was too much ridicule of his religion.*

on no account and **not on any account** for no reason; absolutely not. ☐ *On no account will I lend you the money.* ☐ *Will I say I'm sorry? Not on any account.*

on occasion occasionally. ☐ *I like to go to the movies on occasion.* ☐ *On occasion, Mary would walk her dog through the park.*

on one's **best behavior** being as polite as possible. ☐ *When we went out, the children were on their best behavior.* ☐ *I try to be on my best behavior all the time.*

on one's **deathbed** while one is in bed and dying. ☐ *While he lay on his deathbed, he told his lawyer that he wanted to give all his money to charity.*

on one's **feet 1.** *Lit.* standing up. ☐ *Get on your feet. They are playing the national anthem.* ☐ *I've been on my feet all day, and they hurt.* **2.** *Fig.* well and healthy, especially after an illness. ☐ *I hope to be back on my feet next week.* ☐ *I can help out as soon as I'm back on my feet.*

***on (**one's**) guard (against** someone or something**)** alert against someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; keep ~; remain ~; stay ~**.) ☐ *Try to stay on guard against pickpockets.* ☐ *I am always on my guard.* ☐ *Be on guard when you go into the city.*

on one's **high horse** *Fig.* in a haughty manner or mood. ☐ *Larry is on his high horse again, bossing people around.* ☐ *The boss is on her high horse about the cost of office supplies.*

on one's **honor** *Fig.* on one's solemn oath; sincerely. ☐ *On my honor, I'll be there on time.* ☐ *He promised on his honor that he'd pay me back next week.*

on one's **mind** *Fig.* occupying one's thoughts; currently being thought about. ☐ *You've been on my mind all day.* ☐ *Do you have something on your mind? You look so serious.*

on one's **own** independently. ☐ *Our baby can now walk on his own.* ☐ *I have lived on my own since I was 18.*

on one's **own hook** all by oneself. ☐ *I don't need any help. I can do it on my own hook.* ☐ *She did it on her own hook without having to call on anyone.*

on one's **own time** not while one is at work. ☐ *The boss made me write the report on my own time. That's not fair.* ☐ *Please make your personal telephone calls on your own time.*

on one's **person** [of something] carried with one. ☐ *Always carry identification on your person.* ☐ *I'm sorry, I don't have any money on my person.*

***on** one's **toes** *Fig.* alert. (*Typically: **be ~; keep ~; keep** one **~; stay ~**.) ☐ *You have to be on your toes if you want to be in this business.* ☐ *I have to stay on my toes to keep from getting fired.*

***on** one's **way ((to)** some place**)** leaving one place for another; en route to a place. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I have to leave. I am on my way to the bank.* ☐ *I will be there soon. I'm on my way now.*

on one's **way (to** something or some place**)** Go to **on the way (to** something **or** some place**)**.

on order ordered with delivery expected. ☐ *Your car is on order. It'll be here in a few weeks.* ☐ *I don't have the part in stock, but it's on order.*

on par (with someone or something**)** equal to someone or something. ☐ *Your effort is simply not on par with what's expected from you.* ☐ *These two departments are right on par in productivity.*

on pins and needles *Fig.* anxious; in suspense. ☐ *I've been on pins and needles all day, waiting for you to call with the news.* ☐ *We were on pins and needles until we heard that your plane had landed safely.*

on probation 1. *Lit.* serving a period of probation, typically after conviction for a crime. ☐ *While Anne was on probation, she reported to the police regularly.* ☐ *John was on probation for a year.* **2.** *Fig.* serving a trial period. ☐ *All new members are on probation for a year.* ☐ *I was on probation in my job for a full year before it became permanent.*

on purpose intentionally; in a way that is meant or intended; not an accident. ☐ *The bully stepped on my foot on purpose.* ☐ *Jealously, Jimmy destroyed Billy's sand castle on purpose.*

on record and **on the books** recorded for future reference. ☐ *We had the coldest winter on record last year.* ☐ *This is the fastest race on record.*

on sale available for sale at a reduced price. (Always implies lower than usual sale price.) ☐ *These pots are on sale for $20.* ☐ *I bought these pants on sale for half price.*

on schedule at the expected or desired time. ☐ *The plane came in right on schedule.* ☐ *Things have to happen on schedule in a theatrical performance.*

on second thought *Fig.* having given something more thought; having reconsidered something. ☐ *On second thought, maybe you should sell your house and move into an apartment.* ☐ *On second thought, let's not go to a movie.*

on shaky ground and **on dangerous ground** *Fig.* [of an idea or proposal] on an unstable or questionable foundation; [of an idea or proposal] founded on a risky premise. ☐ *When you suggest that we are to blame, you are on shaky ground. There is no evidence that we are at fault.* ☐ *The case for relying solely on nuclear energy seems to be on dangerous ground.*

on short notice quickly and without a timely notification of other people; with very little lead time. ☐ *She called the meeting on such short notice that we had no time to prepare.*

***on** someone or something [incriminating or harmful information] about someone or something. (*Typically: **get** something **~; have** something **~; give** someone something **~**.) ☐ *I've gotten something on Albert that would really shock you.* ☐ *She is trying to get something on her husband so she can divorce him.*

on someone's **account** because of someone. ☐ *Don't do it on my account.* ☐ *They were late on Jane's account.*

on someone's **back** Go to **on** someone's **case**.

on someone's **behalf** Go to **in behalf of** someone.

***on** someone's **case** and ***on** someone's **back** *Inf.* harassing someone about a personal problem; annoying someone. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; keep ~**.) ☐ *I'll get on Tom's case about being late so much.* ☐ *I'm sorry, I won't get on your case anymore.*

on someone's **doorstep** Go to **at** someone's **doorstep**.

on someone's **good side** Go to **on the good side of** someone.

on someone's **head** *Fig.* [for something negative] belonging only to one person or group. ☐ *All the blame fell on their heads.* ☐ *I don't think that all the criticism should be on my head.*

***on** someone's **heels** *Fig.* following someone very closely; following very closely at someone's heels. (*Typically: **hard ~; hot ~; right ~**. See also **on** someone's **tail**.) ☐ *I ran as fast as I could, but the dog was still hard on my heels.* ☐ *Here comes Sally, and John is hot on her heels.*

***on** someone's **nerves** *Fig.* annoying someone. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Our noisy neighbors are beginning to get on my nerves.* ☐ *That radio is getting on my nerves.*

on someone's or something's **last legs** *Fig.* for someone or something to be almost worn out or finished. ☐ *This building is on its last legs. It should be torn down.* ☐ *I feel as if I'm on my last legs. I'm really tired.*

on someone's **say-so** on someone's authority; with someone's permission. ☐ *I can't do it on your say-so. I'll have to get a written request.* ☐ *Bill: I canceled the contract with the A.B.C. Company. Bob: On whose say-so?*

***on** someone's **shoulders** *Fig.* on someone's own self. (*Typically: **be ~; carry** something **~; fall ~; have** something **~; leave** something **~; put** something **~**.) ☐ *Why should all the responsibility fall on my shoulders?* ☐ *She carries a tremendous amount of responsibility on her shoulders.*

O

on someone's **tail** *Inf. Fig.* following someone closely. (See also **on** someone's **heels**.) ☐ *There is a huge truck on my tail. What should I do?* ☐ *Keep on her tail and don't let her out of your sight.*

on someone's **watch** while someone is on duty; while someone is supposed to be in charge of a situation. ☐ *I am not responsible since it didn't happen on my watch.* ☐ *I guess I have to bear the blame since it happened on my watch.*

on someone's **wrong side** Go to **on the wrong side of** someone.

on something **1.** taking a medication. ☐ *I am on an antibiotic for my chest cold.* ☐ *I want you to be on this drug for another week.* **2.** taking an illegal drug or controlled substance and acting strangely. ☐ *What is the matter with that kid? Is he on something?* ☐ *She acted as if she were on barbiturates or something.*

on speaking terms (with someone**)** on friendly terms with someone. (Often with the negative.) ☐ *I'm not on speaking terms with Mary. We had a serious disagreement.* ☐ *We're not on speaking terms.*

on spec 1. using money risked in the hope of profit; on speculation. ☐ *He lives by buying and selling houses on spec.* ☐ *I think it might be an idea to build a few yachts on spec just now.* **2.** as specified; right on specifications. ☐ *This*

has been built exactly on spec—just as you asked. ☐ *It's important to make sure the design is on spec or the customer will not pay.*

on standby waiting for one's turn, especially describing the status of travelers who wait at a soon-to-depart train, plane, or bus, hoping that a seat will become available. ☐ *The passenger waited on standby for an available seat.* ☐ *The agent was able to seat all of the passengers on standby.*

on tap 1. *Lit.* having to do with beer served from a barrel or keg. ☐ *Do you have any imported beers on tap here?* ☐ *I like beer on tap. The canned stuff tastes funny to me.* **2.** *Fig.* immediately available. ☐ *I have just the kind of person you're talking about on tap.* ☐ *The cook has any kind of food you might want on tap.*

on target on schedule; exactly as predicted. ☐ *Your estimate of the cost was right on target.* ☐ *My prediction was not on target.*

on the air broadcasting (a radio or television program). ☐ *The radio station came back on the air shortly after the storm.* ☐ *We were on the air for two hours.*

on the alert (for someone or something**)** watchful and attentive for someone or something. ☐ *Be on the alert for pickpockets.* ☐ *You should be on the alert when you cross the street in heavy traffic.*

on the average and **on average** generally; usually. ☐ *On the average, you can expect about a 10 percent failure rate.* ☐ *This report looks OK, on average.*

***on the back burner** *Fig.* [of something] on hold or suspended temporarily. (Alludes to putting a pot that needs less active attention on a back burner of a stove, leaving space for pots that need to be stirred. Compare this with on the front burner. *Typically: **be ~; put** something **~**.) ☐ *The building project is on the back burner for now.* ☐ *This matter was on the back burner for a long time.*

on the ball *Inf.* knowledgeable; competent; attentive. (See also have something on the ball.) ☐ *This guy is really on the ball.* ☐ *If you were on the ball, this wouldn't have happened.*

***on the bandwagon** *Fig.* on the popular side (of an issue); taking a popular position. (*Typically: **be ~; climb ~; get ~; hop ~; jump ~**.) ☐ *You really should get on the bandwagon. Everyone else is.* ☐ *Jane has always had her own ideas about things. She's not the kind of person to jump on the bandwagon.*

on the beam *Fig.* exactly right; thinking along the correct lines. ☐ *That's the right idea. Now you're on the beam!* ☐ *She's not on the beam yet. Explain it to her again.*

on the bench 1. [of a judge] directing a session of court. ☐ *I have to go to court tomorrow. Who's on the bench?* ☐ *It doesn't matter who's on the bench. You'll get a fair hearing.* **2.** sitting, waiting for a chance to play in a game. (In sports, such as basketball, football, soccer, etc.) ☐ *Bill is on the bench now. I hope he gets to play.* ☐ *John played during the first quarter, but now he's on the bench.*

on the bias on a diagonal line; on a diagonal pathway or direction. ☐ *The panels of the dress were cut on the bias.* ☐ *The seamstress sewed the fabric on the bias.*

on the bird available on satellite television. ☐ *There is a whole lot of good stuff on the bird, but you need a receiving dish to get it.* ☐ *I get a huge book every month listing what programs are on the bird.*

on the bleeding edge and **on the leading edge** having the most advanced technology; knowing about the most advanced technology. (Alludes to the *cutting edge* of a sword.) ☐ *This gadget is brand new. It's really on the bleeding edge.* ☐ *Tom is on the leading edge when it comes to optical storage technology.*

on the blink Go to on the fritz.

on the block 1. *Lit.* on a city or suburban block. ☐ *John is the biggest kid on the block.* ☐ *We had a party on the block last weekend.* **2.** on sale at auction; on the auction block. ☐ *We couldn't afford to keep up the house, so it was put on the block to pay the taxes.* ☐ *That's the finest painting I've ever seen on the block.*

on the books Go to on record.

on the borderline in an uncertain position between two statuses; undecided. ☐ *Bill was on the borderline between an A and a B in biology.* ☐ *Jane was on the borderline of joining the navy.*

on the bottom rung (of the ladder) Go to at the bottom of the ladder.

on the bright side *Fig.* [ignoring the bad for a moment] considering the positive aspects of a situation. (See also look on the bright side.) ☐ *On the bright side, the car you wrecked was covered by insurance.*

on the brink (of doing something**)** *Fig.* on the verge of doing something; almost to the point of doing something. ☐ *I was on the brink of selling my car to make ends meet when the tax refund came in the mail.*

on the button exactly right; in exactly the right place; at exactly the right time. ☐ *That's it! You're right on the button.* ☐ *He got here at one o'clock on the button.*

on the contrary Go to to the contrary.

on the cusp (of something**)** *Fig.* at the point in time that marks the beginning of something. ☐ *The transistor was on the cusp of a new age in electronics.*

on the cutting edge *Fig.* [for someone] to be trendy and very up-to-date; [for something] to be of the latest design. (Akin to on the bleeding edge.) ☐ *This technology is right on the cutting edge. It's so new, it's not available to the public yet.*

on the defensive weary and ready to defend oneself. ☐ *John goes on the defensive when his athletic ability is questioned.* ☐ *The child was on the defensive when questioned about cheating.*

on the dole receiving welfare money. ☐ *I spent six months on the dole, and believe me, it's no picnic.*

***on the dot** *Fig.* at exactly the right time. (*Typically: **be** somewhere **~; arrive (**somewhere**) ~; get** somewhere **~; see** someone **~; show up ~**.) ☐ *I'll be there at noon on the dot.* ☐ *I expect to see you here at eight o'clock on the dot.*

on the double very fast; twice as fast as normal. (Originally military. Alludes to "double time" in marching.) ☐ *Get over here right now—on the double!* ☐ *She wants to see you in her office on the double.*

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***on the edge** *Fig.* very anxious and about to become distraught; on the verge of becoming irrational. (*Typically: **be ~; live ~**. See also **on edge**.) ☐ *After the horrible events of the last week, we are all on the edge.*

on the edge of one's **seat** *Fig.* [of a member of an audience] closely following the action and excitement of a performance. ☐ *We sat on the edge of our seats during the entire play.*

on the eve of something *Fig.* just before something, possibly the evening before something. ☐ *John decided to leave school on the eve of his graduation.* ☐ *The team held a party on the eve of the tournament.*

on the face of it *Fig.* superficially; from the way it looks. ☐ *This looks like a serious problem on the face of it. It probably is minor, however.* ☐ *On the face of it, it seems worthless.*

on the fast track *Fig.* following an expedited procedure; being acted upon sooner or more quickly than is typical. ☐ *Let's put this project on the fast track and maybe we'll see results sooner.*

***on the fence (about** something**)** *Fig.* undecided about something. (*Typically: **be ~; sit ~**.) ☐ *Ann is on the fence about going to Mexico.* ☐ *I wouldn't be on the fence. I'd love to go.*

on the fly [done] while something or someone is operating or moving. ☐ *I'll try to capture the data on the fly.* ☐ *Please try to buy some aspirin somewhere on the fly today.*

on the fringe 1. *Lit.* at the outer boundary or edge of something. ☐ *He doesn't live in the city, just on the fringe.* **2.** *Fig.* at the extremes of something, typically political thought. ☐ *He is way out. His political ideas are really on the fringe.*

on the fritz and **on the blink** not operating; not operating correctly. ☐ *This vacuum cleaner is on the fritz. Let's get it fixed.* ☐ *How long has it been on the blink?*

***on the front burner** *Fig.* receiving particular attention or consideration. (Compare this with **on the back burner**. *Typically: **be ~; put** something **~**.) ☐ *So, what's on the front burner for us this week?* ☐ *Move this project to the front burner so it will get some attention.*

on the go busy; moving about busily. ☐ *I'm usually on the go all day long.* ☐ *I hate being on the go all the time.*

***on the good side of** someone and ***on** someone's **good side** *Fig.* in someone's favor. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I tried to get on the good side of the teacher, but that teacher has no good side.* ☐ *First of all, don't try to get on the boss's good side.*

on the heels of something *Fig.* soon after something. ☐ *There was a rainstorm on the heels of the windstorm.* ☐ *The team held a victory celebration on the heels of their winning season.*

on the horizon 1. *Lit.* appearing at the boundary between the earth and the sky. ☐ *There is a storm on the horizon.* **2.** *Fig.* soon to happen. ☐ *Do you know what's on the horizon?* ☐ *There is some excitement on the horizon, but I can't tell you about it.*

on the horns of a dilemma *Fig.* having to decide between two things, people, etc. ☐ *Mary found herself on the horns of a dilemma. She didn't know which to choose.* ☐ *I make up my mind easily. I'm not on the horns of a dilemma very often.*

on the hot seat and **in the hot seat** *Fig.* in a difficult position; subject to much attention or criticism. ☐ *I was really in the hot seat for a while.* ☐ *Now that John is on the hot seat, no one is paying any attention to what I do.*

on the hour at each hour on the hour mark. ☐ *I have to take this medicine every hour on the hour.* ☐ *I expect to see you there on the hour, not one minute before and not one minute after.*

on the house [of something] given away free by a merchant. ☐ *"Here," said the waiter, "have a cup of coffee on the house."* ☐ *I went to a restaurant last night. I was the ten thousandth customer, so my dinner was on the house.*

on the job working; doing what one is expected to do. ☐ *I'm always on the job when I should be.* ☐ *I can depend on my furnace to be on the job day and night.*

on the lam running from the police. (Underworld.) ☐ *Richard has been on the lam for a week now.* ☐ *The gang leader broke out of prison and is still on the lam.*

on the leading edge Go to **on the bleeding edge**.

on the level honest; straightforward. ☐ *Come on now, on the level, tell me the truth.* ☐ *Is the ad on the level?*

on the lookout (for someone or something**)** watchful for someone or something. ☐ *Be on the lookout for signs of a storm.* ☐ *I'm on the lookout for John, who is due here any minute.*

on the loose running around free. ☐ *Look out! There is a bear on the loose from the zoo.* ☐ *Most kids enjoy being on the loose when they go to college.*

on the make 1. building or developing; being made. ☐ *There is a company that is on the make.* ☐ *That was a very good sales strategy, John. You're a real-estate agent on the make.* **2.** making sexual advances; seeking sexual activities. ☐ *It seems like Bill is always on the make.* ☐ *He should meet Sally, who is also on the make.*

on the mark *Fig.* right on the measurement point; showing just the right anount. ☐ *It's exactly one quart, right on the mark.*

***on the market** openly available for sale. (*Typically: **be ~; get** something **~; put** something **~**.) ☐ *We put our house on the market last year and it still hasn't sold.*

on the mend getting better; becoming healthy again. ☐ *I cared for my father while he was on the mend.* ☐ *I took a leave of absence from work while I was on the mend.*

on the money and **on the nose** exactly right; in exactly the right place; in exactly the right amount (of money). ☐ *That's a good answer, Bob. You're right on the money.* ☐ *This project is going to be finished right on the nose.*

on the move 1. moving from place to place. ☐ *Are the cattle on the move now, or are they still grazing?* **2.** progressing; advancing. ☐ *Finally the market has turned around now and is really on the move.* ☐ *At last, we are on the move!*

on the nose Go to **on the money**.

on the off chance because of a slight possibility that something may happen or might be the case; just in case. ☐ *I went to the theater on the off chance that there were*

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tickets for the show left. ☐ *We didn't think we would get into the football game, but we went on the off chance.*

on (the) one hand *Fig.* from one point of view; as one side (of an issue). ☐ *On one hand, I really ought to support my team. On the other hand, I don't have the time to attend all the games.* ☐ *On the one hand, I really could use Ann's help. On the other hand, she and I don't get along very well.*

on the other hand *Fig.* a phrase introducing an alternate view. ☐ *John: I'm ready to go; on the other hand, I'm perfectly comfortable here. Sally: I'll let you know when I'm ready, then.* ☐ *Mary: I like this one. On the other hand, this is nice too. Sue: Why not get both?*

on the outs (with someone**)** *Inf.* in a mild dispute with someone; sharing ill will with someone. ☐ *Tom and Bill are on the outs again.* ☐ *Tom has been on the outs with Bill before. They'll work it out.*

on the phone Go to **on the telephone.**

on the pill taking birth control pills. ☐ *Is it true that Mary is on the pill?* ☐ *She was on the pill, but she isn't now.*

on the point of doing something and **at the point of** doing something *Fig.* ready to start doing something. ☐ *I was just on the point of going out the door.* ☐ *We were almost at the point of buying a new car.*

on the prowl looking for someone for sexual purposes. (Alludes to a prowling cat.) ☐ *Tom looks like he is on the prowl again tonight.* ☐ *That whole gang of boys is on the prowl. Watch out.*

on the QT quietly; secretly. (An abbreviation of *quiet.*) ☐ *The company president was making payments to his wife on the QT.* ☐ *The mayor accepted a bribe on the QT.*

on the rag 1. *Sl.* menstruating. (Potentially offensive. Use with caution.) ☐ *Kim's on the rag and in a bad mood.* ☐ *Sue doesn't go swimming when she's on the rag.* **2.** *Sl.* ill-tempered. ☐ *Bill is on the rag and making trouble for everyone.* ☐ *Wow, Bob, you are on the rag. What's eating you?*

on the right track 1. *Lit.* following the right track or trail; riding on the correct track, as with a train. ☐ *The train was on the right track when it left the station. I can't imagine how it got lost.* **2.** *Fig.* following the right set of assumptions. ☐ *Tom is on the right track and will solve the mystery soon.* ☐ *You are on the right track to find the answer.*

on the rise *Fig.* increasing in frequency or intensity. ☐ *The number of auto thefts in Cook County is on the rise again.*

on the road *Fig.* traveling from place to place, not necessarily on the highways; working away from one's home or office. ☐ *I was on the road with the circus for six months.* ☐ *I don't work in the main office anymore. Now I'm on the road.*

on the road to recovery *Cliché* recovering; getting better; improving. ☐ *It's been two weeks since her surgery, and she is on the road to recovery.*

on the rocks 1. *Lit.* [of a ship] broken and marooned on rocks in the sea. ☐ *The ship crashed and was on the rocks until the next high tide.* **2.** *Fig.* [of an alcoholic drink] served with ice cubes. ☐ *I'd like mine on the rocks, please.* ☐ *Give me a scotch on the rocks, please.* **3.** *Fig.* in a state of ruin or bankruptcy. ☐ *That bank is on the rocks. Don't put your money in it.* ☐ *My finances are on the rocks just now.*

on the run 1. *Fig.* while one is moving from place to place. ☐ *I will try to pick up some aspirin today on the run.* ☐ *I will think about it on the run.* **2.** *Fig.* running from the police. ☐ *Richard is on the run from the cops.* ☐ *The gang of crooks is on the run.*

on the safe side *Fig.* taking the risk-free path. ☐ *Let's be on the safe side and call first.* ☐ *I think you should stay on the safe side and call the doctor about this fever.*

on the same wavelength *Fig.* thinking in the same pattern. ☐ *We're not on the same wavelength. Let's try again.* ☐ *We kept talking until we got on the same wavelength.*

on the sauce drinking regularly; intoxicated. ☐ *Poor old Ron is on the sauce again.* ☐ *He is on the sauce most of the time.*

on the scene *Fig.* available or present where something is happening or where something has happened. ☐ *The ambulance was on the scene almost immediately.* ☐ *I wasn't on the scene when it happened.*

on the shelf 1. *Fig.* not active socially; left to oneself in social matters. (Alludes to being left or stored on a shelf.) ☐ *I've been on the shelf long enough. I'm going to make some friends.* ☐ *She likes being on the shelf.* **2.** *Fig.* postponed. ☐ *We'll have to put this matter on the shelf for a while.* ☐ *I have a plan on the shelf just waiting for an opportunity like this.*

on the side 1. *Lit.* extra, such as with a job or an additional order of food. ☐ *I would like an order of eggs with toast on the side, please.* ☐ *She is a bank teller and works as a waitress on the side.* **2.** *Fig.* in addition to one's spouse. ☐ *He is married, but also has a woman on the side.* ☐ *She has boyfriends on the side, but her husband knows about them.*

on the skids *Sl.* on the decline. ☐ *My newly started business is on the skids.* ☐ *Her health is really on the skids, but she stays cheery anyway.*

on the sly *Fig.* secretly and deceptively. ☐ *She was stealing little bits of money on the sly.* ☐ *Martin was having an affair with the maid on the sly.*

on the spot 1. *Lit.* at exactly the right place; at exactly the right time. ☐ *It's noon, and I'm glad you're all here on the spot. Now we can begin.* ☐ *I expect you to be on the spot when and where trouble arises.* **2.** *Fig.* in trouble; in a difficult situation. ☐ *There is a problem in the department I manage, and I'm really on the spot.* ☐ *I hate to be on the spot when it's not my fault.*

on the spur of the moment *Fig.* suddenly; spontaneously. ☐ *We decided to go on the spur of the moment.* ☐ *I had to leave town on the spur of the moment.*

***on the stick** *Inf.* organized and busy. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Get on the stick and get this job done!* ☐ *Come on, you guys. Let's get on the stick!*

on the street 1. *Fig.* widely known. ☐ *Sue put it on the street, and now everyone knows.* ☐ *It's on the street. There isn't anyone who hasn't heard it.* **2.** *Fig.* on Wall Street or elsewhere in the New York City financial districts. (Similar to ③, except that it refers to a specific street. Usually with a capital *s.*) ☐ *I heard on the Street today that bank stocks are headed up.* ☐ *It's on the Street that the market is*

due to crash again. **3.** *Fig.* at discount prices; as available at its lowest retail price. (As if some item were being sold on the street by a peddler.) ☐ *It lists at $2200 and can be got for about $1650 on the street.* ☐ *On the street it goes for about $400.*

on the strength of something *Fig.* because of the support of something, such as a promise or evidence; due to something. ☐ *On the strength of your comment, I decided to give John another chance.* ☐ *On the strength of my testimony, my case was dismissed.*

on the table *Fig.* subject to discussion by the group; submitted as a point of discussion. ☐ *The chairman said we could not discuss salaries since the topic was no longer on the table.*

on the take taking bribes. (Underworld.) ☐ *I heard that the mayor is on the take.* ☐ *Everyone in city hall is on the take.*

***on the telephone** and ***on the phone** *Fig.* speaking on the telephone. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *She's on the phone but won't be long.* ☐ *Please take a seat while I'm on the phone.* ☐ *Get on the phone and call him back immediately!*

on the throne 1. *Lit.* [of royalty] currently reigning. ☐ *King Samuel was on the throne for two decades.* **2.** *Fig. Sl.* seated on the toilet. ☐ *I can't come to the phone. I'm on the throne.*

***on the tip of** one's **tongue** *Fig.* [of a thought or idea] about to be said or almost remembered. (*Typically: **be ~; have** something **~**.) ☐ *I have his name right on the tip of my tongue. I'll think of it in a second.* ☐ *John had the answer on the tip of his tongue, but Anne said it first.*

***on the track of** someone or something Go to next.

***on the trail of** someone or something and ***on the track of** someone or something seeking someone or something; about to find someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I'm on the trail of a new can opener that is supposed to be easier to use.* ☐ *I spent all morning on the track of a vendor who can meet our requirements.*

on the up-and-up legitimate; open and aboveboard. ☐ *Is this deal on the up-and-up? What's the catch?* ☐ *Everything I do is on the up-and-up. I am totally honest.*

on the verge of doing something and **on the verge of** something at the very beginning of doing something; just about to do something. ☐ *Bill was on the verge of leaving town when he found a job.* ☐ *Susan was on the verge of laughter, so she left the lecture hall.*

on the wagon *Fig.* not drinking alcohol. ☐ *No, I don't care for a cocktail. I'm on the wagon.* ☐ *Bob's old drinking buddies complained that he was no fun when he went on the wagon.*

on the waiting list and **on the wait list** [for someone's name to be] on a list of people waiting for an opportunity to do something. ☐ *I couldn't get a seat on the plane, but I got on the waiting list.* ☐ *There is no room for you, but we can put your name on the waiting list.*

on the wane becoming less; fading away. ☐ *Her influence in on the wane, but she is still the boss.*

on the warpath very angry. ☐ *The boss is on the warpath again. Watch out!* ☐ *I am on the warpath about setting goals and standards again.*

on the watch for someone or something alert and watching for someone or something. ☐ *Please stay on the watch for trouble.* ☐ *I'm always on the watch for Ann. I want to know when she's around.*

***on the way (to** something or some place**)** and ***on** one's **way (to** something or some place**)** moving toward a place; advancing toward a new status or condition. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Is he here yet or is he on the way?* ☐ *Mary is better now and on the way to recovery.* ☐ *She's now on the way to San Francisco.* ☐ *Yes, she's on her way.*

on the whole generally; considering everything. ☐ *On the whole, this was a very good day.* ☐ *Your work—on the whole—is quite good.*

on the wing *Fig.* while flying; while in flight. (Usually refers to birds, fowl, etc., not people or planes.) ☐ *There is nothing as pretty as a bird on the wing.* ☐ *The hawk caught the sparrow on the wing.*

on the (witness) stand [of a witness] giving testimony in court, seated in place in view of the court. ☐ *I was on the witness stand, answering questions, when the judge declared a recess.*

***on the wrong side of** someone and ***on** someone's **wrong side** *Fig.* out of favor with someone. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Don't get on the wrong side of her.* ☐ *I do what I can not to get on the wrong side of people.*

on the wrong track 1. *Lit.* [of a train] following the wrong set of tracks. ☐ *We had to back up, because somehow we got on the wrong track.* **2.** *Fig.* going the wrong way; following the wrong set of assumptions. ☐ *You'll never get the right answer. You're on the wrong track.* ☐ *They won't get it figured out because they are on the wrong track.*

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on thin ice 1. *Lit.* on ice that is too thin to support one. (See also skate on thin ice; walk on thin ice.) ☐ *Billy is on thin ice and is in great danger.* **2.** *Fig.* in a risky situation. ☐ *If you try that you'll really be on thin ice. That's too risky.* ☐ *If you don't want to find yourself on thin ice, you must be sure of your facts.*

on time before the deadline; by the stated time. ☐ *Please make sure that your essays are completed on time.* ☐ *My taxes were not done on time, so I had to pay a penalty.*

on tiptoe standing or walking on the front part of the feet (the balls of the feet) with no weight put on the heels. (This is done to gain height or to walk quietly.) ☐ *I had to stand on tiptoe in order to see over the fence.* ☐ *I came in late and walked on tiptoe so I wouldn't wake anybody up.*

on top of something **1.** *Fig.* up-to-date on something; knowing about the current state of something. ☐ *Ask Mary. She's on top of this issue.* ☐ *This issue is constantly changing. She has to pay attention to it to stay on top of things.* **2.** *Fig.* in addition to something. ☐ *Jane told Bill he was dull. On top of that, she said he was unfriendly.* ☐ *On top of being dull, he's unfriendly.* **3.** *Fig.* victorious over something; famous or notorious for something. ☐ *It was a close game, but the home team came out on top.* ☐ *Bill is on top in his field.*

on top of the world *Fig.* feeling wonderful; glorious; ecstatic. □ *Wow, I feel on top of the world.* □ *Since he got a new job, he's on top of the world.*

***on track** on schedule; progressing as planned. (*Typically: **be ~; get** someone or something **~; have** someone or something **~; keep** someone or something **~; put** someone or something **~; set** someone or something **~**.) □ *Try to keep these procedures on track this time.* □ *Please get this discussion on track. Time is limited.*

on trial 1. [of someone] in a legal case before a judge. □ *The criminal was on trial for over three months.* □ *I am not on trial. Don't treat me like that!* **2.** being tested; being examined or experimented with. □ *The new strain of wheat is on trial in Kansas at the present time.* □ *The teaching method is on trial in the school system.*

on vacation away, taking time off work; on holiday. □ *Where are you going on vacation this year?* □ *I'll be away on vacation for three weeks.*

on view visible; on public display. □ *The painting will be on view at the museum.* □ *I'll pull the shades so that we won't be on view.*

on with someone [of a date or appointment] agreed to and confirmed with someone. □ *Is the Friday date still on with you?* □ *It's on with me.*

On your bike! and **Go to your room!** *Sl. imperative.* Get out of here!; Get on your bike and get out! □ *What a bad joke! No puns allowed here! On your bike!* □ *That was a ridiculous remark. Go to your room!*

on your mark, get set, go and **ready, set, go** [in preparing to start a race involving speed] move to the starting point, get set to move, go. □ *Runners on your mark, get set, go.*

Once a priest, always a priest. and **Once a whore, always a whore.** *Prov.* A person who has done a certain kind of job will always have the characteristics of people who do that job, even after he or she no longer does that kind of work. (This can be applied to many different occupations.) □ *Alan: My cousin left the clergy, but boy! He still preaches at me all the time. Jane: Once a priest, always a priest, huh?*

Once a whore, always a whore. Go to previous.

once and for all finally; permanently. □ *Sue: I'm going to get this place organized once and for all! Alice: That'll be the day!* □ *"We need to get this straightened out once and for all," said Bob, for the fourth time today.*

Once bitten, twice shy. *Prov.* When something or someone has hurt you once, you tend to avoid that thing or person. □ *Jill: Let's go ride the roller coaster. Jane: No, thanks. I got really sick on one of those once—once bitten, twice shy.* □ *I once sent in money for something I saw advertised in the back of a magazine, but the merchandise was of such poor quality I was sorry I'd bought it. I'll never buy anything that way again; once bitten, twice shy.*

once in a blue moon *Cliché* very seldom. □ *Jill: Does your husband ever bring you flowers? Ellen: Once in a blue moon.* □ *Once in a blue moon, I buy a fashion magazine, just to see what people are wearing.*

once more and **one more time** Please do it one more time. □ *Mary: You sang that line beautifully, Fred. Now, once more. Fred: I'm really tired of all this rehearsing.* □ *John (finishing practicing his speech): How was that? Sue: Good! One more time, though. John: I'm getting bored with it.*

once upon a time *Cliché* once in the past. (A formula used to begin a fairy tale.) □ *Once upon a time, there were three bears.* □ *Once upon a time, I had a puppy of my own.*

once-in-a-lifetime chance and **once-in-a-lifetime opportunity** a chance that will never occur again in one's lifetime. □ *This is a once-in-a-lifetime chance. Don't miss it.* □ *She offered me a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, but I turned it down.*

once-in-a-lifetime opportunity Go to previous.

*the **once-over** a quick, visual examination. (*Typically: **get ~; give** someone **~**.) □ *Every time John walks by I get the once-over. Does he like me?* □ *I went to the doctor yesterday, but I only had a once-over.*

once-over-lightly 1. *Fig.* a quick and careless treatment. (A noun. Said of an act of cleaning, studying, examination, or appraisal.) □ *Bill gave his geometry the once-over-lightly and then quit studying.* □ *Ann, you didn't wash the dishes properly. They only got a once-over-lightly.* **2.** *Fig.* cursory; in a quick and careless manner. (An adverb.) □ *Tom studied geometry once-over-lightly.* □ *Ann washed the dishes once-over-lightly.*

one and all everyone. □ *"Good morning to one and all," said Jane as she walked through the outer office.* □ *Let's hope that this turns out to be a wonderful party for one and all.*

the **one and only** the famous and talented (person). (Used in theatrical introductions. See also **my one and only**.) □ *And now—the one and only—Jane Smith!* □ *Let's have a big hand for the one and only Bob Jones!*

one and the same *Cliché* the very same person or thing. □ *John Jones and J. Jones are one and the same.* □ *Men's socks and men's stockings are almost one and the same.*

one brick shy of a load *Inf.* stupid; dense. □ *Joyce has done some stupid things. Sometimes I think she is one brick shy of a load.* □ *Ted is one brick shy of a load. He can't seem to do what he is told without messing up.*

one by one and **one at a time** the first one, then the next one, then the next one, etc.; each in turn. □ *I have to deal with problems one by one. I can't handle them all at once.* □ *Okay, just take things one at a time.* □ *The children came into the room one by one.*

One cannot be in two places at once. *Prov.* You cannot be in more than one place or do more than one thing at the same time. □ *Child: Mom! Mom! Come help me wash my hair! Mother: Just a minute! I'm putting clean sheets on your bed right now, and I can't be in two places at once.*

One cannot love and be wise. *Prov.* People often fall in love with someone with whom they are not compatible or behave foolishly when they are in love. □ *My son and his girlfriend have decided to get married in the spring. I don't think that's wise, since they won't have enough money saved by then to set up house. But then, one cannot love and be wise.*

***one eye on** someone or something *Fig.* [get/have] a small amount of attention devoted to someone or something. (*Typically: **keep ~; have ~**.) □ *I have to have one eye on you at all times or you will get into trouble.* □ *I*

have one eye on the speedometer of my car whenever I am driving.

one false move Go to a false move.

one final thing Go to next.

one final word and **one final thing** *Fig.* a phrase introducing a parting comment or the last item in a list. ☐ *John: One final word—keep your chin up. Mary: Good advice!* ☐ *And one final thing, don't haul around a lot of expensive camera stuff. It just tells the thieves who to rob.*

one for the (record) books a record-breaking or very remarkable act. ☐ *What a dive! That's one for the record books.* ☐ *I've never heard such a funny joke. That's really one for the books.*

***one for the road** a drink; a drink before a journey or before leaving a bar. (*Typically: **down ~; drink ~; have ~; take ~**.) ☐ *Let's have one for the road.* ☐ *Don't down one for the road if you are going to be the driver.*

One good turn deserves another. *Prov.* If someone does you a favor, you should do a favor for that person in return. ☐ *Jill: Thanks for the ride. Jane: It's the least I can do after you helped me wash the car last week. One good turn deserves another.* ☐ *Child: I don't want to help Grandma go shopping. Father: But she helped you with your homework yesterday. And one good turn deserves another.*

One hand for oneself **and one for the ship.** *Prov.* When you are on a ship, always use one hand to steady yourself, and one to work; likewise, always put some effort into safeguarding yourself as well as into working. ☐ *The old sailor chastised us for forgetting to hold onto something during the rough weather. "One hand for yourself and one for the ship," he bellowed.* ☐ *This company expects you to work hard, but not so hard that you hurt yourself. One hand for yourself and one for the ship.*

One has to draw the line somewhere. *Prov.* It is necessary to set limits and enforce them. ☐ *Ellen: This is the fifth night this week that my son has stayed out too late. Jane: Why not punish him, then? You have to draw the line somewhere.* ☐ *I am a fairly easygoing employer, but I cannot allow my employees to take two hours for lunch. I have to draw the line somewhere.*

one in a hundred Go to next.

one in a thousand and **one in a hundred; one in a million** *Fig.* nearly unique; one of a very few. ☐ *He's a great guy. He's one in million.* ☐ *Mary's one in a hundred—such a hard worker.*

one jump ahead (of someone or something**)** and **one move ahead (of** someone or something**)** *Fig.* one step in advance of someone or something. ☐ *Try to stay one jump ahead of the competition.* ☐ *If you're one move ahead, you're well prepared to deal with problems. Then, nothing is a surprise.*

one law for the rich and another for the poor *Prov.* Rich people are sometimes able to escape without punishment when they commit crimes, while poor people are usually punished. ☐ *It doesn't seem fair—rich people can avoid paying their taxes and not get in trouble, but poor people are always punished if they don't pay. We shouldn't have one law for the rich and another for the poor.*

one little bit any at all; at all. ☐ *Jean could not be persuaded to change her mind one little bit.* ☐ *I don't want to hear anything more about it. Not even one little bit.*

One man's loss is another man's gain. *Prov.* When one person loses something, another person gets it. (You can substitute appropriate names or pronouns for the phrases *one man's* and *another man's*, as in the second example.) ☐ *Mike found a five-dollar bill on the sidewalk. "One man's loss is another man's gain," he thought to himself, as he took the money.* ☐ *Jane: Andy just got fired. Jill: I know. And Andy's loss is my gain; I'm getting promoted to his job!*

One man's meat is another man's poison. *Prov.* Something that one person likes may be distasteful to someone else. ☐ *Fred: What do you mean you don't like French fries? They're the best food in the world! Alan: One man's meat is another man's poison.* ☐ *Jill: I don't understand why Don doesn't like to read science fiction. It's the most interesting thing to read. Jane: One man's meat is another man's poison.*

One man's trash is another man's treasure. *Prov.* Something that one person considers worthless may be considered valuable by someone else. ☐ *Q: Why would anyone want to hang a picture like that on the wall? A: One man's trash is another man's treasure.* ☐ *A: Bob's uncle is always going through people's garbage, looking for old stuff. B: One man's trash is another man's treasure.*

One moment, please. Please wait briefly. (A polite way of acknowledging that you noticed someone's request.) ☐ *John: Can you help me? Clerk: One moment, please. I will be with you shortly.* ☐ *Bill (answering the phone): Hello? Bob: Hello. Can I speak to Tom? Bill: One moment, please. (handing phone to Tom) It's for you. Tom: Hello, this is Tom.*

one more time Go to once more.

one move ahead (of someone or something**)** Go to one jump ahead (of someone or something).

one of these days someday; in some situation like this one. ☐ *One of these days, someone is going to steal your purse if you don't take better care of it.* ☐ *You're going to get in trouble one of these days.*

One of these days is none of these days. *Prov.* If you say you will do something "one of these days," you probably do not seriously intend to do it, and therefore it will not get done. ☐ *Alan: When are you going to fix the garage door? Jane: One of these days. Alan: One of these days is none of these days.* ☐ *Jill: One of these days, I'll pay you the money I owe you. Jane: One of these days is none of these days.*

One's **bark is worse than** one's **bite.** *Prov.* Someone makes a lot of harsh-sounding threats but never carries them out. ☐ *Don't get upset at anything my father says. His bark is worse than his bite.* ☐ *Jill: Lisa says she's going to sue me for letting my dog dig up her rosebushes. John: Don't pay any attention. Her bark is worse than her bite.*

*one's **bearings** the knowledge of where one is; the knowledge of how one is oriented to one's immediate environment. (*Typically: **get ~; find ~; have ~; lose ~; tell** one **~**.) ☐ *After he fell, it took Ted a few minutes to get his bearings.* ☐ *Jean found her compass and got her bearings almost immediately.*

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one's **best bib and tucker** *Rur.* one's best clothing. ☐ *I always put on my best bib and tucker on Sundays.* ☐ *Put on your best bib and tucker, and let's go to the city.*

one's **best shot** *Fig.* one's best attempt (at something). ☐ *That was his best shot, but it wasn't good enough.* ☐ *I always try to give something my best shot.*

one's **better half** *Fig.* one's spouse. (Usually refers to a wife.) ☐ *I think we'd like to come for dinner, but I'll have to ask my better half.* ☐ *I have to go home now to my better half. We are going out tonight.*

one's **(butter and) egg money** *Fig.* money that a farm woman earns. (Farm women would often sell butter and eggs for extra money that would be stashed away for an emergency.) ☐ *Jane was saving her butter and egg money for a new TV.* ☐ *I've got my egg money. Let's go shopping.*

one's **claws are showing** one is acting catty; one is saying spiteful and cruel things. ☐ *Gloria: Did you see what she was wearing? I wouldn't be caught dead in it! Sally: Gloria, my dear, your claws are showing.*

one's **days are numbered** *Fig.* one is facing death or dismissal. ☐ *If I don't get this contract, my days are numbered at this company.* ☐ *Uncle Bill has a terminal disease. His days are numbered.*

one's **deepest sympathy** one's very sincere sympathy. ☐ *I am so sorry about the death of your father. You have my deepest sympathy.* ☐ *She sent her deepest sympathy to the family.*

one's **ears are red** *Fig.* [for someone's ears] to be red from embarrassment. ☐ *I'm so embarrassed. Wow, are my ears red!* ☐ *My ears are red! I can't believe I said that.*

one's **ears are ringing** *Fig.* [for someone's ears] to have a ringing sound because of an illness or other condition; very loud music, or some other very loud sound. ☐ *After the explosion, my ears were ringing for hours.* ☐ *My ears are ringing because I have a sinus infection.*

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one's **eyes are bigger than** one's **stomach** *Fig.* one has taken more food than one can eat. ☐ *I can't eat all this. I'm afraid that my eyes were bigger than my stomach.* ☐ *Try to take less food. Your eyes are bigger than your stomach at every meal.*

one's **fair share** the amount of something that one is due relative to what other people are receiving. ☐ *Let him take more. He didn't get his fair share.* ☐ *I want my fair share. You cheated me! Give me some more!*

*one's **fill of** someone or something *Fig.* [get/have] as much of someone or something as one needs or can tolerate. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~**.) ☐ *You'll soon get your fill of Tom. He can be quite a pest.* ☐ *I can never get my fill of shrimp. I love it.*

one's **for the asking** *Fig.* [can become] one's property if one asks for it. ☐ *I have a cherry pie here. A slice is yours for the asking if you want it.* ☐ *Uncle Mac said we could have his old car if we wanted it. It was ours for the asking.*

one's **frame of mind** *Fig.* one's mood or mental state. ☐ *My frame of mind is sort of low at the moment. I've had a very bad day.*

One's **future looks bright.** *Fig.* One has a promising future. ☐ *Tom's future looks bright and he will do well if he keeps working hard.*

one's **goose is cooked** one is finished; one has been found out and is in trouble. ☐ *It's over. His goose is cooked!* ☐ *If I get caught, my goose is cooked.*

one's **heart goes out to** someone *Fig.* one feels great sympathy for someone. ☐ *My heart goes out to the grieving family.* ☐ *Let your heart go out to those who are suffering, and pray for their improvement.*

one's **heart is (dead) set against** something *Fig.* one is totally against something. ☐ *Jane's heart is set against going to that restaurant ever again.*

one's **heart is in** one's **mouth** *Fig.* one feels strongly emotional (about someone or something). (See also **have** one's **heart in** one's **mouth**.) ☐ *"Gosh, Mary," said John, "My heart is in my mouth whenever I see you."* ☐ *It was a touching scene. My heart was in my mouth the whole time.*

one's **heart is in the right place** *Fig.* one has good intentions, even if the results are bad. ☐ *She gave it a good try. Her heart was in the right place.* ☐ *He is awkward, but his heart is in the right place.*

one's **heart is set on** something *Fig.* one desires and expects something. ☐ *Jane's heart is set on going to London.* ☐ *My heart is set on returning home.*

one's **heart misses a beat** and one's **heart skips a beat** *Fig.* one's heart flutters or palpitates; one has a strong emotional reaction. ☐ *Whenever I'm near you, my heart skips a beat.* ☐ *When the racehorse fell, my heart missed a beat.*

one's **heart skips a beat** Go to previous.

one's **heart stands still** *Fig.* one's heart (figuratively) stops beating because of strong emotions. ☐ *When I first saw you, my heart stood still.* ☐ *My heart will stand still until you answer.*

one's **home away from home** a place, other than one's home, where one can feel at home. ☐ *Please make our house your home away from home when you are in town.*

one's **John Hancock** Go to next.

one's **John Henry** and one's **John Hancock** one's signature. ☐ *Just put your John Henry on this line, and we'll bring your new car around.*

one's **last resting place** *Euph.* one's grave. ☐ *Daddy has gone to his last resting place.* ☐ *I want to be beside her in her last resting place.*

one's **luck runs out** *Fig.* one's good luck stops. ☐ *My luck ran out, so I had to come home.* ☐ *She will quit gambling when her luck runs out.*

one's **mind went blank** *Fig.* someone's mind has experienced total forgetfulness. ☐ *He knew all his lines in rehearsal, but his mind went blank when he went before an audience.*

*one's **money's worth** *Fig.* everything that one has paid for; the best quality for the money paid. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~**.) ☐ *Weigh that package of meat before you buy it. Be sure you're getting your money's worth.* ☐ *I didn't get my money's worth with my new camera, so I took it back.*

one's **name is mud** *Fig.* one is in trouble or humiliated. ☐ *If I can't get this contract signed, my name will be mud.* ☐ *His name is mud ever since he broke the crystal vase.*

one's next of kin one's closest living relative or relatives. ☐ *The police notified the dead man's next of kin.* ☐ *My next of kin lives 800 miles away.*

one's next-door neighbor the person living in the house or apartment closest to one's own. ☐ *My next-door neighbor came over to borrow a shovel.* ☐ *I will be visiting our next-door neighbor if you need me.*

one's nose is in the air *Fig.* one is acting conceited or aloof. ☐ *Mary's nose is always in the air since she got into that exclusive boarding school.* ☐ *Her mother's nose was always in the air, too.*

one's number is up *Fig.* one's time to die—or to suffer some other unpleasantness—has come. ☐ *John is worried. He thinks his number is up.* ☐ *When my number is up, I hope it all goes fast.*

one's old stamping ground *Fig.* the place where one was raised or where one has spent a lot of time. (There are variants with *stomping* and *grounds.*) ☐ *Ann should know about that place. It's near her old stamping ground.* ☐ *I can't wait to get back to my old stomping grounds.*

***one's (own) way** one's way of doing something; one's will or desire. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~**.) ☐ *She always has to have her own way. She thinks no one else can do it right.*

***one's (own) way (with someone or something)** [get/have] one's control over someone or something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~**.) ☐ *The mayor got his way with the city council.* ☐ *He seldom gets his own way.* ☐ *How often do you have your way with your own money?* ☐ *Parents usually have their way with their children.*

***one's own worst enemy** *Fig.* consistently causing oneself to fail; more harmful to oneself than other people are. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *Ellen: My boss is my enemy. She never says anything good about me. Jane: Ellen, you're your own worst enemy. If you did your job responsibly, your boss would be nicer.*

***one's say** one's stance or position; what one thinks. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~**.) ☐ *I want to have my say on this matter.* ☐ *He got his say, and then he was happy.*

***one's sea legs** *Fig.* one's ability to tolerate the movement of a ship at sea. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~**.) ☐ *Jean was a little awkward on the cruise at first, but in a few days she got her sea legs and was fine.* ☐ *You may feel a little sick until you get your sea legs.*

***one's second wind 1.** *Lit.* one's stabilized breathing after exerting oneself for a short time. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~**.) ☐ *John was having a hard time running until he got his second wind.* ☐ *Bill had to quit the race because he never got his second wind.* **2.** *Fig.* one's greater or renewed energy and productivity, gained at some time after starting. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~**.) ☐ *I usually get my second wind early in the afternoon.* ☐ *Mary is a better worker after she has her second wind.*

***one's start** one's first career opportunity. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** one **~**.) ☐ *I had my start in painting when I was thirty.* ☐ *She helped me get my start by recommending me to the manager.*

one's sunset years *Euph.* one's old age. ☐ *Many people in their sunset years love to travel.* ☐ *Now is the time to think about financial planning for your sunset years.*

***one's walking papers** *Fig.* a notice that one is fired from one's job. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** one **~**.) ☐ *Well, I'm through. I got my walking papers today.* ☐ *They are closing down my department. I guess I'll get my walking papers soon.*

one's way of life one's lifestyle; one's pattern of living. ☐ *That kind of thing just doesn't fit into my way of life.* ☐ *Our way of life includes contributing to worthy causes.*

one's word is one's bond *Fig.* one's statement of agreement is as sound as a posting of a performance bond. ☐ *Of course, you can trust anything I agree to verbally. My word is my bond. There's no need to get it in writing.*

one's work is cut out for one *Fig.* one's task is prepared for one; one has a lot of work to do. ☐ *This is a big job. My work is cut out for me.* ☐ *The new president's work is cut out for him.*

one sandwich short of a picnic *Inf.* not very smart; lacking intelligence. (Jocular.) ☐ *Poor Bob just isn't too bright. He's one sandwich short of a picnic.* ☐ *She's not stupid. Just one sandwich short of a picnic.*

One swallow does not make a summer. and **One swallow does not a summer make.** *Prov.* You should not assume that something is true just because you have seen one piece of evidence for it. ☐ *Amanda: I got a good grade on this quiz! My troubles in school are over. Nancy: One swallow does not a summer make.*

the **one that got away** *Fig.* the big fish that got away, especially as the subject of a fisherman's story. ☐ *The one that got away is always bigger than the one that got caught.*

One thing leads to another. One event sets things up for another event, and so on. (As an explanation of how little things lead to big problems.) ☐ *I kept spending more and more money until I was broke. You know how one thing leads to another.* ☐ *He bought a car, then a house, then a boat. One thing leads to another.*

one thing or person **after another** a series of things or people that seems without limit. ☐ *It's just one problem after another.* ☐ *One customer after another has been buying shoes today!*

one to a customer *Fig.* each person can have or receive only one. (As in sales restrictions where each customer is permitted to buy only one.) ☐ *"Only one to a customer!" said the chef as he handed out the hamburgers.* ☐ *Is it one to a customer, or can I take two now?*

one too many *Euph.* one drink of liquor too many, implying drunkenness. ☐ *I think I've had one too many. It's time to stop drinking.* ☐ *Don't drive if you've had one too many.*

***one up (on someone)** ahead of someone; having an advantage over someone. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Tom is one up on Sally because he got a job and she didn't.* ☐ *Yes, it sounds like Tom is one up.*

one way or another somehow. ☐ *Tom: Can we fix this radio, or do I have to buy a new one? Mary: Don't fret! We'll get it repaired one way or another.* ☐ *John: I think we're lost. Alice: Don't worry. We'll get there one way or another.*

one-horse town *Fig.* a very small town; a small and backward town. ☐ *I refuse to spend a whole week in that one-horse town!* ☐ *I grew up in a one-horse town, and I liked it very much.*

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one-man show 1. *Lit.* a performance put on by one person. □ *It was a one-man show, but it was very entertaining.* □ *For a one-man show, it was very long.* **2.** *Fig.* an exhibition of the artistic works of one person. □ *She is having a one-man show at the Northside Gallery.* □ *I'm having a one-man show next weekend. Come and see what I have done.*

one-night stand 1. *Lit.* a performance lasting only one night. □ *The band did a series of one-night stands down the East Coast.* □ *You can't make a living doing one-night stands.* **2.** *Fig.* a romance or sexual relationship that lasts only one night. □ *It was not a romance, just a one-night stand.* □ *It looked like something that would last longer than a one-night stand.*

***oneself again** showing signs of being healthy again or restored. (*Typically: **act like ~; be ~; feel like ~; seem like ~**.) □ *After such a long illness, it's good to be myself again.* □ *I'm sorry that I lost my temper. I think I feel like myself again now.*

one-track mind *Fig.* a mind that thinks entirely or almost entirely about one subject. □ *Adolescent boys often have one-track minds. All they're interested in is the opposite sex.* □ *Bob has a one-track mind. He can only talk about football.*

online 1. Go to in line. **2.** *Fig.* connected to a computer or network. □ *As soon as I get online, I can check the balance of your account.* □ *I was online for an hour before I found out what I wanted to know.*

only have eyes for someone *Fig.* [to be] loyal to only one person, in the context of romance. □ *Oh, Jane! I only have eyes for you!* □ *Don't waste any time on Tom. He only has eyes for Ann.*

(Only) time will tell. *Prov.* You will only know the outcome after time has passed. □ *Jill: Do you think Bill and Nancy will have a happy marriage? John: Only time will tell.* □ *I'm not sure yet if our advertising campaign was a success. Time will tell.*

the **only way to go** the best way to do something; the best choice to make. □ *Get a four-wheel drive car. It's the only way to go.* □ *That's it! A new house. It's the only way to go.*

***onto a good thing** having found something useful, promising, or profitable. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) □ *This is a great scheme. I know I'm onto a good thing.* □ *I'm onto a good thing. I'm sure I am.*

***onto someone** seeing through someone's deception. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; catch ~**.) □ *By the time we got on to the con artists, they were out of town.* □ *The sheriff got on to Jed, and Jed wanted to get out of town fast.*

***onto something 1.** *Fig.* alerted to or aware of a deceitful plan. (*Typically: **be ~; catch ~**.) □ *The cops are onto your little game here. Fig.* having found something useful or promising; on the verge of discovering something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) □ *I think we are really onto something this time.* □ *I am onto a new discovery.*

ooze (out) (from someone or something) and **ooze out (of someone or something)** to seep out of someone or something. □ *The heavy oil oozed out from the hole in the barrel.* □ *Some blood was oozing out of his nose.*

ooze with something 1. *Lit.* to flow or seep with something; to be covered with some oozing substance. □ *The wound oozed with blood.* □ *The roast beef oozed with juices.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to exude an ingratiating or insincere manner. □ *The used-car salesman oozed with insincerity.* □ *The young woman oozed with charm.*

open a can of worms Go to a can of worms.

open a conversation to start a conversation. (See also strike up a conversation.) □ *I tried to open a conversation with him, but he had nothing to say.* □ *She opened a conversation with an inquiry into my health, which got me talking about my favorite subject.*

open a few doors (for someone) Go to open some doors (for someone).

open and aboveboard Go to honest and aboveboard.

(Open) confession is good for the soul. *Prov.* If you have done something wrong, you will feel better if you confess that you did it. □ *You ought to tell Dad that you broke his radio. Open confession is good for the soul.* □ *Sue: I've been so upset about cheating on the exam that I haven't been sleeping nights. Sam: You can do something about it; confession is good for the soul.*

open fire (on someone) *Fig.* to start (doing something, such as asking questions or criticizing). (Based on open fire on someone or something.) □ *The reporters opened fire on the mayor.* □ *When the reporters opened fire, the mayor was smiling, but not for long.*

open fire (on someone or something) to begin shooting at someone or something. □ *The troops opened fire on the enemy.* □ *The trainees opened fire on the target.*

open for business [of a shop, store, restaurant, etc.] operating and ready to do business. □ *The store is now open for business and invites you to come in.* □ *The construction will be finished in March, and we will be open for business in April.*

open into something to open inward to something. □ *The passageway opened into a dining room.* □ *Our kitchen opens into a bright breakfast nook.*

*an **open mind** a mind or attitude that is open to new ideas and opinions. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; keep ~**.) □ *Please try to be nice and keep an open mind. It's all not as bad as you think.*

open one's heart to someone or something 1. *Fig.* to tell all of one's private thoughts to someone. □ *I didn't mean to open my heart to you.* □ *She opened her heart to the wrong magazine, and it published a scandalous story.* **2.** *Fig.* to become loving and solicitous toward someone; to donate money generously to someone or some cause. □ *We opened our hearts to Fred, who was soliciting for a good cause.* □ *We hope you will all open your hearts to our plea.*

open oneself to criticism to do something that makes one vulnerable to criticism. □ *By saying something so stupid in public, you really opened yourself to criticism.*

open (out) on(to) something [for a building's doors] to exit toward something. □ *The French doors opened out onto the terrace.* □ *The doors opened on a lovely patio.*

open Pandora's box *Fig.* to uncover a lot of unsuspected problems. □ *When I asked Jane about her problems, I didn't know I had opened Pandora's box.* □ *You should be cautious with people who are upset. You don't want to open Pandora's box.*

open season (on some creature**)** a time of unrestricted hunting of a particular game animal. ☐ *It's always open season on rabbits around here.*

open season (on someone**)** *Fig.* a period of time when everyone is criticizing someone. (Based on **open season (on** some creature**)**.) ☐ *It seems as if it's always open season on politicians.* ☐ *At the news conference, it was open season on the mayor.*

an **open secret** something that is supposed to be known only by a few people but is known in fact to a great many people. ☐ *Their engagement is an open secret. Only their friends are supposed to know, but in fact, the whole town knows.* ☐ *It's an open secret that Max is looking for a new job.*

open some doors (for someone**)** and **open a few doors (for** someone**)** *Fig.* to gain access to opportunity or influence (for someone). ☐ *Morris was able to open a few doors for Mary and get her an interview with the president.*

open someone's **eyes to** someone or something *Fig.* to cause someone, including oneself, to become aware of someone or something. ☐ *We finally opened our eyes to what was going on around us.* ☐ *The events of last night opened my eyes to Tom.*

open someone **up†** *Fig.* to perform a surgical operation requiring a major incision on someone. ☐ *The doctor had to open George up to find out what was wrong.* ☐ *They opened up George, seeking the cause of his illness.*

open something **out†** to unfold or expand something; to open and spread something out. ☐ *When she opened the fan out, she saw it was made of plastic.* ☐ *The peacock opened out its tail feathers and delighted the children.*

open something **up† 1.** *Lit.* to unwrap something; to open something. ☐ *Yes, I want to open my presents up.* ☐ *I can't wait to open up my presents.* ☐ *Open up this door!* **2.** *Fig.* to begin examining or discussing something. ☐ *Do you really want to open it up now?* ☐ *Now is the time to open up the question of taxes.* **3.** *Fig.* to reveal the possibilities of something; to reveal an opportunity. ☐ *Your letter opened new possibilities up.* ☐ *Your comments opened up a whole new train of thought.* **4.** *Fig.* to start the use of something, such as land, a building, a business, etc. ☐ *They opened the coastal lands up to resort development.* ☐ *We opened up a new store last March.* **5.** *Fig.* to make a vehicle go as fast as possible. (As in opening up the throttle.) ☐ *We took the new car out on the highway and opened it up.* ☐ *I've never really opened up this truck. I don't know how fast it'll go.* **6.** to make something less congested. ☐ *They opened the yard up by cutting out a lot of old shrubbery.* ☐ *We opened up the room by taking the piano out.*

open something **up† (to** someone**)** to make something available to someone; to permit someone to join something or participate in something. ☐ *We intend to open the club up to everyone.* ☐ *We will open up our books to the auditors.*

open the door to someone **1.** *Lit.* to permit someone to enter a room, building, etc. ☐ *The butler opened the door to the guests and they all entered.* ☐ *I opened the door to Mr. Wilson.* **2.** to make a move or passage easier for a person. ☐ *Ann opened the door to Fred, who wanted to start a new career in writing.* ☐ *Mark opened the door to her, and she was always grateful to him.*

open the door to something *Fig.* to invite something to happen. ☐ *The armistice opened the door to peace talks.* ☐ *The door was opened to further discussion.*

open to criticism vulnerable to criticism. ☐ *Anything the president does is open to criticism.*

open to question [an action or opinion] inviting question, examination, or refutation. ☐ *Everything he told you is open to question and you should look into it.*

open to something *Fig.* agreeable to hear or learn about new ideas and suggestions. ☐ *The store owner was open to suggestions from her employees.* ☐ *We are always open to new ideas.*

open up 1. *Lit.* open your door; open your mouth. (Usually **Open up!**) ☐ *I want in. Open up!* ☐ *Open up! This is the police.* **2.** *Fig.* to become available. ☐ *A new job is opening up at my office.* ☐ *Let me know if any other opportunities open up.* **3.** *Fig.* to go as fast as possible. (As in opening up the throttle.) ☐ *I can't get this car to open up. Must be something wrong with the engine.* ☐ *Faster, Tom! Open up! Let's go!* **4.** to become clear, uncluttered, or open. ☐ *As we drove along, the forest opened up, and we entered into a grassy plain.* ☐ *The sky opened up, and the sun shone.*

open up (about someone or something**) (with** someone**)** and **open up (on** someone or something**) (with** someone**)** to speak freely about someone or something; to speak a great deal about someone or something. ☐ *After a while, he began to open up about his disagreements.* ☐ *He opened up with us about the accident.* ☐ *She opened up on Fred with Alice.*

open up (on someone, something, or an animal**)** to fire a gun or other weapon at someone, something, or an animal. ☐ *The sergeant told the soldiers to open up on the enemy position.* ☐ *"Okay, you guys," shouted the sergeant. "Open up!"*

O

open (up) one's **kimono** *Sl.* to reveal what one is planning. (From the computer industry, referring especially to the involvement of the Japanese in this field.) ☐ *Sam isn't one to open his kimono much when it comes to new products.* ☐ *Even if Tom appears to open up his kimono on this deal, don't put much stock in what he says.*

open up (to someone**)** and **open up (with** someone**)** to tell [everything] to someone; to confess to someone. ☐ *If she would only open up to me, perhaps I could help her.* ☐ *She just won't open up. Everything is "private."*

open up to something to become more accepting of someone or something. ☐ *Finally, he opened up to the suggestion that he should leave.* ☐ *Finally the boss opened up to the notion of Tom as a manager.*

open up (with someone**)** Go to open up (to someone).

open with someone or something to begin a season, session, series, or performance with someone or something. ☐ *The conference will open with a series of invited speakers.* ☐ *The performance opened with Donna, who played the flute.*

an **open-and-shut case** a simple and straightforward situation without complications. (Often said of criminal cases where the evidence is convincing.) ☐ *The murder trial was an open-and-shut case. The defendant was caught with the murder weapon.* ☐ *Bob's death was an open-and-shut case of suicide. He left a suicide note.*

opening gambit *Fig.* an opening movement, tactic, or statement which is made to secure a position that is to one's advantage. ☐ *The rebel army's opening gambit was to bomb the city's business district.* ☐ *The prosecution's opening gambit was to call a witness who linked the defendant to the scene of the crime.*

operate against someone or something to work against someone or something; to have a negative effect on someone or something. ☐ *All of this operates against our idea of fixing the garage up as a family room.* ☐ *The new vacation policy operates against my plan to take all of July off.*

operate from something to work out of something or some place. ☐ *I'm in business for myself. I operate from my home.* ☐ *We operate from a garage in the back of City Hall.*

operate on someone to perform a surgical operation on someone. ☐ *They decided not to operate on her.* ☐ *She wasn't operated on after all.*

operate on something **1.** to work on something; to work with the insides of something. (As a surgeon might operate.) ☐ *He tried to operate on his watch and ruined it.* ☐ *Todd operated on the door lock and fixed it.* **2.** to function or conduct business on a certain principle or assumption. ☐ *The company has always operated on the theory that the customer is always right.* ☐ *Sam operates on the assumption that everyone is out to get him.*

Opportunity knocks but once. *Prov.* You will only have one chance to do something important or profitable. (You can say *opportunity knocks* to signal that someone's chance to do something important is here right now.) ☐ *When Nancy got a scholarship offer from a college far away, her parents encouraged her to go, even though they didn't like the thought of her moving so far from home. "Opportunity knocks but once," they said, "and this may be your only chance to get a good education."*

O

Opportunity makes a thief. *Prov.* Anyone would steal, given a chance to do so without being punished. ☐ *Mr. Cooper thought of himself as a moral man. But opportunity makes a thief, and with the safe unguarded he had the opportunity to steal thousands of dollars undetected.*

opposed to something in opposition to something. ☐ *I am strongly opposed to your suggestion.* ☐ *He is morally opposed to war.*

the **opposite sex** the other sex; (from the point of view of a female) males; (from the point of view of a male) females. (Also with *member of,* as in the example.) ☐ *Ann is crazy about the opposite sex.* ☐ *Bill is very shy when he's introduced to the opposite sex.* ☐ *Do members of the opposite sex make you nervous?*

opt for something to choose a particular option. ☐ *I opted for the orange one.* ☐ *I opt for not going out at all.*

opt in favor of someone or something to choose a particular person; to choose a particular thing. ☐ *Do you think she will opt in favor of this one or that?* ☐ *We will opt in favor of David.*

opt in(to something**)** to choose to join in. ☐ *She opted into our plans.* ☐ *She opted in almost immediately.*

opt out (of something**)** to choose not to be in something. ☐ *If you do that, I'm going to have to opt out of the club.* ☐ *Then go ahead and opt out.*

or else or suffer the consequences. (An inspecific threat of bad consequences.) ☐ *Do what I tell you, or else.* ☐ *Don't be late for work, or else!*

or what? a way of adding emphasis to a yes-or-no question the speaker has asked. (In effect, if it wasn't what I said, what is it?) ☐ *Bob: Now, is this a fine day or what? John: Looks okay to me.* ☐ *Tom: Look at Bill and Mary. Do they make a fine couple or what? Bob: Sure, they look great.*

or words to that effect *Fig.* or similar words meaning the same thing. ☐ *John: It says right here in the contract, "You are expected to attend without fail," or words to that effect. Mary: That means I have to be there, huh? John: You got it!* ☐ *Sally: She said that I wasn't doing my job well, or words to that effect. Jane: Well, you ought to find out exactly what she means. Sally: I'm afraid I know.*

orbit (around) someone or something to circle around something in an orbit. ☐ *The flies orbited around Fred and his ice-cream cone.* ☐ *Many satellites orbit around our planet.*

ordain someone **(as)** something **1.** *Lit.* to establish someone as a priest or minister. ☐ *In a lovely ceremony, they ordained David as a priest.* ☐ *He was ordained as a priest by a bishop.* **2.** *Fig.* to establish someone as something. ☐ *They ordained the poor old man as a deputy sheriff.* ☐ *Was he duly ordained as a Mercedes mechanic?*

the **order of the day** something necessary or usual at a certain time. ☐ *Warm clothes are the order of the day when camping in the winter.* ☐ *Going to bed early was the order of the day when we were young.*

order some food **to go** Go to **to go.**

order someone **about** and **order** someone **around** to give commands to someone. ☐ *I don't like for someone to order me about.* ☐ *Don't order me around!*

order someone **in(to** something**)** to command someone to get into something. ☐ *The officer ordered Ann into the wagon.* ☐ *She didn't want to go, but the cop ordered her in.*

order someone **off ((of)** something**)** to command someone to get off something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *The teacher ordered Tom off the steps.* ☐ *He ordered him off.*

order someone **off the field** [for a game official] to command a player to leave the playing area. ☐ *The referee will order you off the field.* ☐ *He ordered us off the field.*

order someone **out of** some place and **order** someone **out**† to command that someone leave a place. ☐ *The cook ordered Judy out of the kitchen.* ☐ *The teacher ordered out all the kids.*

order something **from** someone or something to agree to purchase something from someone or a group. ☐ *We ordered some plants from the mail-order company.* ☐ *I will order some of those clever little things from you as soon as I can.*

order something **in**† to have something, usually food, brought into one's house or place of business. ☐ *Do you want to order pizza in?* ☐ *Shall I order in pizza?*

orient someone **to** something **1.** *Lit.* to help someone locate a compass direction or other similar location. ☐ *Try to orient Karen to the light so I can photograph her.* ☐ *It took time, but I oriented myself to north at last.* **2.** *Fig.* to help someone adjust to something, a position, or a relationship.

☐ *Will you please orient Bill to our routine?* ☐ *She found it difficult to orient herself to the new procedures.*

originate from something to come from something or some place. ☐ *Did you originate from around here?* ☐ *I originated from a different area of the country.* ☐ *Some of our customs originate from old beliefs.*

originate in something to have had a beginning in something or some place. ☐ *The river originates in the Andes Mountains.* ☐ *All your troubles originate in your lungs.*

originate with someone or something to have been started by someone, something, or during a time period or event. ☐ *Did this policy originate with you?* ☐ *This idea originated with the committee.*

ornament something **with** something to decorate something with something. ☐ *The driver ornamented his truck with lots of chrome.* ☐ *The room was ornamented with velvet drapes, wood paneling, family portraits—a den of Victorian virtue.*

oscillate between someone or something **and** someone or something else to swing between (choosing) someone and someone else; to swing between (choosing) something and something else. ☐ *Fred oscillated between going to college and getting a job.* ☐ *The boss oscillated between John and Roger.*

the **other place** *Euph.* hell. ☐ *If you're good, you'll go to heaven, and if you're bad, you'll go to the other place.* ☐ *If she keeps up her drinking and gambling, she's headed to the other place for sure.*

the **other side of the tracks** and the **wrong side of the tracks** the poor part of a town or city. ☐ *He was a rich boy, and she was a girl from the other side of the tracks.* ☐ *You don't want to buy a house in that neighborhood. It's on the wrong side of the tracks.*

other things being equal and **all things being equal** *Cliché* if things stay the way they are now; if there are no complications from other factors. ☐ *Other things being equal, we should have no trouble getting your order to you on time.* ☐ *I anticipate no problems, all things being equal.*

Other times, other manners. *Prov.* Different generations or eras have different customs. ☐ *Amy thought her grandchildren addressed their friends in startlingly rude terms. "But then," she reflected, "other times, other manners."* ☐ *Jane: The young folks today are so shocking. Why, when I was their age, you wouldn't kiss your husband in public, let alone some of the things these children do! Alan: Other times, other manners.*

the **other way (a)round** the reverse; the opposite. ☐ *No, it won't fit that way. Try it the other way round.* ☐ *It doesn't make any sense like that. It belongs the other way around.*

An **ounce of common sense is worth a pound of theory.** *Prov.* Common sense will help you solve problems more than theory will. ☐ *The psychologist had many elaborate theories about how to raise her child, but often forgot that an ounce of common sense is worth a pound of theory.*

An **ounce of discretion is worth a pound of wit.** *Prov.* Knowing when to refrain from making jokes is better than being able to make jokes all the time. ☐ *Mabel makes fun of everybody, regardless of whether or not she hurts their feelings. Someone should tell her that an ounce of discretion is worth a pound of wit.*

An **ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.** *Prov.* If you put in a little effort to prevent a problem, you will not have to put in a lot of effort to solve the problem. ☐ *Brush your teeth every day; that way you won't have to go to the dentist to have cavities filled. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.* ☐ *If you get in the habit of being careful with your new stereo, chances are you won't break it and have to have it fixed later. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.*

Our house is your house. Go to My house is your house.

oust someone **from** something to force someone to leave something or some place; to throw someone out of something or some place. ☐ *They ousted the boys from the bar.* ☐ *The underage kids were ousted from the tavern quickly.*

***an out** an excuse; means of avoiding something. (*Typically: **have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *He's very clever. No matter what happens, he always has an out.*

out an amount of money lacking something; having lost or wasted something. ☐ *I'm out ten bucks because of your miscalculation.* ☐ *I'm out the price of a meal.*

***out and about** outside the house; outdoors. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Beth has been ill, but now she's out and about.* ☐ *As soon as I feel better, I'll be able to get out and about.*

out at some place located at a distant place. ☐ *Tom's out at the farm and there's no phone there, so you can't talk to him.* ☐ *Jed is out at the cabin on a hunting trip.*

out cold and **out like a light 1.** *Fig.* unconscious. ☐ *I fell and hit my head. I was out cold for about a minute.* ☐ *Tom fainted! He's out like a light!* **2.** *Fig.* intoxicated. ☐ *Four beers and he was out cold.* ☐ *He sat in his chair at the table, out cold.* **3.** *Fig.* sound asleep. ☐ *After a few minutes of tossing and turning, she was out like a light.*

out for blood *Fig.* aggressively seeking to harm or get revenge; angry and looking for the cause of one's distress. ☐ *The opposite team is out for blood, but we have a good defense.*

out for the count Go to down for the count.

***out from** something some distance away from something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; go ~**.) ☐ *I would like to be farther out from the city.* ☐ *I need to get out from the town.*

***out (from under** someone or something**) 1.** *Lit.* out from beneath someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; crawl ~; creep ~; move ~**.) ☐ *Will you please get out from under my bed?* ☐ *The dog got out from under her just before she sat down.* **2.** *Fig.* free of someone's control or the burden of a problem. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; crawl ~; move ~**.) ☐ *Mary wanted to get out from under her mother.* ☐ *There is so much work to do! I don't know when I'll ever get out from under it.*

out front 1. in the front of one's house. ☐ *Our mailbox is out front.* ☐ *We have a spruce tree out front and a maple tree in the back.* **2.** leading, as in a race. ☐ *My horse was out front by two lengths until the final turn.* ☐ *The other candidate is out front in the polls.*

out (in bloom) Go to next.

***out (in blossom)** and ***out (in bloom)** [of a plant or tree] blooming; [of flowers] open in blooms. (*Typically: **be ~; come ~**.) ☐ *All the trees were out in blossom.* ☐ *The daffodils won't be out until next week.*

out in droves Go to **out in large numbers**.

***out in force** *Fig.* appearing in great strength. (*Typically: **be ~; come ~; go ~**. See also **out in large numbers**.) ☐ *What a night! The mosquitoes are out in force.* ☐ *The police went out in force over the holiday weekend.*

***out in large numbers** and ***out in droves** *Fig.* in evidence in some large amount. (*Typically: **be ~; come ~**.) ☐ *The sidewalk salesmen are out in droves today.* ☐ *The ants were out in large numbers at the picnic.*

out in left field *Fig.* offbeat; unusual and eccentric. (See also **out of left field**.) ☐ *Sally is a lot of fun, but she's sort of out in left field.* ☐ *What a strange idea. It's really out in left field.*

***out in the cold 1.** *Lit.* outdoors where it is cold. (*Typically: **be ~; keep** someone or some creature **~; leave** someone or some creature **~; put** someone or some creature **~**.) ☐ *Open the door! Let me in! Don't keep me out in the cold!* ☐ *Who left the dog out in the cold all night?* **2.** *Fig.* not informed about what is happening or has happened. (*Typically: **be ~; keep** someone **~; leave** someone **~**.) ☐ *Don't keep your supervisor out in the cold. Tell her what's going on.* ☐ *Please don't leave me out in the cold. Share the news with me!* **3.** *Fig.* excluded. (*Typically: **be ~; keep** someone **~; leave** someone **~**.) ☐ *There was a party last night, but my friends left me out in the cold.* ☐ *When it came to the final prizes in the dog show, they left our animals out in the cold.*

***out in the open 1.** *Lit.* visible in an open space; exposed in an open area. (*Typically: **be ~; bring** something **~; come ~; get ~; get** something **~**.) ☐ *The trucks are out in the open where we can see them.* ☐ *They came out in the open.* **2.** *Fig.* [for something] to be public knowledge. (*Typically: **be ~; bring** something **~; get ~; get** something **~**.) ☐ *Is this matter out in the open, or is it still secret?* ☐ *Let's get this out in the open and discuss it.*

out like a light Go to **out cold**.

out of action not operating temporarily; not functioning normally. ☐ *The pitcher was out of action for a month because of an injury.* ☐ *I will be out of action for a while.*

***out of (all) proportion** of exaggerated importance; of an unrealistic importance or size compared to something else. (*Typically: **be ~; blow** something **~; grow ~**.) ☐ *This problem has grown out of all proportion.* ☐ *Yes, this figure is way out of proportion to the others in the painting.*

***out of breath** and ***out of wind** breathing fast and hard; gasping for breath. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I ran so much that I got out of breath.* ☐ *Mary gets out of wind when she climbs stairs.*

out of character 1. unlike one's usual behavior. ☐ *Ann's remark was quite out of character.* ☐ *It was out of character for Ann to act so stubborn.* **2.** inappropriate for the character that an actor is playing. ☐ *Bill went out of character when the audience started giggling.* ☐ *Bill played the part so well that it was hard for him to get out of character after the performance.*

out of circulation 1. *Lit.* no longer available for use or lending. (Usually said of library materials, certain kinds of currency, etc.) ☐ *I'm sorry, but the book you want is temporarily out of circulation.* ☐ *How long will it be out of circulation?* **2.** *Fig.* not interacting socially with other people. ☐ *I don't know what's happening because I've been out of circulation for a while.* ☐ *My cold has kept me out of circulation for a few weeks.*

out of commission 1. *Lit.* [for a ship] to be not currently in use or under command. ☐ *This vessel will remain out of commission for another month.* ☐ *The ship has been out of commission since repairs began.* **2.** *Fig.* broken, unserviceable, or inoperable; not currently in use. ☐ *My watch is out of commission and needs a new battery.* ☐ *I can't run in the marathon because my knees are out of commission.*

out of condition Go to **out of shape**.

out of consideration (for someone or something**)** with consideration for someone or something; with kind regard for someone or something. ☐ *Out of consideration for your past efforts, I will do what you ask.* ☐ *They let me do it out of consideration. It was very thoughtful of them.*

***out of context** [of an utterance or the report of an action] removed from the surrounding context of the event, thereby misrepresenting the intent of the utterance or report. (*Typically: **be ~; lift** something **~; quote** someone or something **~; take** something **~**.) ☐ *You took her remarks out of context! You're the dishonest person, not her!*

***out of control 1.** *Lit.* [of something, such as a machine] not responding to direction or instructions. (*Typically: **be ~; go ~**.) ☐ *The computer is out of control and making funny-looking characters all over the screen.* ☐ *My CD player is out of control and only makes screeching noises.* **2.** and ***out of hand** *Fig.* acting wildly or violently. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Watch out, that dog is out of control.* ☐ *The kids got out of hand again.*

out of courtesy (to someone**)** in order to be polite to someone; out of consideration for someone. ☐ *We invited Mary's brother out of courtesy to her.* ☐ *They invited me out of courtesy.*

***out of debt** no longer owing a debt. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; get** oneself **~**.) ☐ *I've taken a second job so I can get myself out of debt.*

out of earshot *Fig.* too far from the source of a sound to hear the sound. ☐ *I was out of earshot and could not hear the conversation.* ☐ *Mary waited until her children were out of earshot before mentioning the presents she got them.*

out of fashion Go to **out of style**.

***out of favor (with** someone**)** no longer desirable or preferred by someone. (*Typically: **be ~; go ~**.) ☐ *I can't ask John to help. I'm out of favor with him.* ☐ *That kind of thing has been out of favor for years.*

***out of focus** blurred or fuzzy; seen indistinctly. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; go ~**.) ☐ *What I saw through the binoculars was sort of out of focus.* ☐ *The scene was out of focus.*

***out of gas 1.** *Lit.* without gasoline (in a car, truck, etc.). (*Typically: **be ~; run ~**.) ☐ *We can't go any farther. We're out of gas.* ☐ *This car will be completely out of gas in a few more miles.* **2.** *Fig.* tired; exhausted; worn out. (*Typ-

ically: **be ~; run ~**.) ☐ *What a day! I've been working since morning, and I'm really out of gas.* ☐ *I think the old washing machine has finally run out of gas. I'll have to get a new one.*

out of hand Go to **out of control**.

***out of harm's way** *Fig.* not liable to be harmed; away from any causes of harm. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; get someone ~**.) ☐ *We should try to get all the civilians out of harm's way.*

out of hock 1. *Lit.* [of something] bought back from a pawn shop. ☐ *When I get my watch out of hock, I will always be on time.* **2.** *Fig.* out of debt; having one's debts paid. ☐ *When I pay off my credit cards, I'll be out of hock for the first time in years.*

out of it 1. Go to **out to lunch**. **2.** intoxicated. ☐ *Two drinks and she was totally out of it.* ☐ *When they are out of it, they are quite dangerous.*

out of keeping (with something) [of something said or some behavior] failing to fit in with something. ☐ *This kind of thing is completely out of keeping with our standards of behavior.* ☐ *That is quite out of keeping with your statement of yesterday.*

***out of kilter** and ***off-kilter 1.** *Lit.* out of balance; crooked or tilted. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; knock something ~**.) ☐ *John, your tie is sort of off-kilter. Let me fix it.* ☐ *Please straighten the picture on the wall. It's out of kilter.* **2.** *Fig.* malfunctioning; **on the fritz**. (*Typically: **be ~; go ~**.) ☐ *My furnace is out of kilter. I have to call someone to fix it.* ☐ *This computer is out of kilter. It doesn't let me log on.*

out of left field suddenly; from an unexpected source or direction. (See also **out in left field**.) ☐ *Most of your ideas are out of left field.* ☐ *All of his paintings are right out of left field.*

out of line (with something) 1. *Lit.* not properly lined up in a line of things. ☐ *I told you not to get out of line. Now, get back in line.* ☐ *One of those books on the shelf is out of line with the others. Please fix it.* **2.** *Fig.* beyond certain set or assumed limits. ☐ *Your bid on this project is completely out of line with our expectations.* ☐ *The cost of this meal is out of line with what other restaurants charge.* ☐ *Your asking price is quite out of line!* **3.** *Fig.* [of something said or behavior] improper. ☐ *I'm afraid that your behavior was quite out of line. I do not wish to speak further about this matter.* ☐ *Bill, that remark was out of line. Please be more respectful.* ☐ *Your request is out of line.*

out of luck without good luck; having bad fortune. ☐ *If you wanted some ice cream, you're out of luck.* ☐ *I was out of luck. I got there too late to get a seat.*

out of necessity because of necessity; due to need. ☐ *I bought this hat out of necessity. I needed one, and this was all there was.* ☐ *We sold our car out of necessity.*

***out of nowhere** appearing suddenly, without warning. (*Typically: **appear ~; come ~; materialize ~**.) ☐ *A huge bear appeared out of nowhere and roared and threatened us.* ☐ *Suddenly, a truck came out of nowhere.* ☐ *Without warning, the storm came out of nowhere.*

***out of one's depth** *Fig.* involved in something that is beyond one's capabilities. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *You know, you are really out of your depth in this project.* ☐ *I am sure I am out of my depth in organic chemistry.*

***out of one's element** *Fig.* not in a natural or comfortable situation. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *When it comes to computers, I'm out of my element.* ☐ *Sally's out of her element in math.*

out of one's head Go to next.

***out of one's mind** and ***out of one's head; *out of one's senses** *Fig.* to be silly and senseless; to be crazy and irrational. (*Typically: **be ~; go ~**.) ☐ *Why did you do that? You must be out of your mind!* ☐ *Don't drive so fast, Tom! You have to be out of your head!*

***out of one's skull** *Sl.* intoxicated. (*Typically: **be ~; go ~**.) ☐ *Oh, man, I drank till I was out of my skull.* ☐ *Two beers and he went out of his skull.*

out of one's way Go to **out of the way**.

out of order 1. *Lit.* [of something or things] out of the proper sequence. ☐ *She noticed that the books on the shelf were out of order.* ☐ *All these cards were alphabetized, and now they're out of order.* **2.** *Fig.* [of something] incapable of operating; [of something] broken. ☐ *The elevator is out of order again.* ☐ *My stereo is out of order.* **3.** *Fig.* not following correct parliamentary procedure. ☐ *I was declared out of order by the chair.* ☐ *Anne inquired, "Isn't a motion to table the question out of order at this time?"*

***out of patience** annoyed and impatient after being patient for a while. (*Typically: **be ~; run ~**.) ☐ *I finally ran out of patience and lost my temper.* ☐ *The boss is finally out of patience with me.*

***out of place 1.** *Lit.* not in the proper place. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; knock something ~**.) ☐ *The book I wanted was out of place, and I almost did not find it.* ☐ *How did the furniture in this room get out of place?* **2.** *Fig.* inappropriate. (*Typically: **be ~; seem ~**.) ☐ *That kind of behavior is out of place at a party.* ☐ *Your crude language is out of place.* **3.** *Fig.* [of someone] awkward and unwelcome. (*Typically: **be ~; feel ~; seem ~**.) ☐ *I feel out of place at formal dances.* ☐ *Bob and Ann felt out of place at the picnic, so they went home.*

***out of practice** performing poorly due to a lack of practice. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; go ~**.) ☐ *I used to be able to play the piano extremely well, but now I'm out of practice.* ☐ *The baseball players lost the game because they were out of practice.*

out of print [for a book] to be no longer available from the publisher. ☐ *The book you want just went out of print, but perhaps I can find a used copy for you.* ☐ *It was published nearly ten years ago, so it's probably out of print.*

out of proportion Go to **out of (all) proportion**.

out of reach 1. *Lit.* not near enough to be reached or touched. ☐ *Place the cookies out of reach, or the children will eat them all.* ☐ *The mouse ran behind the piano, out of reach. The cat just sat and waited for it.* **2.** *Fig.* unattainable. ☐ *I wanted to be president, but I'm afraid that such a goal is out of reach.* ☐ *I shall choose a goal that is not out of reach.*

out of season 1. not now available for sale. ☐ *Sorry, oysters are out of season. We don't have any.* ☐ *Watermelon is out of season in the winter.* **2.** *Fig.* not now legally able to

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be hunted or caught. □ *Are salmon out of season?* □ *I caught a trout out of season and had to pay a fine.*

out of service inoperable; not currently operating. □ *Both elevators had been put out of service, so I had to use the stairs.* □ *The washroom is temporarily out of service.*

out of shape and **out of condition** not in good physical condition. □ *I get out of breath when I run because I'm out of shape.* □ *Keep exercising regularly, or you'll get out of condition.*

***out of sight 1.** not visible; too far away to be seen. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; go ~; keep ~; stay ~**.) □ *The cat kept out of sight until the mouse came out.* □ *"Get out of sight, or they'll see you!" called John.* **2.** figuratively stunning, unbelievable, or awesome. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) □ *Wow, this music is out of sight!* □ *What a wild party. It's out of sight!* **3.** *Fig.* very expensive; high in price. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; go ~**.) □ *Prices at that restaurant are out of sight.* □ *The cost of medical care has gone out of sight.* **4.** *Sl.* heavily intoxicated. (*Typically: **be ~**.) □ *They've been drinking since noon, and they're out of sight.* □ *Man, is she ever out of sight!*

Out of sight, out of mind. *Prov.* If you do not see someone or something frequently, you will forget about it. (Sometimes used to imply that you will forget about people who have moved away.) □ *Ever since I moved, none of my old friends have gotten in touch with me. It's out of sight, out of mind with them, evidently.* □ *My electric bill somehow got moved to the bottom of the stack on my desk, and I forgot all about paying it. Out of sight, out of mind.*

***out of** someone's **hands 1.** *Lit.* no longer in someone's grasp. (*Typically: **get ~; pull** something **~; take** something **~**.) □ *The police officer took the gun out of Fred's hands.* □ *The heavy tray was pulled out of my hands just in time.* **2.** *Fig.* no longer in someone's control. (*Typically: **get ~; pull** something **~; take** something **~**.) □ *The boss decided to take the project out of Roger's hands.* □ *The contract had to be gotten out of Alice's hands because she announced that she was leaving.*

out of someone's **way** Go to out of the way.

***out (of** something**) 1.** gone; having left some place; absent from a place; escaped. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) □ *The monkey is out of its cage.* □ *Sam is out of the building at present.* **2.** having no more of something. (*Typically: **be ~; run ~**.) □ *Sorry, we are fresh out of cucumbers.* □ *We ran out of catsup and mustard halfway through the picnic.* **3.** free of the responsibility of doing something. (*Typically: **get ~**.) □ *Are you trying to get out of this job?* □ *You agreed to do it, and you can't get out of it!*

***out of sorts** not feeling well; grumpy and irritable. (*Typically: **be ~; feel ~; get ~**.) □ *I've been out of sorts for a day or two. I think I'm coming down with something.* □ *The baby is out of sorts. Maybe she's getting a new tooth.*

out of spite with the desire to harm someone or something. □ *Jane told some evil gossip about Bill out of spite.* □ *That was not an accident! You did it out of spite.*

***out of step (with** someone or something**) 1.** and ***out of time (with** someone or something**)** *Lit.* out of cadence with someone else. (*Typically: **be ~; dance ~; get ~; march ~**.) □ *You've gotten out of step with the music.* □ *Pay attention, Ann. You're out of time.* **2.** *Fig.* not as up-to-date as someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) □ *John is out of step with the times.* □ *Billy missed three days and now is out of step with the rest of the class.*

out of stock not immediately available in a store; [for goods] to be temporarily unavailable. □ *Those items are out of stock, but a new supply will be delivered on Thursday.* □ *I'm sorry, but the red ones are out of stock. Would a blue one do?*

out of style and **out of fashion** not fashionable; old-fashioned; obsolete. (See also go out of fashion.) □ *John's clothes are really out of style.* □ *He doesn't care if his clothes are out of fashion.*

***out of sync** uncoordinated; unsynchronized. (An abbreviation for *synchronization*. *Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) □ *Our efforts are out of sync.* □ *My watch and your watch are out of sync.*

out of the ballpark *Fig.* beyond the amount of money suggested or available. □ *Your estimate is completely out of the ballpark. Just forget it.*

***out of the closet 1.** *Fig.* revealing one's secret interests. (*Typically: **be ~; come ~; get ~**.) □ *Tom Brown came out of the closet and admitted that he likes to knit.* □ *It's time that all of you lovers of chamber music came out of the closet and attended our concerts.* **2.** *Fig.* revealing that one is homosexual. (*Typically: **be ~; come ~; bring** someone **~**.) □ *Tom surprised his parents when he came out of the closet.* □ *It was difficult for him to be out of the closet.*

out of the corner of one's **eye** *Fig.* [seeing something] at a glance; glimpsing something, as with peripheral vision. □ *I saw someone do it out of the corner of my eye. It might have been Jane who did it.* □ *I only saw the accident out of the corner of my eye. I don't know who is at fault.*

***out of the frying pan (and) into the fire** *Fig.* from a bad situation to a worse situation. (*Typically: **get ~; go ~; jump ~**.) □ *When I tried to argue about my fine for a traffic violation, the judge charged me with contempt of court. I really went out of the frying pan into the fire.* □ *I got deeply in debt. Then I really got out of the frying pan into the fire when I lost my job.*

***out of the goodness of** one's **heart** *Fig.* simply because one is kind. (*Typically: **be** something **~; do** something **~**.) □ *What are you going to pay me? You don't expect me to do this out of the goodness of my heart, do you?*

out of the hole *Fig.* out of debt. □ *I get paid next week, and then I can get out of the hole.* □ *I can't seem to get out of the hole. I keep spending more money than I earn.*

Out of the mouths of babes (oft times come gems). *Prov.* Children occasionally say remarkable or insightful things. □ *Mr. and Mrs. Doyle were quietly bickering in the kitchen when their seven-year-old daughter came in and said, "You guys should get counseling." After a surprised pause, Mrs. Doyle remarked, "Out of the mouths of babes."* □ *Child: Don't eat so much candy, Mommy. Candy is bad for your teeth. Mother: Out of the mouths of babes oft times come gems.*

out of the ordinary unusual. □ *It was a good meal, but not out of the ordinary.* □ *Your report was nicely done, but nothing out of the ordinary.*

out of the picture *Fig.* no longer relevant to a situation; departed; dead. ☐ *Now that Tom is out of the picture, we needn't concern ourselves about his objections.* ☐ *With her husband out of the picture, she can begin living as she pleases.*

out of the question *Fig.* not allowed; not permitted. ☐ *I'm sorry, but your taking my car is out of the question.* ☐ *You can't go to Florida this spring. We can't afford it. It's out of the question.*

out of the red *Fig.* out of debt; into profitability. ☐ *This year our company is likely to get out of the red before fall.* ☐ *If we can cut down on expenses, we can get out of the red fairly soon.*

out of the running *Fig.* no longer being considered; eliminated from a contest. ☐ *After the first part of the diving meet, three members of our team were out of the running.* ☐ *After the scandal was made public, I was out of the running. I pulled out of the election.*

out of the swim of things *Fig.* not in the middle of activity; not involved in things. (The opposite of in the swim of things.) ☐ *While I had my cold, I got out of the swim of things.* ☐ *I've been out of the swim of things for a few weeks. Please bring me up-to-date.*

***out of the way 1.** and ***out of** someone's **way; *out of the road** *Lit.* not blocking or impeding the way. (*Typically: **get ~; get** someone or something **~; move** someone or something **~**.) ☐ *Please get out of my way.* ☐ *Would you please get your foot out of the way?* **2.** and ***out of** one's **way** *Fig.* not along the way; not included in the proposed route. (*Typically: **be ~**.) ☐ *I'm sorry, but I can't give you a ride home. It's out of my way.* ☐ *That route is out of our way.* **3.** *Fig.* completed; finished. (*Typically: **be ~; get** something **~; have** something **~**.) ☐ *I'm sure glad to have that test out of the way.* ☐ *I'll be happy to have all this medical stuff out of the way.*

out (of) the window *Fig.* gone; wasted. ☐ *All that work gone out the window because my computer crashed.* ☐ *My forty dollars—out the window! Why didn't I save my money?*

out of the woods *Fig.* past a critical phase; out of the unknown. ☐ *When the patient got out of the woods, everyone relaxed.* ☐ *I can give you a better prediction for your future health when you are out of the woods.*

***out of the woodwork** *Fig.* out into the open from other places or a place of concealment. (*Typically: **bring** someone or something **~; come ~; creep ~**.) ☐ *When the cake appeared, all the office people suddenly came out of the woodwork.*

out of thin air *Fig.* out of nowhere; out of nothing. ☐ *Suddenly—out of thin air—the messenger appeared.* ☐ *You just made that excuse up out of thin air.*

out of this world 1. *Fig.* wonderful and exciting. ☐ *This pie is out of this world.* ☐ *My boyfriend is just out of this world.* **2.** intoxicated. ☐ *Man, is she ever out of this world! What did she drink?* ☐ *He drank until he was out of this world.*

out of time (with someone or something**)** Go to out of step (with someone or something).

out of touch (with someone or something**)** *Fig.* knowing no news of someone or something; not keeping informed of the developments relating to someone or something. ☐ *I've been out of touch with my brother for many years.* ☐ *I couldn't go back into mechanics because I've been out of touch for too long.*

out of town temporarily not in one's own town. ☐ *I'll go out of town next week. I'm going to be at a conference.* ☐ *I take care of Mary's cat when she's out of town.*

***out of tune (with** someone or something**) 1.** *Lit.* not in musical harmony with someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *The oboe is out of tune with the flute.* ☐ *The flute is out of tune with John.* ☐ *They are all out of tune.* **2.** *Fig.* not in agreement with someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~**.) ☐ *Your proposal is out of tune with my ideas of what we should be doing.* ☐ *Your ideas are out of tune with company policy.*

out of turn not at the proper time; not in the proper or expected order. ☐ *We were permitted to be served out of turn because we had to leave early.* ☐ *Bill tried to register out of turn and was sent away.*

***out of w(h)ack 1.** crazy, silly, or irrational. (*Typically: **be ~**.) ☐ *Why do you always act as if you're out of whack?* ☐ *I'm not out of wack. I'm eccentric.* **2.** *Fig.* out of adjustment; to be out of order. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I'm afraid that my watch is out of whack.* ☐ *The elevator is out of wack. We'll have to walk up.*

out of wind Go to out of breath.

out of work unemployed; having lost one's job. ☐ *Todd was out of work for almost a year.* ☐ *Too many people were out of work, and the economy got into trouble.*

***out on a limb 1.** *Lit.* out on a limb of a tree where it is dangerous. (*Typically: **be ~; go ~**.) ☐ *It's okay to climb the tree, but don't go out on a limb and fall off.* **2.** *Fig.* in a dangerous position to do something; at risk. (*Typically: **be ~; go ~; put** someone **~**.) ☐ *I don't want to go out on a limb, but I think we can afford to do it.* ☐ *If I had to go out on a limb, I would say that it will be a month before your merchandise will be delivered.*

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out on bail out of jail after a court appearance and pending trial because bail bond money has been paid. (The money will be forfeited if the person who is out on bail does not appear for trial at the proper time.) ☐ *Bob got out on bail waiting for his trial.* ☐ *The robber committed another crime while out on bail.*

(out) on parole out of prison, conditionally, before one's total sentence is served. ☐ *Bob was caught using drugs while out on parole and was sent back to prison.* ☐ *He has to be careful and obey the law because he is out on parole.*

(out) on patrol away from a central location, watching over a distant or assigned area. (Said especially of police and soldiers.) ☐ *Officer Smith is out on patrol and cannot see you now.* ☐ *The soldiers who are on patrol on this snowy night must be very cold.*

out (on strike) to be away from one's job in a strike or protest. ☐ *The workers went out on strike.* ☐ *We can't do anything while the workers are out.*

out on the town *Fig.* celebrating at one or more places in a town. ☐ *I'm really tired. I was out on the town until dawn.* ☐ *We went out on the town to celebrate our wedding anniversary.*

Out, please. Please let me get out. (Said by someone trying to get out of an elevator. Compare this with **Coming through(, please).**) ☐ *The elevator stopped again, and someone at the back said, "Out, please."* ☐ *Jane: Out, please. This is my floor. John: I'll get out of your way. Jane: Thanks.*

out to (a meal) to be away, eating a meal. ☐ *Mary is out to lunch right now.* ☐ *Fred went out to dinner for the evening.*

out to get someone *Fig.* intending to harm someone in particular. ☐ *I know they are out to get me! They hate me!*

out to lunch 1. *Lit.* eating lunch away from one's place of work or activity. ☐ *I'm sorry, but Sally Jones is out to lunch. May I take a message?* ☐ *She's been out to lunch for nearly two hours. When will she be back?* **2.** and **out of it** *Fig.* not alert; giddy; uninformed. ☐ *Bill is really out of it. Why can't he pay attention?* ☐ *Don't be out of it, John. Wake up!* ☐ *Ann is really out to lunch these days.*

out to win determined to win. ☐ *Bobby is out to win at all costs! He can't face losing.*

out West in the western part of the United States. ☐ *We lived out West for nearly ten years.* ☐ *Do they really ride horses out West?*

***out-of-bounds 1.** *Lit.* outside the boundaries of the playing area. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; go ~**.) ☐ *The ball went out-of-bounds just at the end of the game.* ☐ *The whistle blew when Juan went out-of-bounds.* **2.** and ***off-limits** *Fig.* forbidden. (*Typically: **be ~**.) ☐ *This area is off-limits. You can't go in there.* ☐ *Don't go there. It's out-of-bounds.* ☐ *That kind of behavior is off-limits. Stop it!*

out-of-pocket expenses *Fig.* the actual amount of money spent. (Alludes to the money one person pays while doing something on someone else's behalf. One is usually paid back this money.) ☐ *My out-of-pocket expenses for the party were nearly $175.* ☐ *My employer usually reimburses all out-of-pocket expenses for a business trip.*

outside of something except for something; besides something. ☐ *Outside of the cost of my laundry, I have practically no expenses.* ☐ *Outside of some new shoes, I don't need any new clothing.*

***over a barrel** *Fig.* out of one's control; in a dilemma. (*Typically: **get someone ~; have someone ~; put someone ~**.) ☐ *He got me over a barrel, and I had to do what he said.* ☐ *Ann will do exactly what I say. I've got her over a barrel.*

over and above something *Fig.* more than something; in addition to something. ☐ *I'll need another twenty dollars over and above the amount you have already given me.* ☐ *You've been eating too much food over and above what is required for good nutrition. That's why you're gaining weight.*

***over (and done) with** finished. (*Typically: **be ~; get something ~; have something ~**.) ☐ *I'm glad that's over and done with.* ☐ *Now that I have college over and done with, I can get a job.*

Over and out. I am finished talking. (From two-way radio communications.) ☐ *That's all. Good day. Over and out.*

over and over (again) repeatedly. ☐ *She stamped her foot over and over again.* ☐ *Bill whistled the same song over and over.*

over easy *Fig.* [of eggs] turned carefully during cooking. ☐ *I want mine cooked over easy.* ☐ *Over easy eggs are better than scrambled.*

Over my dead body! *Inf. Fig.* a defiant phrase indicating the strength of one's opposition to something. (A joking response is "That can be arranged.") ☐ *Sally: Alice says she'll join the circus no matter what anybody says. Father: Over my dead body! Sally: Now, now. You know how she is.* ☐ *Bill: I think I'll rent out our spare bedroom. Sue: Over my dead body! Bill (smiling): That can be arranged.*

***over someone's head 1.** *Fig.* [of the intellectual content of something] too difficult for someone to understand. (*Typically: **be ~; go ~; pass ~**.) ☐ *All that talk about computers went over my head.* ☐ *I hope my lecture didn't go over the students' heads.* **2.** and ***over someone; *above someone** *Fig.* to an authority higher than someone. (*Typically: **be ~; go ~**.) ☐ *I don't want to have to go over your head, but I will if necessary.* ☐ *I had to go over Fran to get it done.* ☐ *My boss wouldn't listen to my complaint, so I went above her.*

over the counter *Fig.* [of medication bought or sold] without a prescription. (Hyphenated when prenominal. See also **under the counter**.) ☐ *This is a good product. You can buy it over the counter.* ☐ *I don't put much trust in over-the-counter medications.*

over the edge *Fig.* excessive; out of control. ☐ *His performance was over the edge. Too long, too dirty, and too loud!*

***over the hill 1.** *Fig. Inf.* escaped from prison or the military. (*Typically: **be ~; go ~**.) ☐ *Two privates went over the hill last night.* ☐ *They broke out of jail and went over the hill.* **2.** *Fig.* too old (for something). (*Typically: **be ~; go ~**.) ☐ *You're only fifty! You're not over-the-hill yet.* ☐ *Some people seem over-the-hill at thirty.*

over the hump 1. *Fig.* over the hard part; past the midpoint. ☐ *Things should be easy from now on. We finally got over the hump.* ☐ *When you get over the hump, life is much better.* **2.** intoxicated on drugs. ☐ *Harry is over the hump now. He is stoned.* ☐ *This stuff makes you sick at first. Then suddenly you are over the hump and floating.*

over the long haul and **in the long haul; in the long run** *Fig.* long term; over a long period of time. ☐ *Over the long haul, this model will prove best.* ☐ *This will last in the long haul.*

over the short haul and **in the short haul; in the short run** *Fig.* for the immediate future. ☐ *Over the short haul, you'd be better off to put your money in the bank.* ☐ *Over the short haul, you may wish you had done something different. But things will work out all right.*

over the top 1. *Fig.* having gained more than one's goal. ☐ *Our fund-raising campaign went over the top by $3,000.* ☐ *We didn't go over the top. We didn't even get half of what we set out to collect.* **2.** *Fig.* outrageously overdone. ☐ *The comedy sketch was so over-the-top that most of the audience was embarrassed.*

***over the wall** reaching freedom from a prison. (*Typically: **be ~; go ~**.) ☐ *Max tried to go over the wall, but they caught him.* ☐ *Lefty was over the wall for a week before that caught him.*

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***over (with)** finished; concluded. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I hope this thing gets over with pretty soon.* ☐ *When will the lecture get over?*

overdose (someone**) on** something and **overdose** someone **with** something to give someone too much of some substance, usually a drug. ☐ *The police say he overdosed on heroine.* ☐ *Sam overdosed his sister on the cough medicine.* ☐ *She overdosed herself with aspirin.*

overflow into something to spill over into something. ☐ *The river overflowed into the surrounding farmland.* ☐ *The water in the bowl overflowed into the sink.*

overflow with someone or something to have so much or so many people or things that they spill over. ☐ *The kitchen overflowed with the guests.* ☐ *My cup overflowed with coffee and spilled on the counter.*

owe someone **a debt of gratitude** a large amount of thanks owed to someone who deserves gratitude. (Actually payment of the debt is owed.) ☐ *We owe you a debt of gratitude for all you have done for us.*

owe someone **a pound of flesh** Go to a pound of flesh.

owe something **(to** someone**) (for** something**)** to be under obligation to pay or repay someone for something. ☐ *I owe forty dollars to Ann for the dinner.* ☐ *I owe money for the gift to Ann.* ☐ *I still owe money for the gift.* ☐ *Do you still owe money to Ann?*

owing to because of something; due to the fact of something. ☐ *Owing to the lateness of the evening, I must go home.* ☐ *We were late owing to the heavy traffic.*

own flesh and blood Go to flesh and blood.

own up to someone to confess or admit something to someone. ☐ *Finally, he owned up to his mother about breaking the vase.* ☐ *We had hoped he would own up to us sooner.*

own up (to something**)** to admit something; to confess to something. ☐ *I know you broke the window. Come on and own up to it.*

O

Pp

pace around and **pace about** to walk around nervously or anxiously. ☐ *Stop pacing around and sit down.* ☐ *There is no need to pace about.*

pace back and forth and **pace up and down** to walk over and over the same short route nervously or anxiously. ☐ *The leopard paced back and forth in its cage.* ☐ *I paced up and down, worrying about a variety of things.*

pace something **off†** to mark off a distance by counting the number of even strides taken while walking. ☐ *The farmer paced a few yards off and pounded a stake into the soil.* ☐ *He paced off a few yards.*

pace something **out† 1.** *Lit.* to measure a distance by counting the number of even strides taken while walking. ☐ *He paced the distance out and wrote it down.* ☐ *He paced out the distance from the door to the mailbox.* **2.** *Fig.* to deal with a problem by pacing around. ☐ *When she was upset, she walked and walked while she thought through her problem. When Ed came into the room, she was pacing a new crisis out.* ☐ *She usually paced out her anxiety.*

pace up and down Go to pace back and forth.

P

pack a punch Go to next.

pack a wallop and **pack a punch** *Fig.* to provide a burst of energy, power, or excitement. ☐ *Wow, this spicy food really packs a wallop.* ☐ *I put a special kind of gasoline in my car because I thought it would pack a punch. It didn't.*

pack down [for something] to settle down in a container. ☐ *The cereal has packed down in the box so that it seems that the box is only half full.* ☐ *Everything was packed down carefully inside.*

pack it in 1. *Fig.* to quit trying to do something; to give up trying something and quit. ☐ *I was so distressed that I almost packed it in.* ☐ *I've had enough! I'm going to pack it in.* **2.** *Fig.* to go to bed. ☐ *Good night. It's time for me to pack it in.* ☐ *We drove to a hotel and packed it in.*

a **pack of lies** a series of lies. ☐ *The thief told a pack of lies to cover up the crime.* ☐ *John listened to Bill's pack of lies about the fight and became very angry.*

pack someone **off† (to** someone or something**)** to send someone away to someone or some place. ☐ *Laura just packed all the kids off to summer camp.* ☐ *She packed off the kids to their camp.* ☐ *After a lot of planning and a few tears, she packed them all off.*

pack someone or something **in†** Go to **pack** someone or something **into** something.

pack someone or something **(in†) like sardines** *Fig.* to squeeze in as many people or things as possible. (From the way that many sardines are packed into a can.) ☐ *They packed us in like sardines. There was no room to breathe.* ☐ *They packed in the people like sardines.* ☐ *Dave got a box and packed old negatives in like sardines.*

pack someone or something **into** something and **pack** someone or something **in†** to press or push someone or something into something; to manage to get a lot of things or people into a place. ☐ *The boys packed a lot of kids into a telephone booth as a gag.* ☐ *They packed in a lot of kids.*

pack someone or something **together†** to press or squeeze people or things together. ☐ *The ushers packed the people together as much as they dared.* ☐ *They packed together all the people standing in the room.* ☐ *They packed the cups together too tightly and some broke.*

pack something **away†** to pack something up and put it away. ☐ *Pack this mirror away where it will be safe.* ☐ *Please pack away this mirror carefully.*

pack something **down†** to make something more compact; to press something in a container down so it takes less space. ☐ *The traffic packed down the snow.* ☐ *Pack the grass down in the basket so the basket will hold more.*

pack something **in** something to surround or enclose something in something. ☐ *They packed his wounded hand in ice, then took him to the hospital.* ☐ *Pack the vase in shredded paper before you close the box.*

pack something **off† (to** someone or something**)** to send something to someone or something. ☐ *I will pack the books off to you immediately.* ☐ *She packed off the books to my home address.* ☐ *Harry found the books I wanted and packed them off.*

pack something **up† (in** something**)** to prepare something to be transported by placing it into a container. ☐ *Gerry will pack the dishes up in a strong box, using lots of crumpled paper.* ☐ *Please pack up the dishes carefully.*

pack them in *Fig.* to draw a lot of people. ☐ *It was a good night at the theater. The play really packed them in.* ☐ *The circus manager knew he could pack them in if he advertised the lion tamer.*

pack up to prepare one's belongings to be transported by placing them into a container; to gather one's things together for one's departure. ☐ *If we are going to leave in the morning, we should pack up now.* ☐ *I think you should pack up and be ready to leave at a moment's notice.* ☐ *He didn't say good-bye. He just packed up and left.*

a **package deal** *Fig.* a collection or group of related goods or services sold as a unit. ☐ *I got all these tools in a package deal for only $39.95.* ☐ *What about giving me all three shirts as a package deal?*

packed (in) like sardines *Fig.* packed very tightly. ☐ *It was terribly crowded there. We were packed in like sardines.* ☐ *The bus was full. The passengers were packed like sardines.*

pad down (some place**)** *Sl.* to make one's bed somewhere, usually a casual or temporary bed. ☐ *Do you mind if I pad down at your place for the night?* ☐ *Can I pad down tonight?*

pad out *Sl.* to go to bed or to sleep. ☐ *Man, if I don't pad out by midnight, I'm a zombie.* ☐ *Why don't you people go home so I can pad out?*

pad something **out**† *Fig.* to make something appear to be larger or longer by adding unnecessary material. ☐ *If we pad the costume out here, it will make the person who wears it look much plumper.* ☐ *Let's pad out this paragraph a little.*

pad the bill *Fig.* to put unnecessary or additional items on a bill to make the total cost higher. ☐ *The plumber had padded the bill with things we didn't need.* ☐ *I was falsely accused of padding the bill.*

paddle one's **own canoe** *Fig.* to do something by oneself; to be alone. ☐ *I've been left to paddle my own canoe too many times.* ☐ *Sally isn't with us. She's off paddling her own canoe.*

a **pain in the ass** and a **pain in the butt;** a **pain in the rear** *Fig.* a very annoying thing or person. (Crude. Potentially offensive. Use only with discretion. An elaboration of *pain*. Use caution with *ass*. *Butt* is less offensive. *Rear* is euphemistic.) ☐ *That guy is a real pain in the ass.* ☐ *Things like that give me a pain in the butt.*

a **pain in the neck** *Fig.* a bother; an annoyance. ☐ *This assignment is a pain in the neck.* ☐ *Your little brother is a pain in the neck.*

a **pain in the rear** Go to a pain in the ass.

paint on something to apply paint to the surface of something. ☐ *He painted on the fence a while and then went inside to rest.* ☐ *Please don't paint on the area that is not sanded down.*

paint over something to cover something up with a layer of paint. ☐ *Sam painted over the rusty part of the fence.* ☐ *The work crew was told to paint over the graffiti.*

paint something **in**† to paint something extra onto a painted area. ☐ *I know that there is supposed to be a big white spot here. We will have to paint it in.* ☐ *We will have to paint in the spot.*

paint something **onto** something and **paint** something **on**† to apply a design or picture to something, using paint. ☐ *Joel painted the portrait onto a large sheet of plywood.* ☐ *He painted on some leaves and flowers too.*

paint something **out**† to cover something up or obliterate something by applying a layer of paint. ☐ *The worker painted the graffiti out.* ☐ *They had to paint out the graffiti.*

paint the town (red) *Sl.* to go out and celebrate; to go on a drinking bout; to get drunk. ☐ *I feel like celebrating my promotion. Let's go out and paint the town.* ☐ *They were out painting the town red last night.*

pair off [for two people or other creatures] to form a couple or pair. ☐ *All of them paired off and worked as teams to solve the puzzle.* ☐ *Everyone should pair off and discuss the issue for a while.*

pair up (with someone**)** to join with someone to make a pair. ☐ *Sally decided to pair up with Jason for the dance contest.* ☐ *Sally and Jason paired up with each other.*

pal around (with someone**)** to associate with someone as a good friend. ☐ *I like to pal around with my friends on the weekends.* ☐ *They like to pal around.* ☐ *They often palled around with each other.*

pal up (with someone**)** to join with someone as a friend. ☐ *I palled up with Henry and we had a fine time together.* ☐ *We palled up and had a fine time together.* ☐ *They palled up with each other.*

pale around the gills and **blue around the gills; green around the gills** *Fig.* looking sick. (The *around* can be replaced with *about*.) ☐ *John is looking a little pale around the gills. What's wrong?* ☐ *Oh, I feel a little green about the gills.*

***pale as a ghost** and ***pale as death** very pale. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Laura came into the room, as pale as a ghost. "What happened?" her friends gasped.* ☐ *What's the matter? You're pale as death!*

pale as death Go to previous.

pale at something to become weak, frightened, or pale from fear of something or the thought of something. ☐ *Bob paled at the thought of having to drive all the way back to get the forgotten suitcase.* ☐ *We paled at the notion that we would always be poor.*

pale beside someone or something *Fig.* to appear to be weak or unimportant when compared to someone or something. ☐ *He is competent, but he pales beside Fran.* ☐ *My meager effort pales beside your masterpiece.*

pale by comparison and **pale in comparison** *Fig.* to appear to be deficient in comparison to something else. ☐ *My work pales by comparison with yours. You are a real pro.*

pally (with someone**)** friendly or overly friendly with someone, as a pal would be. ☐ *I don't know why Sue acts so pally. I hardly know her.* ☐ *She doesn't seem pally with me.*

palm someone or something **off**† **(on** someone**) (as** someone or something**)** and **pass** someone or something **off**† **(on** someone**) (as** someone or something**); pawn** someone or something **off**† **(on** someone**) (as** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to give someone or something to someone as a gift that appears to be someone or something desirable. (As if the gift had been concealed in one's palm until it was gotten rid of.) ☐ *Are you trying to palm that annoying client off on me as a hot prospect?* ☐ *Don't palm off that pest on me.* ☐ *Please don't pass that problem off on me as a challenge.* ☐ *Don't pass it off on me!* ☐ *Don't pawn it off on me as something of value.*

pan across to someone or something to turn or rotate a film or television camera so that the picture follows movement or moves to and settles on someone or something. ☐ *The camera panned across to Mary, who was sitting, looking out the window.* ☐ *The camera operator panned across to the window on the opposite side of the room.*

pan for something to search for a precious metal, usually gold, by using a pan to locate the bits of metal in sand and gravel in a stream bed. ☐ *When I was in Alaska, I panned for gold in a little stream set aside for tourists.* ☐ *The old prospector spent many hours panning for gold.*

pan in (on someone or something**)** Go to zoom in (on someone or something).

pan out 1. and **zoom out** to move back to a wider angle picture using a zoom lens. ☐ *The camera zoomed out.* ☐ *Pan out at this point in the script and give a wider view of the scene.* **2.** Go to turn out (all right).

pan over someone or something to turn or rotate a film or television camera so that the picture moves across a view

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of someone or something. □ *The camera panned over the skyline, picking up interesting cloud formations.* □ *It panned over Roger as if he weren't there—which is exactly the effect the director wanted.*

pander to someone or something to cater toward undesirable tastes or people with undesirable tastes. □ *All your writing seems to pander to persons with poor taste.* □ *You are pandering to the moral dregs of society.*

panic at something to lose control in a frightening or shocking situation. □ *Try not to panic at what you see. It will be a shock.* □ *Don't panic at the price of food. It will be worse next week.*

panic someone **by** something to make someone lose control by doing something. □ *She panicked Denise by describing the event too vividly.* □ *She panicked her horse by jerking the reins too tightly.*

pant for air to breathe fast and hard in need of air. □ *The dog was panting for air.* □ *I was panting for air after my long climb.*

pant for someone or something *Fig.* to desire or long for someone or something. □ *My heart is panting for you!* □ *I am just panting for some interesting news.*

pant something **out†** to tell something while panting for breath. □ *Laura had been running but she was able to pant the name of the injured person out.* □ *She panted out the name.*

paper over something **1.** *Lit.* to put a layer of wallpaper on a wall. □ *We papered over the wall, giving the room a bright, new look.* □ *We papered over the old plaster on the wall.* **2.** to cover up some sort of blemish on a wall with wallpaper. □ *We papered over a lot of little cracks.* □ *Sam papered over all the flaws in the plaster wall.* **3.** *Fig.* to conceal something; to cover something up. □ *Don't try to paper over the mess you have made.* □ *George tried to paper over all his mistakes.*

paper over the cracks (in something**)** *Fig.* to try to hide faults or difficulties, often in a hasty or not very successful way. (Based on **paper over** something ②.) □ *The politician tried to paper over the cracks in his party's economic policy.* □ *Tom tried to paper over the cracks in his relationship with the boss, but it was not possible.* □ *She didn't explain it. She just papered over the cracks.*

*a **paper trail** *Fig.* a series of records that is possible to examine to find out the sequence of things that happen. (*Typically: **have ~; leave ~; make ~**.) □ *The legal department requires all these forms so that there is a paper trail of all activity.*

par for the course typical; about what one could expect. (This refers to golf courses, not school courses.) □ *So he went off and left you? Well that's about par for the course. He's no friend.* □ *I worked for days on this proposal, but it was rejected. That's par for the course around here.*

parade by (someone) to march past someone in a parade or as if in a parade. □ *The soldiers paraded by the commander in chief.* □ *Looking quite sharp, they paraded by.*

parade someone or an animal **out†** to bring or march someone or an animal out in public. □ *He parades his children out every Sunday as they go to church.* □ *He paraded out all his children.*

parade someone or something **in front of** someone or something to exhibit someone or something in front of someone or something, as if in a parade. □ *One by one, the teacher paraded the honor students in front of the parents.* □ *The sheriff paraded the suspects in front of the camera.* □ *The sheriff paraded the suspects in front of the victim.*

a **paradise (on earth)** *Fig.* a place on earth that is as lovely as paradise. □ *The retirement home was simply a paradise on earth.* □ *The beach where we went for our vacation was a paradise.*

parcel someone or something **out†** *Fig.* to divide up and send or give away people or things. □ *Carla parceled all the uniforms out so everyone would have one to wear for the parade.* □ *We will parcel out the children for the summer.*

parcel something **up†** to wrap something up in a package. □ *Would you parcel the papers up and set them in the corner?* □ *Parcel up the files and place them on top of the file cabinet.*

Pardon (me). Go to Excuse me.

Pardon me for living! *Inf.* a very indignant response to a criticism or rebuke. □ *Fred: Oh, I thought you had already taken yourself out of here! Sue: Well, pardon me for living!* □ *Tom: Butt out, Mary! Bill and I are talking. Mary: Pardon me for living!*

Pardon my French. and **Excuse my French.** *Inf.* Excuse my use of swear words or taboo words. (Does not refer to real French.) □ *Pardon my French, but this is a hell of a day.* □ *What she needs is a kick in the ass, if you'll excuse my French.*

pardon someone **for** something **1.** to excuse someone for doing something. □ *Will you please pardon me for what I did?* □ *I can't pardon her for that.* **2.** to excuse and release a convicted criminal. □ *The governor pardoned Max for his crime.* □ *The governor did not pardon any drug dealers for their crimes.*

pare something **down† (to** something**)** to cut someone down to something or a smaller size. □ *I will have to pare the budget down to the minimum.* □ *I hope we can pare down the budget.* □ *After much arguing, we pared it down.*

pare something **off (of)** something and **pare** something **off†** to cut something off something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) □ *See if you can pare a bit of this extra wood off the edge of the base of this pillar.* □ *Pare off some of the wood.*

park it (somewhere**)** *Inf.* sit down somewhere; sit down and get out of the way. □ *Hey, park it! You're in the way.* □ *Richard, park it over there in the corner. Stop pacing around. You make me nervous.*

parlay something **into** something *Fig.* to exploit an asset in such a way as to increase its value to some higher amount. □ *She is trying to parlay her temporary job into a full-time position.* □ *Alice parlayed her inheritance into a small fortune by investing in the stock market.*

parley with someone *Fig.* to talk with someone. □ *I need to parley with my brother before making a financial commitment.* □ *We need to parley with each other sometime soon.*

part and parcel Go to bag and baggage.

part company (with someone**)** *Fig.* to leave someone; to depart from someone. ☐ *Tom finally parted company with his brother.* ☐ *They parted company, and Tom got in his car and drove away.*

part from someone to leave someone. ☐ *I just hate parting from you.* ☐ *I must part from her now.*

a **part in** something Go to a **hand in** something.

part over something [for people] to separate because of something. ☐ *We had to part over our disagreement.* ☐ *They parted over a very small matter.*

part someone or an animal **from** someone or an animal to take someone or an animal away from someone or some other animal. ☐ *It was difficult to part the mother dog from her puppies.* ☐ *I hated to part the mother from her child.*

part someone's **hair 1.** *Lit.* to divide someone's hair into separate sections while combing it. ☐ *The barber asked me where I parted my hair.* **2.** *Fig.* to come very close to someone. (Usually an exaggeration.) ☐ *That plane flew so low that it nearly parted my hair.* ☐ *He punched at me and missed. He only parted my hair.*

part with someone or something to give up or let go of someone or something. ☐ *She did not want to part with her friend.* ☐ *I could never part with my books.*

partake in something to participate in something. ☐ *Valerie does not care to partake in those childish games.* ☐ *I would like to partake in the fun.*

partake of something **1.** to have a portion of something, such as food or drink. ☐ *Would you care to partake of this apple pie with me?* ☐ *I would like to partake of that fine dinner I see set out on the table.* **2.** to take part in or experience something. ☐ *Sarah had always wanted to partake of the good life.* ☐ *Roger had no intention of partaking of the events offered at the fair.*

***partial to** someone or something favoring or preferring someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *The boys think their teacher is partial to female students.* ☐ *I am partial to vanilla ice cream.*

partially sighted *Euph.* not able to see well. ☐ *Carrie is partially sighted, but she is not able to see well enough to read.* ☐ *I am not blind. I am partially sighted.*

participate (in something**) (with** someone or something**)** to take part in something with someone or a group. ☐ *I will not participate in this activity with you.* ☐ *They don't participate with our team in this contest.*

the **particulars of** something specific details about something. ☐ *My boss stressed the important particulars of the project.* ☐ *What are the particulars of your request?*

a **parting of the ways** a point at which people separate and go their own ways. (Often with *come to a, arrive at a, reach a,* etc.) ☐ *Jane and Bob finally came to a parting of the ways.* ☐ *Bill and his parents reached a parting of the ways.*

partition something **into** something to divide or separate something into something [smaller]. ☐ *I will partition this room into two separate spaces.* ☐ *Do you think you can partition this box into four compartments so we can store files by quarter?*

partition something **off**† to divide off a section of something. ☐ *They planned to partition the basement off.* ☐ *We will partition off a larger area.*

partners in crime 1. *Fig.* persons who cooperate in committing a crime or a deception. (Usually an exaggeration.) ☐ *The sales manager and the used-car salesmen are nothing but partners in crime.* **2.** persons who cooperate in some legal task. ☐ *The legal department and payroll are partners in crime as far as the average worker is concerned.*

the **party line** *Fig.* the official ideas and attitudes that are adopted by the leaders of a particular group and that the other members are expected to accept. ☐ *Tom has left the club. He refused to follow the party line.* ☐ *Many politicians agree with the party line without thinking.*

The **party's over.** *Fig.* A happy or fortunate time has come to an end. ☐ *We go back to school tomorrow. The party's over.* ☐ *The staff hardly worked at all under the old management, but they'll find the party's over now.*

a **party to** something a participant in something; someone who is involved in something. ☐ *I refuse to be a party to your dishonest plan!*

pass as someone or something to succeed in being accepted as someone or something. ☐ *The spy was able to pass as a regular citizen.* ☐ *The thief was arrested when he tried to pass as a priest.*

pass away and **pass on** *Euph.* to die. ☐ *My aunt passed away last month.* ☐ *When I pass on, I won't care about the funeral.*

pass by (someone or something**)** to move or travel past someone, something, or some place. ☐ *Please don't pass by me so fast.* ☐ *If you pass by a large white house with a red roof, you have gone too far.*

pass for someone or something to be accepted as someone, some type of person, or something. ☐ *You could pass for your twin brother.* ☐ *This painting could almost pass for the original.*

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pass for something to pay for something; to treat someone by paying for something. ☐ *Come on. Let's go out. I'll pass for dinner.* ☐ *I'll pass for drinks if you want.*

pass from something to fade away from something; to go away gradually. ☐ *The larger trees had passed from the scene years ago.* ☐ *The exact details passed from Harry's memory some time ago.*

pass gas *Euph.* to release intestinal gas through the anus. ☐ *Someone on the bus had passed gas. It smelled awful.* ☐ *Something I ate at lunch made me pass gas all afternoon.*

pass in review [for marchers] to move past an important person for a visual examination. ☐ *All the soldiers passed in review on the Fourth of July.* ☐ *As they passed in review, each of them saluted the officers on the reviewing stand.*

pass into something to move into something; to fade away into something. ☐ *Thoughts about the accident, little by little, passed into oblivion.* ☐ *All her old school chums passed into oblivion.*

pass judgment (on someone or something**)** to make a judgment about someone or something. ☐ *I should not pass judgment on you, but I certainly could give you some good advice about how to be more pleasant.* ☐ *The judge*

passed judgment on the defendant, who was then taken away to prison.

pass muster *Fig.* to measure up to the required standards. ☐ *I tried, but my efforts didn't pass muster.* ☐ *If you don't wear a jacket and tie, you won't pass muster at that fancy restaurant. They won't let you in.*

pass on Go to pass away.

pass on someone or something to accept or approve someone or something. ☐ *She refused to pass on Ted, so he will not be appointed.* ☐ *The committee passed on the proposal, so work can now begin.*

pass out to faint; to lose consciousness. ☐ *Oh, look! Tom has passed out.* ☐ *When he got the news, he passed out.*

pass over (someone or something**) 1.** to skip over someone or something; to fail to select someone or something. ☐ *I was next in line for a promotion, but they passed over me.* ☐ *I passed over the bruised apples and picked out the nicest ones.* **2.** to pass above someone or something. ☐ *A cloud passed over our little group, cooling us a little.* ☐ *The huge blimp passed over the little community.*

pass over someone's **head** Go to over someone's head.

pass sentence on someone **1.** *Lit.* [for a judge] to read out the sentence of punishment for a convicted criminal. ☐ *It is my job as judge to pass sentence on you.* ☐ *The judge was about to pass sentence on Max—ten years in prison.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to render a judgment on another person in the manner of a judge. ☐ *You have no right to pass judgment on me!* ☐ *I wish you wouldn't pass judgment on everyone around you.*

pass someone **on† (to** someone**)** to send, hand, or conduct a person to someone else. ☐ *I passed the baby on to the next admiring relative.* ☐ *She passed on the baby to her aunt.*

pass someone or something **by†** to miss someone or something; to overlook someone or something. ☐ *The storm passed by the town leaving it unharmed.* ☐ *The teacher passed me by and chose the next person in line.*

pass someone or something **off† (on** someone**) (as** someone or something**)** Go to palm someone or something off† (on someone) (as someone or something).

pass someone or something **up† 1.** to fail to select someone or something. ☐ *The committee passed Jill up and chose Kelly.* ☐ *They passed up Jill.* **2.** to travel past someone or something. ☐ *We had to pass the museum up, thinking we could visit the next time we were in town.* ☐ *We passed up a hitchhiker.*

pass something **along† (to** someone**) 1.** to give or hand something to someone. ☐ *Would you kindly pass this along to Hillary?* ☐ *Please pass along my advice to Wally over there.* **2.** to relay some information to someone. ☐ *I hope you don't pass this along to anyone, but I am taking a new job next month.* ☐ *Could you pass along my message to Fred?*

pass something **around† (to** someone**)** to offer something to everyone. ☐ *Please pass the snacks around to everyone.* ☐ *Would you pass around the snacks?*

pass something **back (to** someone**)** to return something by hand to someone. ☐ *Kelly passed the pictures back to Betty.* ☐ *They weren't Betty's and she passed them back to Beth.*

pass something **down† (to** someone**)** and **pass** something **on (to** someone**) 1.** to send something down a line of people to someone. (Each person hands it to the next.) ☐ *Please pass this down to Mary at the end of the row.* ☐ *Pass down this box to Mary.* **2.** to will something to someone. ☐ *My grandfather passed this watch down to me.* ☐ *He passed on the watch to me.*

pass something **forward** to send something toward the front of a group of people. (Each person hands it to the next.) ☐ *Please pass this forward to the front of the room.* ☐ *Would you pass this book forward, please?*

pass something **in† (to** someone**)** and **hand** something **in† (to** someone**)** to turn in or hand in something, such as a school assignment, paper, etc., to someone. ☐ *They were told to pass their papers in to the teacher.* ☐ *Hand in your papers to me.*

pass something **off†** Go to pass something off (on someone) (as something).

pass something **off (as** something**)** Go to shrug something off (as something).

pass something **off (on** someone**) (as** something**)** and **pass** something **off†** to get rid of something deceptively by giving or selling it to someone as something else. ☐ *I passed the rhinestone off on John as a diamond.* ☐ *Don't try to pass that fake off on me!* ☐ *He couldn't pass off the stone on the clever jeweler.*

pass something **on† 1.** *Lit.* to hand or give something (to another person). ☐ *Have a piece of toffee and pass the box on.* ☐ *Please pass on this book to the next person on the list.* **2.** *Fig.* to tell someone something; to spread news or gossip. ☐ *Don't pass this on, but Bill isn't living at home any more.* ☐ *I refuse to pass on rumors.*

pass something **on (to** someone**)** Go to pass something down† (to someone).

pass something **out† (to** someone**)** to distribute something to someone. ☐ *Please pass these out to everyone.* ☐ *Pass out these papers to everyone.*

pass something **over (to** someone**)** to send something to someone farther down in a line of people. (Each person hands it to the next.) ☐ *Please pass this paper over to Jane.* ☐ *Would you pass this paper over to Jane?*

pass something **to** someone to hand or send something to someone, usually by way of a number of other people. ☐ *Please pass this paper to Betty.* ☐ *Who passed this to me?*

pass the buck *Fig.* to pass the blame (to someone else); to give the responsibility (to someone else). (See also The buck stops here.) ☐ *Don't try to pass the buck! It's your fault, and everybody knows it.* ☐ *Some people try to pass the buck whenever they can.*

pass the hat (around†) (to someone**)** *Fig.* to collect donations of money from people. (Could also be literal.) ☐ *Jerry passed the hat around to all the other workers.* ☐ *He passed around the hat to everyone.* ☐ *I'll pass the hat around.*

pass the time (of day) to spend time doing something; to consume or use spare time by doing something. ☐ *I read to pass the time while waiting in the doctor's office.* ☐ *I passed the time of day by talking to Dave.*

pass the time of day (with someone**)** to chat or talk informally with someone. ☐ *I saw Mr. Brown in town yesterday. I stopped and passed the time of day with him.* ☐ *No, we didn't have a serious talk; we just passed the time of day.*

pass through someone to be digested through the bowels of someone. ☐ *This fruit should pass through you in no time at all.* ☐ *He will be better when the offending food passes through him.*

pass through someone's **mind** and **cross** someone's **mind** *Fig.* [for a thought] to come to mind briefly; [for an idea] to occur to someone. ☐ *Let me tell you what just crossed my mind.* ☐ *As you were speaking, something passed through my mind that I'd like to discuss.*

pass through something to travel through something or some place. ☐ *I passed through the countryside and breathed the good clean air.* ☐ *Perhaps I will stop and visit Joe the next time I pass through Adamsville.*

pass under something to move or travel beneath something. ☐ *The ship slowly passed under the bridge.* ☐ *Harry counted the cars as they passed under the bridge.*

passport to something *Fig.* something that allows something good to happen. ☐ *John's new girlfriend is his passport to happiness.* ☐ *Anne's new job is a passport to financial security.*

past caring *Fig.* [of someone] beyond caring about someone or something that is hopeless. ☐ *I don't care what you do! I'm past caring!*

*****a **past master at** something *Fig.* someone proven extremely good or skillful at an activity. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *Mary is a past master at cooking omelets.* ☐ *Pam is a past master at the art of complaining.*

past someone's or something's **prime** *Fig.* beyond the most useful or productive period. ☐ *Joan was a wonderful singer, but she's past her prime now.* ☐ *This old car's past its prime. I'll need to get a new one.*

paste someone **one** *Sl.* to land a blow on someone. ☐ *I pasted him one right on the nose.* ☐ *Next time you do that, I'll paste you one!*

paste something **down**† to secure something down [onto something] with paste or glue. ☐ *The poster will look better if you will paste the loose edges down.* ☐ *Please paste down the edges.*

paste something **on** someone **1.** *Lit.* to affix something to someone with paste or glue. ☐ *We had to paste a mustache on her for the last scene of the play.* ☐ *They pasted beards on themselves too.* **2.** *Sl.* to charge someone with a crime. ☐ *You can't paste that charge on me! Max did it!* ☐ *The cops pasted a robbery charge on Lefty "Fingers" Moran.* **3.** *Sl.* to land a blow on someone. (See also **paste** someone **one**.) ☐ *If you do that again, I'll paste one on you.* ☐ *Max pasted a nasty blow on Lefty's chin.*

paste something **up**† **1.** to repair something with paste. ☐ *See if you can paste this book up so it will hold together.* ☐ *Paste up the book and hope it holds together for a while.* **2.** to assemble a complicated page of material by pasting the parts together. ☐ *There is no way a typesetter can get this page just the way you want it. You'll have to paste it up yourself.* ☐ *Paste up this page again and let me see it.*

a **pat answer** a quick, easy answer; a simplified or evasive answer. ☐ *Don't just give them a pat answer. Give some more explanation and justification. Otherwise you will just end up answering a lot more questions.*

pat someone **on the back** and **give** someone **a pat on the back 1.** *Lit.* to pat someone's back to show praise. ☐ *The coach patted each player on the back after the game.* **2.** *Fig.* to praise someone for something. ☐ *The teacher patted all the students on the back for their good work.* ☐ *They were patting themselves on the back for winning when the final whistle blew.*

pat someone or something **on** something to tap someone or something on a particular place with the open hand. ☐ *She patted the child on the bottom.* ☐ *I patted the car on its hood to show how proud I was of it.*

pat something **down**† to tap something down with the open hand. ☐ *I heaped some soil over the seeds and patted it down.* ☐ *I patted down the soil.*

patch a quarrel up† *Fig.* to put an end to a quarrel; to reconcile quarreling parties. ☐ *Tom and Fred were able to patch their quarrel up.* ☐ *I hope we can patch up this quarrel.*

patch someone **up**† to give medical care to someone. ☐ *That cut looks bad, but the doc over there can patch you up.* ☐ *The doc patched up my friend.*

patch something **together (with** something**)** to use something to repair something hastily or temporarily. ☐ *I think I can patch the exhaust pipe together with some wire.* ☐ *See if you can patch this engine together well enough to run for a few more hours.*

patch something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to repair something in a hurry; to make something temporarily serviceable again. ☐ *Can you patch this up so I can use it again?* ☐ *I'll patch up the hose for you.* **2.** *Fig.* to "repair" the damage done by an argument or disagreement. ☐ *Mr. and Mrs. Smith are trying to patch things up.* ☐ *We patched up our argument, then kissed and made up.*

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the **path of least resistance** *Fig.* the easiest course to follow; the easiest route. (Often with *follow the* or *take the*.) ☐ *John will follow the path of least resistance.* ☐ *I like challenges. I won't usually take the path of least resistance.*

Patience is a virtue. *Prov.* It is good to be patient. ☐ *Jill: I wish Mary would hurry up and call me back! Jane: Patience is a virtue.* ☐ *Fred: The doctor has kept us waiting for half an hour! If he doesn't call us into his office pretty soon, I may do something violent. Ellen: Calm down, dear. Patience is a virtue.*

***patient as Job** very patient. (Alludes to the biblical figure Job. *Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *If you want to teach young children, you must be as patient as Job.* ☐ *The director who is working with that temperamental actor must have the patience of Job.*

the **patter of tiny feet** the sound of young children; having children in the household. ☐ *I really liked having the patter of tiny feet in the house.* ☐ *Darling, I think we're going to be hearing the patter of tiny feet soon.*

pattern something **after** something to use something as an example or model when making something. ☐ *I patterned my house after one I saw in England.* ☐ *She wanted to pattern her coat after her mother's.*

pattern something **on** something to use something as a model for something else. ☐ *Try to pattern your sales speech on Jane's. She's got it just right.* ☐ *We patterned our approach on Bob's.*

pave the way (for someone or something**) (with** something**)** *Fig.* to prepare the way with something for someone to come or something to happen. (Alludes to paving a road.) ☐ *I will pave the way for her with an introduction.* ☐ *I am sure I can pave the way for your success.* ☐ *I will pave the way with an introduction.*

pawn someone or something **off† (on** someone**) (as** someone or something**)** Go to **palm** someone or something **off† (on** someone**) (as** someone or something**).**

pay a call *Euph.* to go to the toilet; to leave to go to the toilet. (See also **pay a call on** someone.) ☐ *Excuse me. I have to pay a call.* ☐ *Tom left to pay a call. He should be back soon.*

pay a call on someone to visit someone. ☐ *Grandmother always paid us a call on Sundays.* ☐ *Let's pay a call on Mary at the hospital.*

pay a king's ransom Go to a **king's ransom.**

pay a visit to someone or something Go to **pay (**someone or something**) a visit.**

pay an arm and a leg (for something**)** and **pay through the nose (for** something**)** *Fig.* to pay too much [money] for something. ☐ *I hate to have to pay an arm and a leg for a tank of gas.* ☐ *If you shop around, you won't have to pay an arm and a leg.* ☐ *Why should you pay through the nose?*

pay as you go to pay costs as they occur; to pay for goods as they are bought (rather than charging them). ☐ *You ought to pay as you go. Then you won't be in debt.* ☐ *If you pay as you go, you'll never spend too much money.*

pay attention (to someone or something**)** to give attention (to someone or something). ☐ *Please pay attention to the teacher.* ☐ *Max always pays careful attention to what is being told to him.*

pay by something **1.** *Lit.* to use something as a medium of payment. ☐ *Will you pay by cash or check?* ☐ *The bill was paid by check.* **2.** *Fig.* to pay by a certain time. ☐ *You will have to pay by the end of the month or we will cancel your lease.* ☐ *I promise I will pay by the end of the month.*

pay court to someone *Fig.* to solicit someone's attention; to woo someone. ☐ *The lawyer was thought to be paying court to too many politicians.* ☐ *The lobbyist paid court to all the influential members of Congress.*

pay for something **1.** *Lit.* to pay out money for something. ☐ *Did you pay for the magazine, or shall I?* ☐ *No, I'll pay for it.* **2.** *Fig.* to suffer punishment for something. ☐ *The criminal will pay for his crimes.* ☐ *I don't like what you did to me, and I'm going to see that you pay for it.* ☐ *Max paid for his wicked ways.*

pay heed to someone to listen to and accommodate someone. ☐ *You had better pay heed to your father!* ☐ *They are not paying heed to what I told them.*

pay homage to someone or something to openly honor or worship someone or something. ☐ *Do you expect me to pay homage to your hero?* ☐ *I refuse to pay homage to your principles.*

pay in advance to pay (for something) before it is received or delivered. ☐ *I want to make a special order. Will I have to pay in advance?* ☐ *Yes, please pay in advance.*

pay into something to pay money into an account. ☐ *I intend to pay into my vacation account until I have enough for a nice vacation.* ☐ *We paid a lot into our savings account this month.*

pay lip service (to something**)** *Fig.* to express loyalty, respect, or support for something insincerely. ☐ *You don't really care about politics. You're just paying lip service to the candidate.* ☐ *Don't sit here and pay lip service. Get busy!*

pay off to yield profits; to result in benefits. ☐ *My investment in those stocks has really paid off.* ☐ *The time I spent in school paid off in later years.*

pay on something to make a payment against a bill. ☐ *You have to pay on this every month or we will repossess it.* ☐ *How much do you plan to pay on the car per month?*

pay one's **debt (to society)** *Cliché* to serve a sentence for a crime, usually in prison. ☐ *The judge said that Mr. Simpson had to pay his debt to society.* ☐ *Mr. Brown paid his debt in state prison.*

pay one's **dues 1.** *Lit.* to pay the fees required to belong to an organization. ☐ *If you haven't paid your dues, you can't come to the club picnic.* ☐ *How many people have paid their dues?* **2.** *Fig.* to have earned one's right to something through hard work or suffering. ☐ *He worked hard to get to where he is today. He paid his dues and did what he was told.* ☐ *I have every right to be here. I paid my dues!*

pay one's **last respects (to** someone**)** to go to someone's funeral. ☐ *I paid my last respects to Mr. Kantor yesterday.* ☐ *Scores of people came to pay their last respects.*

pay one's **own way** to pay for one's own transportation, entrance fees, tickets, room, board, etc. ☐ *I wanted to go to Florida this spring, but my parents say I have to pay my own way.*

pay someone **a backhanded compliment** and **pay** someone **a left-handed compliment** *Fig.* to give someone a false compliment that is really an insult or criticism. ☐ *John said that he had never seen me looking better. I think he was paying me a left-handed compliment.* ☐ *I'd prefer that someone insulted me directly. I hate it when someone pays me a backhanded compliment—unless it's a joke.*

pay someone **a compliment** *Fig.* to give someone a compliment. ☐ *Tom paid Bill a compliment when he told him he was intelligent.* ☐ *Mary was very gracious when Anne paid her a compliment.*

pay someone **a left-handed compliment** Go to **pay** someone **a backhanded compliment.**

pay someone **a pound of flesh** Go to a **pound of flesh.**

pay someone **back† 1.** *Lit.* to return money that was borrowed from a person. ☐ *You owe me money. When are you going to pay me back?* ☐ *You must pay John back. You have owed him money for a long time.* ☐ *You have to pay back everyone you owe money to.* **2.** *Fig.* to get even with someone [for doing something]. ☐ *I will pay her back for what she said about me.* ☐ *Fred eventually will pay Mike back. He bears grudges for a long time.* ☐ *He intends to pay back everyone who has wronged him!*

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pay someone **(for** something**) (with** something**)** to make payment with something to someone for something or for doing something. ☐ *I will pay you for the loan you made me with the money I get from selling my car.* ☐ *I will pay you with a check.*

pay someone **off**† **1.** *Lit.* to pay what is owed to a person. ☐ *I can't pay you off until Wednesday when I get my paycheck.* ☐ *I have to use this money to pay off Sarah.* **2.** *Fig.* to bribe someone. ☐ *Max asked Lefty if he had paid the cops off yet.* ☐ *Lefty paid off the cops on time.*

pay (someone or something**) a visit** and **pay a visit to** someone or something to visit someone or something. ☐ *Bill paid a visit to his aunt in Seattle.* ☐ *Please pay a visit to our house whenever you are in town.*

pay someone **respect** to honor someone; to have and show respect for someone. ☐ *You really should pay your boss more respect.* ☐ *We have to pay our parents a lot of respect.*

pay someone's **way** to pay the costs (of something) for a person. ☐ *My aunt is going to pay my way to Florida—only if I take her with me!*

pay something **back**† **(to** someone**)** to repay someone. ☐ *I paid the money back to Jerry.* ☐ *Can I pay back the money to George now?* ☐ *Please pay the money back now.*

pay something **down**† **1.** *Lit.* to make a deposit of money on a purchase. ☐ *You will have to pay a lot of money down on a car that expensive.* ☐ *I only paid down a few thousand dollars.* **2.** *Fig.* to reduce a bill by paying part of it, usually periodically. ☐ *I think I can pay the balance down by half in a few months.* ☐ *I will pay down the balance a little next month.*

pay something **into** something and **pay** something **in**† to pay an amount of money into an account. ☐ *Mary paid forty dollars into my account by mistake.* ☐ *She paid in a lot of money.* ☐ *I have an account here and I want to pay something in.*

pay something **off**† to pay all of a debt; to pay the final payment for something bought on credit. ☐ *This month I'll pay the car off.* ☐ *Did you pay off the gas bill yet?*

pay something **out**† to unravel or unwind wire or rope as it is needed. (See also **play** something **out**.) ☐ *One worker paid the cable out, and another worker guided it into the conduit.* ☐ *The worker paid out the cable.*

pay something **out**† **(for** someone or something**)** to disburse or spend money for someone or something. ☐ *We have already paid too much money out for your education.* ☐ *We paid out too much money.*

pay something **out**† **(to** someone**)** to pay money to someone. ☐ *The utility paid one hundred dollars out to everyone who had been overcharged.* ☐ *They paid out money to every customer.*

pay something **up**† to pay all of whatever is due; to complete all the payments on something. ☐ *Would you pay up your bills, please?* ☐ *Your dues are all paid up.*

pay the penalty 1. *Lit.* to pay a fine for doing something wrong. ☐ *You ran the red light and now you will have to pay the penalty.* **2.** *Fig.* to suffer the consequences for doing something wrong. ☐ *My head really hurts. I am paying the penalty for getting drunk last night.*

pay the piper *Fig.* to face the results of one's actions; to receive punishment for something. ☐ *You can put off paying your debts only so long. Eventually you'll have to pay the piper.* ☐ *You can't get away with that forever. You'll have to pay the piper someday.*

pay the price 1. *Lit.* to pay the price that is asked for goods or services. (Usually implying that the price is high.) ☐ *If this is the quality of goods that you require, you will have to pay the price.* **2.** *Fig.* to suffer the consequences for doing something or risking something. ☐ *Oh, my head! I am paying the price for drinking too much last night.*

pay through something to make payment through an intermediary, such as a bank. ☐ *I will pay the bill through my bank in New York.* ☐ *Sam had to pay through his brokerage account.*

pay through the nose (for something**)** Go to **pay an arm and a leg (for** something**)**.

pay to do something to be beneficial to do something; to be profitable. ☐ *It doesn't pay to drive downtown when you can take the train.* ☐ *It pays to take an umbrella with you if it's supposed to rain.*

pay tribute to someone or something *Fig.* to salute someone or something; to give public recognition to someone or something. ☐ *Many of Judy's friends gathered to pay tribute to her.* ☐ *We will have a reception to pay tribute to the work of the committee.*

pay up to pay what is owed. (Often a command: **Pay up!**) ☐ *I want my money now. Pay up!* ☐ *If you don't pay up, I'll take you to court.*

peace of mind *Fig.* a tranquility that results from not having worries, guilt, or problems. ☐ *If peace of mind is more important to you than earning a lot of money, maybe you should consider teaching.*

peal out [for bells or voices] to sound forth musically. ☐ *The bells pealed out to announce that the wedding had taken place.* ☐ *All six of the bells seemed to peal out at once.*

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peck at something **1.** *Lit.* [for a bird] to poke someone or something with its beak. ☐ *The bird pecked at the ground, snatching up the ants.* ☐ *I tried to hold on to the bird but it pecked at me hard.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to eat just a little bit of something, being as picky as a bird. ☐ *Are you well, Betty? You are just pecking at your food.* ☐ *Please don't peck at your food. You should eat everything.*

peck something **up**† [for a bird] to eat something up by pecking at it. ☐ *The chickens pecked all the grain up.* ☐ *The birds pecked up the grain.*

peek at someone or something to sneak a glimpse at someone or something. ☐ *Now, don't peek at me while I am changing my shirt.* ☐ *I peeked at the dessert you made. It looks delicious.*

peek in (on someone or something**)** to glance quickly into a place to see someone or something. ☐ *Would you please peek in on the baby?*

peek in(to something**)** to steal a quick glimpse into something. ☐ *Sam peeked into the oven to see what was cooking.* ☐ *Laura opened the oven door and peeked in.*

peek out (from behind someone or something**) 1.** to look outward from behind someone or something. ☐ *A shy kitten peeked out from behind the sofa.* ☐ *I looked toward the*

back of the sofa just as a little cat face peeked out. **2.** to show just a little bit with the rest concealed behind someone or something. ☐ *A bit of yellow peeked out from behind the tree, so we knew Frank was hiding there.* ☐ *We saw a flash of Frank's yellow shirt peek out.*

peek out (from underneath someone or something**)** **1.** to look outward from beneath someone or something. ☐ *A small furry face peeked out from underneath the sofa.* ☐ *At the base of the sofa, a cat peeked out.* **2.** to show just a little bit with the rest concealed under someone or something. ☐ *Her petticoat peeked out from underneath her skirt.* ☐ *Her skirt was a tad too short and a little bit of her slip peeked out.*

peek out of something **(at** someone or something**)** **1.** to be inside of something and take a look out. ☐ *A pair of glimmering eyes peeked out of the darkened room at the two people standing at the door.* ☐ *I peeked out of my room at the eerie shadows in the hallway.* ☐ *Jerry peeked out of the bathroom to see if anyone was looking.* **2.** [for a little bit of something] to be revealed with the rest concealed within. ☐ *A bit of white skin peeked out beneath his pants cuff.*

peek over something **1.** to examine something with a quick glance. ☐ *I really can't say how good the story was. I only peeked over it.* ☐ *I peeked over your manuscript, and it looks good.* **2.** to raise up and look over some barrier. ☐ *I peeked over the wall and saw the lovely garden.* ☐ *Don't peek over the sofa and let Roger see you. It will ruin the surprise.*

peek through (something**)** **1.** to peer or glimpse through something. ☐ *I'll just peek through your picture album. I'll study it more carefully later.* ☐ *I only have time to peek through. I would like to spend more time with it later.* **2.** [for something] to become slightly visible through something. ☐ *Mary, the lace of your slip is peeking through your blouse!* ☐ *Some lace is peeking through.*

peek under something to sneak a little glance beneath something. ☐ *I peeked under the table, hoping to see the dog waiting there for the part of my dinner I wasn't going to eat.* ☐ *Peek under the chair and see if the cat is there.*

peel off (from something**)** [for one or more airplanes] to separate from a group of airplanes. ☐ *The lead plane peeled off from the others, and soon the rest followed.* ☐ *The lead plane peeled off and dived into the clouds.*

peel off ((of) something**)** [for a surface layer] to come loose and fall away from something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *The paint is beginning to peel off the garage.* ☐ *The paint is peeling off.*

peel out [for a driver] to speed off in a car with a screeching of tires. ☐ *Dave got in his car and peeled out, waking the neighbors.* ☐ *I wish he would stop peeling out!*

peel something **away† (from** something**)** to peel something from the surface of something. ☐ *Peel the label away from the envelope and place it on the order form.* ☐ *Peel away the label carefully.*

peel something **back† (from** something**)** to lift something away from the surface of something. ☐ *He peeled the sheets back from the bed and got in.* ☐ *He peeled back the sheets and got into the bed.*

peel something **off† ((of)** something**)** and **peel** something **off† from** something to remove the outside surface layer from something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *She carefully peeled the skin off the apple.* ☐ *She peeled off the apple's skin.*

*a **peep** a quick look at someone or something. (*Typically: **have ~; take ~**.) ☐ *Have a peep into the refrigerator and see if we need any milk.* ☐ *I took a peep at the comet through the telescope.*

peep at someone or something to get a glimpse of someone or something, as if looking through a hole. ☐ *I peeped at Tom through the venetian blinds.* ☐ *Look in the microscope and peep at this bacterium.*

peep in(to something**)** to get a quick look into something, as through a hole in the wall or something similar. ☐ *I peeped into the oven to see what was cooking for dinner.* ☐ *She opened the oven door and peeped in.*

peep out (of something**) (at** someone or something**)** to sneak a glimpse of someone or something out of something, as through a hole. ☐ *A little mouse peeped out of its hole at the bright lights in the room.* ☐ *Johnny, hiding in the closet, peeped out at the guests through the partly opened door.*

peep over something to raise up and sneak a glance over some barrier; to look over the top of something. ☐ *The child peeped over the wall to get a look at the yard next door.* ☐ *Grandfather peeped over his glasses to look at the television set for a moment.*

peep through something to take a quick glance through something, such as a hole, telescope, etc. ☐ *Sam peeped through the keyhole and saw that the room was dark.* ☐ *Peep through the telescope and have a look at the moon!*

peep under something to take a quick little glance under something. ☐ *Would you please peep under the table and see if my shoes are there?* ☐ *Dave peeped under the bed, looking for the cat.*

peer about to stare around; to look at everything about. ☐ *She came into the room and peered about.* ☐ *Mary peered about, looking for a place to sit.*

peer at someone or something to look at someone or something closely; to stare at and examine someone or something. ☐ *The child peered at me for a while in a strange way.* ☐ *The owl peered at the snake for a moment before grabbing it.*

peer in(to something**)** to stare into something; to look deep into something. ☐ *I peered into the room, hoping to get a glimpse of the lovely furnishings.* ☐ *I only had time to peer in and then I walked on by.*

peer out at someone or something to stare out at someone or something. ☐ *A little puppy peered out at them from the cage.* ☐ *When I looked under the box, Timmy peered out at me with a big smile.*

peer over something to stare out or look over something, such as one's glasses. ☐ *The old man peered over his glasses and looked off into the distance.* ☐ *She peered over the wall to see what she could see.*

peer through something **1.** to view or look through glasses, spectacles, binoculars, etc. ☐ *From the way she peered through her glasses at me, I knew I was in trouble.* ☐ *Claire stood on the balcony, peering through her binoculars.* **2.** to stare through a partial barrier, such as a window, drapes, the haze, the fog, etc. ☐ *George peered through the drapes and spied on the party next door.* ☐ *Sally*

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peered through the haze as best she could, trying to see if the way was clear.

peer under something to look underneath something. ☐ *She peered under the bed, hoping to find her slippers.* ☐ *When she peered under the bed, she found nothing but lint.*

peg away (at something**)** Go to **plug away (at** something**)**.

peg out *Sl.* to die. ☐ *I was so scared, I thought I would peg out for sure.* ☐ *Uncle Herman almost pegged out last week.*

peg someone **as** something and **have** someone **pegged as** something to think of someone in a certain way. ☐ *Susan pegged the new employee as a lazy worker.* ☐ *I had you pegged as an angry rebel before I got to know you.*

peg something **down†** to fasten something to the ground with pegs. ☐ *After he had finished pegging the tent down, he built a fire.* ☐ *He pegged down the tent before building a fire.*

pelt down (on someone or something**)** [for something] to fall down on someone or something hard or in quantity. (Typically rain, hail, sleet, stones, etc.) ☐ *The rain pelted down on the children as they ran to their school bus.* ☐ *The ashes from the volcanic eruption pelted down on the town, covering the houses in a gray shroud.*

pelt someone or something **with** something to hit or strike someone or something with something. ☐ *The citizens pelted Max with rocks.* ☐ *The boys pelted the mad dog with a hail of stones.*

The **pen is mightier than the sword.** *Prov.* Eloquent writing persuades people better than military force. ☐ *Believing that the pen is mightier than the sword, the rebels began publishing an underground newspaper.* ☐ *Alan: Why do you want to become a journalist? Bill: The pen is mightier than the sword.*

pen someone or an animal **in† (**some place**)** to confine someone or an animal in a pen. ☐ *We penned all the kids in out in the backyard while we got the party things ready in the house.* ☐ *We had to pen in the kids to keep them away from the traffic.* ☐ *Alice penned her dog in.*

pen someone or an animal **up†** to confine someone to a confined space or an animal to a pen. ☐ *He said he didn't want them to pen him up in an office all day.* ☐ *They penned up the dog during the day.*

penalize someone **for** something to punish someone for something. ☐ *It's not fair to penalize her for being late.* ☐ *You needn't penalize yourself for the failure. It wasn't all your fault.*

pencil someone or something **in†** to write in something with a pencil. (Implies that the writing is not final.) ☐ *This isn't a firm appointment yet, so I will just pencil it in.* ☐ *I penciled in a tentative answer.*

penetrate into someone or something to pierce into someone or something; to stick deep into someone or something. ☐ *The lance penetrated into the knight, right through his armor.* ☐ *The bullet penetrated into the wall.*

penetrate something **with** something to pierce something with something. ☐ *I could not even penetrate the steel door with a cold chisel.* ☐ *It was easy to penetrate the lid with a can opener.*

penetrate through something to pierce all the way through something. (Some people will view the *through* as redundant.) ☐ *The bullet could not penetrate through the metal plating.* ☐ *It did not have enough force to penetrate through the steel.*

A **penny for your thoughts!** *Prov.* What are you thinking about?; I would give you a penny if you tell me your thoughts. ☐ *Noticing that Janet looked pensive, Bill said, "A penny for your thoughts!"* ☐ *You seem very pleased with yourself today. A penny for your thoughts!*

A **penny saved is a penny earned.** *Prov.* Money that you save is more valuable than money that you spend right away.; It is good to save money. ☐ *Now that you have your first job, you ought to open a savings account. A penny saved is a penny earned.* ☐ *Mary worked hard to save money; she knew that a penny saved is a penny earned.*

penny-wise and pound-foolish *Prov.* thrifty with small sums and foolish with large sums. (Describes someone who will go to a lot of trouble to save a little money, but overlooks large expenses to save a little money. Even in the United States, the reference is to British pounds sterling.) ☐ *Sam: If we drive to six different grocery stores, we'll get the best bargains on everything we buy. Alan: But with gasoline so expensive, that's penny-wise and pound-foolish.*

pension someone **off†** to retire someone with a pension. ☐ *The company tried to pension me off before I was ready to retire.* ☐ *They pensioned off the long-time workers.*

people something **with** someone to provide population for something or some place, using someone or some kind of people. ☐ *The government decided to people the frontier with a variety of races.* ☐ *The island had been peopled with marooned sailors.*

People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones. *Prov.* You should not criticize other people for having the same faults that you yourself have. ☐ *Jill: Richard sure was drinking a lot at the office party. Jane: I noticed you had quite a few cocktails yourself. People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.*

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pep someone or something **up†** to make someone or something more vigorous. ☐ *Nancy needs to take some vitamins to pep her up.* ☐ *The coffee break pepped up the tired workers.* ☐ *Better food might pep your cat up.*

pepper someone or something **with** something to shower someone or something with something, such as stones, bullets, etc. ☐ *The angry crowd peppered the police with stones.* ☐ *The sheriff's posse peppered the bandit's hideout with bullets.*

perceive someone or something **as** something to think of someone or something as something or as displaying certain characteristics. ☐ *I perceive Randy as sort of hotheaded.* ☐ *We all perceive this problem as solvable.*

perch on something **1.** [for a bird] to stand at rest on something. ☐ *A robin perched on the branch by my window.* ☐ *We saw a parrot perched on some kind of flowering tree.* **2.** to sit or balance on something. ☐ *I can't perch on this fence forever. Let's go.* ☐ *Sam was perched on the bicycle and he looked very uncomfortable.*

perch someone or something **on** something to place, seat, or stand someone or something in a place. ☐ *She perched the little girl on the edge of the tub.* ☐ *Walter perched his hat on the top shelf.*

percolate through something [for a liquid] to seep down through something. ☐ *The water percolated through the coffee grounds too slowly for Fred, who was just dying for a hot cup of the stuff.* ☐ *The water percolated through the subsoil and appeared again at the bottom of the hill.*

a **perfect stranger** and a **total stranger** *Fig.* a person who is completely unknown [to oneself]. ☐ *I was stopped on the street by a perfect stranger who wanted to know my name.* ☐ *If a total stranger asked me such a personal question, I am sure I would not answer!*

perform an old warhorse Go to an old warhorse.

perform something **on** someone or something to do something to someone or something; to carry out a procedure on someone or something. ☐ *The surgeon performed a simple office procedure on the patient.* ☐ *Do you expect me to perform magic on this problem?*

Perhaps a little later. Not now, but possibly later. ☐ *Waiter: Would you like your coffee now? Bob: Perhaps a little later. Waiter: All right.* ☐ *Sally: Hey, Bill, how about a swim? Bob: Sounds good, but not now. Perhaps a little later. Sally: Okay. See you later.*

perish from something to die from a particular cause, such as a disease. ☐ *Nearly all the fish perished from the cold.* ☐ *I was afraid that I would perish from hunger.*

perish in something to die because of involvement in something. ☐ *Four people perished in the flames.* ☐ *Our cat perished in an accident.*

Perish the thought. *Fig.* Do not even consider thinking of such a (negative) thing. ☐ *If you should become ill—perish the thought—I'd take care of you.* ☐ *I'm afraid that we need a new car. Perish the thought.*

perish with something to feel bad enough to die because of something, such as heat, hunger, etc. (Often an exaggeration.) ☐ *I was just perishing with hunger when we arrived at the restaurant.* ☐ *Mary felt as if she would perish with the intense heat of the stuffy little room.*

P

perk someone **up**† to make someone more cheery or refreshed. ☐ *A nice cup of coffee would really perk me up.* ☐ *A cup of coffee will perk up the sleepiest person.*

perk something **up**† to refresh or brighten something; to make something more lively. ☐ *A bit of bright yellow here and there will perk this room up a lot.* ☐ *We need something to perk up the second act of the play.*

perk up to become invigorated; to become more active. ☐ *After a bit of water, the plants perked up nicely.* ☐ *About noon, Andy perked up and looked wide-awake.*

permeate something **with** something to saturate something with something. ☐ *The comedian permeated his act with smutty jokes.* ☐ *The evening air was permeated with the smell of jasmine.*

permeate through something to seep in and saturate something. ☐ *The coffee spilled on the desk and permeated through all the papers and stuff.* ☐ *The strong odor permeated through the walls and nearly suffocated us.*

Permit me. Go to Allow me.

permit someone **into** something and **permit** someone **in**† to allow someone to enter something or some place. ☐ *They would not permit me in the dining room since I had no tie.* ☐ *They would not permit in that bunch of rowdy brats or any other of her friends.*

permit someone **out (of** something**)** to allow someone to go out of something or some place. ☐ *His mother won't permit him out of his room all weekend.* ☐ *I didn't do anything, but she won't permit me out!*

permit someone **through (**something**)** to allow someone to pass through something. ☐ *Would you permit me through the door? I have to get into this building.* ☐ *Janet said she was in a hurry, but they wouldn't permit her through.*

permit someone **up (**something**)** to allow someone to come up something. ☐ *She would not permit me up the ladder.* ☐ *I wanted to climb the ladder to be with Walter, but he wouldn't permit me up.*

permit someone **up to** something to allow someone to come up to something or some place. ☐ *The teacher would not permit the smallest children up to the edge.* ☐ *They would not permit us up to the gate before our turn came.*

persecute someone **for** something to harass or repress someone for something. ☐ *They were persecuting the native people for being underdeveloped.* ☐ *They were persecuted for being simple and unsuspecting.*

persevere at something to keep trying to do something. ☐ *I will persevere at my studies and I'm sure I will succeed.* ☐ *Todd persevered at his job and got promoted in no time.*

persevere in something to persist in [doing] something. ☐ *I will persevere in my efforts to win election.* ☐ *Kelly persevered in her studies and graduated with honors.*

persevere with something to continue to try to accomplish something. ☐ *Do you really think it is wise to persevere with your plan?* ☐ *Sally persevered with her scheme to earn a million dollars.*

persist in doing something to continue doing something. ☐ *John persists in thinking that he's always right.* ☐ *Tom persists in demanding that I agree to his terms.*

persist with something to continue the state of something; to extend an action or state. ☐ *Please do not persist with your demands that I agree to your terms.* ☐ *If you persist with this intrusion, I'm going to call the police.*

person of color a person of an African, Asian, or Native American race. (The plural is *people of color.*) ☐ *The apartment manager clearly discriminated against people of color. He would only rent to whites.* ☐ *As a person of color, I felt threatened by the racist jokes that my coworker told.*

*a **perspective on** something a way of looking at a situation and determining what is important. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; gain ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *The jury did not have a good perspective on the crime since some of the evidence had to be ignored.* ☐ *Studying history gives one a perspective on the past.*

persuade someone **of** something to convince someone of something. ☐ *Laura was unable to persuade me of the truth of her statement.* ☐ *We were all persuaded of the need for higher taxes.*

persuade someone **to** do something to convince someone to do something. ☐ *Are you sure I can't persuade you to have another piece of cake?* ☐ *Richard was easily persuaded to have another piece of his favorite cake.*

pertain to someone or something to relate to someone or something; to have something to do with someone or something. ☐ *I don't think that anything discussed in this meeting pertained to me.* ☐ *It really doesn't pertain to the matter at hand.*

pester someone **about** someone or something to bother someone about someone or something. ☐ *Please don't pester me about Frank.* ☐ *Stop pestering me about money.*

pester someone **into** something to annoy someone into doing something. ☐ *We are trying to pester her into accepting the position.* ☐ *I don't want to be pestered into losing my temper!*

pester someone **out of** something **1.** to annoy someone out of doing something. ☐ *Dave pestered Mary out of going away for the weekend.* ☐ *He pestered her out of leaving without him.* **2.** to annoy one out of one's mind, senses, good manners, etc. ☐ *I was pestered out of my mind by a series of silly questions.*

pester someone **with** something to annoy someone with something. ☐ *Don't pester me with your constant questions!* ☐ *I was pestered with phone call after phone call.*

pester the life out of someone *Fig.* to annoy someone excessively. ☐ *Leave me alone. You are pestering the life out of me.* ☐ *Stop pestering the life out of me!*

pet hate *Fig.* something that is disliked intensely and is a constant or repeated annoyance. ☐ *My pet hate is being put on hold on the telephone.* ☐ *Another pet hate of mine is having to stand in line.*

pet peeve *Fig.* a frequent annoyance; one's "favorite" or most often encountered annoyance. ☐ *My pet peeve is someone who always comes into the theater after the show has started.* ☐ *Drivers who don't signal are John's pet peeve.*

peter out [for something] to die or dwindle away; [for something] to become exhausted gradually. ☐ *When the fire petered out, I went to bed.* ☐ *My money finally petered out, and I had to come home.*

petition someone or something **for** something to make a formal request of someone or a group for something. ☐ *They petitioned us for an end to the stringent dress code.* ☐ *We had to petition the upper administration for a revision in the policy.*

phase someone or something **into** something and **phase** someone or something **in**† to work someone or something into use or service gradually. ☐ *They decided to phase Ruth into the job little by little.* ☐ *They phased in Ruth over a long period of time.*

phase someone or something **out of** something and **phase** someone or something **out**† to work someone or something out of use or service or out of a group gradually. ☐ *We are going to have to phase you out of the job of treasurer.* ☐ *They phased out the unneeded workers.*

phone in (to someone or something**)** to call in by telephone to a central person or central point. ☐ *I will phone in to my secretary and report the change in schedule.* ☐ *I have to phone in and report the changes.*

phone someone **up**† to call someone on the telephone. ☐ *I don't know what he will do. I will phone him up and ask him.* ☐ *Phone up your brother and ask his advice.*

phone something **in**† **(to** someone or something**)** to transmit information to a central person or central point by telephone. ☐ *I will phone this order in to the plant right away.* ☐ *I will phone in the order to my secretary right now.* ☐ *Don't worry. I'll phone it in.*

***phony as a three-dollar bill** and ***queer as a three-dollar bill** phony; bogus. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *This guy's as phony as a three-dollar bill.* ☐ *The whole deal stinks. It's as queer as a three-dollar bill.*

a **photo op(portunity)** a time or event designed for taking pictures of a celebrity. ☐ *All the photographers raced toward a photo op with the president.*

***physical (with** someone**) 1.** *Lit.* physical in the use of force against someone. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *The coach got in trouble for getting physical with some members of the team.* ☐ *When the suspect wouldn't cooperate, the police were forced to get physical.* **2.** *Fig.* physical in touching someone in lovemaking. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I've heard that Bill tends to get physical with his dates.* ☐ *I don't care if he gets physical—within reason.*

Physician, heal thyself. *Prov.* Do not rebuke someone for a fault or problem you have yourself. (Biblical.) ☐ *Ellen: You're such a spendthrift. You should go on a strict budget. Fred: But you manage money even worse than I do! Physician, heal thyself.* ☐ *Jane: You look like you're gaining weight. You should probably get more exercise. Alan: Physician, heal thyself. You're getting a little pudgy, too.*

pick a fight (with someone**)** and **pick a quarrel (with** someone**)** to start a fight or argument with someone on purpose. ☐ *Are you trying to pick a fight with me?* ☐ *Max intended to pick a quarrel with Lefty.*

pick a lock to open a lock without using a key. ☐ *The robber picked the lock with a nail file.* ☐ *The thief picked the lock on the safe and stole the money.*

pick a quarrel (with someone**)** Go to pick a fight (with someone).

pick and choose to choose very carefully from a number of possibilities; to be selective. ☐ *You must take what you are given. You cannot pick and choose.* ☐ *Meg is so beautiful. She can pick and choose from a whole range of boyfriends.*

pick at someone or something to be very critical of someone or something; to pick on someone or something. ☐ *Why are you always picking at me?* ☐ *The critics picked at the little things, missing the serious problems.*

pick at something **1.** *Lit.* to try to pull away bits of something. ☐ *Don't pick at the bookbinding. It will fall apart.* **2.** *Fig.* to eat just a tiny bit of a meal or some kind of food. ☐ *You are just picking at your food!*

pick holes in something **1.** and **pick** something **to pieces** to criticize something severely; to point out the flaws or fallacies in an argument. ☐ *The lawyer picked holes in the witness's story.* ☐ *They will pick holes in your argument.* ☐ *Stop picking holes in everything I say!* **2.** to poke or pinch little holes in something. ☐ *Look! You've picked holes in the bread! How can I make sandwiches?* ☐ *Who picked holes in the blanket?*

the **pick of** something the best of the group. ☐ *This playful puppy is the pick of the whole lot.* ☐ *These potatoes are the pick of the crop.*

P

pick on somebody your own size Go to pick on someone your own size.

pick on someone or something to harass or bother someone or something, usually unfairly. ☐ *Please stop picking on me! I'm tired of it.* ☐ *You shouldn't pick on the cat.*

pick on someone your own size and **pick on somebody your own size** to abuse someone who is big enough to fight back. ☐ *Go pick on somebody your own size!* ☐ *Wilbur should leave his little brother alone and pick on someone his own size.*

pick one's **way through** something and **make** one's **way through** something **1.** to move along a route full of obstacles; to travel, usually on foot, through an area of heavy vegetation or through a crowd of people or things. ☐ *When the grandchildren visit, I have to pick my way through the toys on the floor.* ☐ *We slowly picked our way through the thorny bushes to get to the ripe raspberries.* **2.** to work slowly and meticulously through something. ☐ *My teacher said he couldn't even pick his way through my report. It was just too confusing.* ☐ *I spent an hour picking my way through the state tax forms.*

pick someone or something **apart**† **1.** *Lit.* to pick at and pull someone or something to pieces. ☐ *The vultures attacked the hunger-weakened man and tried to pick him apart.* ☐ *They tried to pick apart the body.* ☐ *Harry picked his piece of cake apart, looking to get all the nuts out.* **2.** *Fig.* to analyze and criticize someone or something negatively. ☐ *You didn't review her performance; you just picked her apart.* ☐ *The critics picked apart the performers.*

pick someone or something **from** someone or something to choose someone from a group of people; to choose something from a group of things. ☐ *I picked Joe from all the other boys.* ☐ *Tony picked this one from the collection.*

pick someone or something **off**† **1.** *Fig.* to kill someone or something with a carefully aimed gunshot. ☐ *The hunter picked the deer off with great skill.* ☐ *The killer tried to pick off the police officer.* **2.** Go to next.

pick someone or something **off (of)** someone or something and **pick** someone or something **off**† to pull or gather someone or something off something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *The teacher picked the little boys off the jungle gym and hurried them back into the school building before the storm hit.* ☐ *Pick off the ripe tomatoes and leave the rest.*

pick someone or something **out**† Go to pick someone or something out of something.

pick someone or something **out**† **(for** someone or something**)** to choose someone or something to serve as someone or something. ☐ *I picked one of the new people out for Santa Claus this year.* ☐ *I picked out several large potatoes for the stew.*

pick someone or something **out of** something and **pick** someone or something **out**† **1.** to lift or pull someone or something out of something. ☐ *The mother picked her child out of the fray and took him home.* ☐ *I picked out the mushrooms before eating the soup.* **2.** to select someone or something out of an offering of selections. ☐ *I picked Jerry out of all the boys in the class.* ☐ *I picked out Jerry.*

pick someone or something **to pieces 1.** *Lit.* to pull or pinch at someone or something until only pieces are left. ☐ *The savage birds picked the carcass to pieces.* ☐ *The mice seem to have picked the stuffed doll to pieces.* **2.** *Fig.* to criticize someone or something harshly or unduly. ☐ *You have just picked her to pieces. Leave her alone!* ☐ *The critic picked the play to pieces.*

pick someone's **brain(s)** *Fig.* to talk with someone to find out information about something. ☐ *I spent the afternoon with Donna, picking her brain for ideas to use in our celebration.* ☐ *Do you mind if I pick your brains? I need some fresh ideas.*

pick someone **up**† **1.** to attempt to become acquainted with someone for romantic or sexual purposes. ☐ *Who are you anyway? Are you trying to pick me up?* ☐ *No, I never picked up anybody in my life!* **2.** [for the police] to find and bring someone to the police station for questioning or arrest. ☐ *The cop tried to pick her up, but she heard him coming and got away.* ☐ *Sergeant Jones, go pick up Sally Franklin and bring her in to be questioned about the jewel robbery.* **3.** to stop one's car, bus, etc., and offer someone a ride. ☐ *Don't ever pick a stranger up when you're out driving!* ☐ *I picked up a hitchhiker today, and we had a nice chat.* **4.** to go to a place in a car, bus, etc., and take on a person as a passenger. ☐ *Please come to my office and pick me up at noon.* ☐ *I have to pick up Billy at school.*

pick something **away**† to pull or pinch something loose from something. ☐ *Mary picked the meat away from the bones.* ☐ *He picked away the burrs.*

pick something **over**† *Fig.* to look through something carefully, looking for something special. ☐ *The shoppers who got here first picked everything over, and there is not much left.* ☐ *They picked over all the merchandise.*

pick something **to pieces** Go to pick holes in something.

pick something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to lift up or raise something from a lower place. ☐ *Please help me pick this stuff up off the pavement.* ☐ *Pick up every bit of it!* **2.** *Fig.* to tidy up or clean up a room or some other place. ☐ *Let's pick this room up in a hurry.* ☐ *I want you to pick up the entire house.* **3.** *Fig.* to find, purchase, or acquire something. ☐ *Where did you pick that up?* ☐ *I picked up this tool at the hardware store.* **4.** *Fig.* to learn something. ☐ *I pick languages up easily.* ☐ *I picked up a lot of knowledge about music from my brother.* **5.** *Fig.* to cause something to go faster, especially music. ☐ *All right, let's pick up the tempo and get it moving faster.* ☐ *Okay, get moving. Pick it up!* **6.** *Fig.* to resume something. ☐ *Pick it up right where you stopped.* ☐ *I'll have to pick up my work where I left off.* **7.** *Fig.* to receive radio signals; to bring something into view. ☐ *I can just pick it up with a powerful telescope.* ☐ *I can hardly pick up a signal.* **8.** *Fig.* to find a trail or route. ☐ *The dogs finally picked the scent up.* ☐ *You should pick up highway 80 in a few miles.*

pick up 1. to tidy up. (See also pick up (after someone or something).) ☐ *When you finish playing, you have to pick up.* ☐ *Please pick up after yourself.* **2.** to get busy; to go faster. ☐ *Things usually pick up around here about 8:00.* ☐ *I hope business picks up a little later. It's boring here.*

pick up after someone or something to tidy up after someone or a group. ☐ *I refuse to pick up after you all the time.* ☐ *I refuse to pick up after your rowdy friends.*

pick up on something to become alert to something; to take notice of something; to learn or catch on to something. ☐

She's real sharp. She picks up on everything. ☐ *The cop picked up on the car with the expired license plates.*

pick up someone **for a song** Go to for a song.

pick up speed to increase speed. ☐ *The train began to pick up speed as it went downhill.* ☐ *The car picked up speed as we moved into the left lane.*

pick up the check Go to pick up the tab.

pick up the pace to speed up the tempo; to increase the rate that something is being done. ☐ *We are going to have to pick up the pace of activity around here if we are to get the job done.*

pick up the pieces (of something**) 1.** *Lit.* to gather up each piece or part. ☐ *Norma picked up the pieces of the broken lamp.* ☐ *She stooped down to pick up the pieces.* **2.** *Fig.* to try to repair emotional, financial, or other damage done to one's life. ☐ *I need some time to pick up the pieces of my life after the accident.* ☐ *After a while, Fred was able to pick up the pieces and carry on.*

pick up the tab and **pick up the check** to pay the bill. ☐ *Whenever we go out, my father picks up the tab.* ☐ *Order whatever you want. The company is picking up the check.*

picked over rejected; worn, dirty, or undesirable. ☐ *This merchandise looks worn and picked over. I don't want any of it.* ☐ *Everything in the store is picked over by the end of the month.*

A **picture is worth a thousand words.** *Prov.* Pictures convey information more efficiently and effectively than words do. ☐ *It's much easier to learn how machines work by looking at pictures, rather than by hearing someone describe them. A picture is worth a thousand words.* ☐ *The newspaper editor decided to devote more space to photographs of the disaster than to text, since a picture is worth a thousand words.*

the **picture of (good) health** in a very healthy condition. ☐ *The doctor says I am the picture of good health.* ☐ *Each of the children is the picture of health.*

picture perfect *Fig.* looking exactly correct or right. (Hyphenated as a modifier.) ☐ *At last, everything was picture perfect.* ☐ *Nothing less than a picture-perfect party table will do.*

picture someone **as** someone or something to imagine someone as someone or a type of person; to form a mental picture of someone as someone or a type of person. ☐ *Just picture me as Santa Claus!* ☐ *I can't picture you as a doctor.*

picture someone **in** something **1.** to form a mental picture of someone wearing something. ☐ *I can just picture Tony in that baseball uniform.* ☐ *Can you picture yourself in a dress like this?* **2.** to form a mental picture of someone inside something or some place. ☐ *I can just picture you in that car!* ☐ *Can you picture yourself in jail?*

piddle around *Fig.* to waste time doing little or nothing. ☐ *Stop piddling around and get busy.* ☐ *I'm not piddling around. I am experimenting.*

piddle something **away**† *Fig.* to waste away money or a period of time. ☐ *Please don't piddle all your money away.* ☐ *Jane piddled away most of the day.*

pie in the sky 1. *Fig.* a future reward after death, considered as a replacement for a reward not received on earth. ☐ *Don't hold out for pie in the sky. Get realistic.* ☐ *If he didn't hope for some heavenly pie in the sky, he would probably be a real crook.* **2.** *Fig.* having to do with a hope for a special reward. (This is hyphenated before a nominal.) ☐ *Get rid of your pie-in-the-sky ideas!* ☐ *What these pie-in-the-sky people really want is money.*

piece of cake *Fig.* something easy to do. ☐ *No problem. When you know what you're doing, it's a piece of cake.* ☐ *Glad to help. It was a piece of cake.* ☐ *Rescuing frightened cats is my specialty. Piece of cake!*

a **piece (of the action)** and a **bit of the action;** a **slice of the action** *Sl.* a share in the activity or the profits. (Especially of a business scheme or gambling activity.) ☐ *If you get in on that real estate deal, I want a piece, too.* ☐ *Deal Tom in. He wants a piece of the action.*

piece something **out**† **1.** *Lit.* to add patches or pieces to something to make it complete. ☐ *There is not quite enough cloth to make a shirt, but I think I can piece it out with some scraps of a complementary color for the collar.* ☐ *We managed to piece out the material that we needed.* **2.** *Fig.* to add missing parts to a story, explanation, or narrative to make it make sense. ☐ *Before she passed out, she muttered a few things and we were able to piece the whole story out from that.* ☐ *We pieced out the story from the few bits we heard from her.*

piece something **together**† to fit something together; to assemble the pieces of something, such as a puzzle or something puzzling, and make sense of it. ☐ *The police were unable to piece the story together.* ☐ *The detective tried to piece together the events leading up to the crime.*

pierce through something to poke through something; to penetrate something. ☐ *He pierced through the meat with a fork and then put it in a spicy marinade.* ☐ *Mary pierced the yarn through with the knitting needles.*

a **piercing scream** *Fig.* a very loud and shrill scream. ☐ *Suddenly, there was a piercing scream from the next room.* ☐ *Bob heard Susan's piercing scream and ran to help her.*

P

pig out (on something**)** *Inf.* to eat too much of something; to make a pig of oneself. ☐ *I intend to really pig out on pizza.* ☐ *I love to pig out on ice cream.*

pile in(to something**)** to climb in or get in roughly. ☐ *Okay, kids, pile in!* ☐ *The children piled into the car and slammed the door.*

pile off (something**)** to get down off something; to clamber down off something. ☐ *All the kids piled off the wagon and ran into the barn.* ☐ *She stopped the wagon, and they piled off.*

pile on((to someone or something**)** to make a heap of people on someone or something. ☐ *The football players piled onto the poor guy holding the ball.* ☐ *They ran up to the ballcarrier and piled on.*

pile out (of something**)** [for many people] to get out of something roughly. ☐ *Okay, kids, pile out!* ☐ *The car door burst open, and the children piled out.*

pile someone **into** something and **pile** someone **in**† to bunch people into something in a disorderly fashion. ☐ *She piled the kids into the van and headed off for school.* ☐ *She piled in the kids and closed the doors.* ☐ *Pile them in and let's go.* ☐ *They piled themselves into the car and sped off.*

pile someone or something **on(to)** someone or something and **pile** someone or something **on†** to heap people or things onto someone or something. ☐ *The wrestler piled the referee onto his unconscious opponent.* ☐ *We piled the kids on the heap of leaves we had raked up.* ☐ *Pile on the chili! What's a hot dog without chili?*

pile something **up† 1.** to crash or wreck something. ☐ *Drive carefully if you don't want to pile the car up.* ☐ *The driver piled up the car against a tree.* **2.** to make something into a heap. ☐ *Carl piled all the leaves up and set them afire.* ☐ *Please pile up the leaves.*

pile the work on (someone**)** *Fig.* to give someone a lot of work to do. ☐ *The boss really piled the work on me this week.* ☐ *The boss piled on the work this week.*

pile up 1. *Lit.* [for things] to gather or accumulate. ☐ *The newspapers began to pile up after a few days.* ☐ *Work is really piling up around here.* **2.** *Fig.* [for a number of vehicles] to crash together. ☐ *Nearly twenty cars piled up on the bridge this morning.*

pilfer from someone or something to steal from someone or a group. ☐ *The petty thief had pilfered from several merchants in town.* ☐ *Someone has pilfered from the petty-cash drawer.*

pilfer something **from** someone or something to steal something from someone or something. ☐ *Did you pilfer this money from your parents?* ☐ *Who pilfered some money from the cash box?*

pillar of strength and **pillar of support** someone or something that consistently provides moral, emotional, or financial support as does a pillar. ☐ *My parents are my pillars of support.* ☐ *John looked to God as his pillar of strength.*

pillar of support Go to previous.

pilot someone or something **through (**something**)** to guide or steer someone or something through something, especially through a waterway. ☐ *We hired someone to pilot us through the harbor entrance.* ☐ *The channel was treacherous, and we hired someone to pilot the ship through.*

pilot something **into** something and **pilot** something **in†** to steer or guide something into something. (Usually refers to steering a ship.) ☐ *We need to signal for a pilot to pilot our ship into the harbor.* ☐ *Fred piloted in the freighter.*

pilot something **out of** something and **pilot** something **out†** to steer or guide something out of something. (Usually refers to steering a ship.) ☐ *The chubby little man with a pipe piloted the huge ship out of the harbor.* ☐ *The storm made it very difficult to pilot the ship out.* ☐ *Help me pilot out this old tub.*

pin one's **faith on** someone or something and **pin** one's **hopes on** someone or something *Fig.* to fasten one's faith or hope to someone or something. ☐ *Don't pin your faith on Tom. He can't always do exactly what you want.* ☐ *He pinned his hopes on being rescued soon.*

pin one's **hopes on** someone or something Go to previous.

pin someone **down† (on** something**)** and **nail** someone **down† (on** something**)** *Fig.* to demand and receive a firm answer from someone to some question. (Alludes to shifting from answer to answer; commit to one answer or another.) ☐ *I tried to pin him down on a time and place, but he was very evasive.* ☐ *Don't try to pin down the mayor on anything!* ☐ *I want to nail her down on a meeting time.*

pin someone or something **against** something to press and hold someone or something against something. ☐ *The police pinned the mugger against the wall and put handcuffs on him.* ☐ *The wildlife veterinarian pinned the rhino against the walls of the enclosure and subdued it so it could be treated.*

pin someone or something **beneath** someone, something or an animal to trap someone or something beneath someone, an animal, or something. ☐ *The mine cave-in pinned four miners beneath a beam.* ☐ *I held the alligator's mouth closed and pinned it beneath me.*

pin someone or something **under** someone or something to trap someone or something under someone or something. ☐ *Someone knocked Gerry down and pinned Randy under him.* ☐ *The accident pinned Maggie under the car.*

pin someone's **ears back† 1.** *Fig.* to beat someone, especially about the head. ☐ *Don't talk to me like that or I will pin your ears back!* ☐ *Max wanted to pin back Lefty's ears for making fun of him.* **2.** *Fig.* to give someone a good scolding. ☐ *Did you hear him? He really pinned Chuck's ears back.* ☐ *He pinned back Chuck's ears.*

pin something **back†** to hold something back by pinning. ☐ *I will pin the curtains back to let a little more light in.* ☐ *Jane pinned back the curtains.*

pin something **down†** and **nail** something **down† 1.** *Lit.* to attach or affix something with nails or pins. ☐ *Pin the pattern down temporarily.* ☐ *Nail down this piece of flooring every 12 inches.* **2.** *Fig.* to determine or fix something, such as a date, an agreement, an amount of money, a decision, etc. ☐ *It will be ready sometime next month. I can't pin the date down just yet, however.* ☐ *I can't pin down the exact date just now.*

pin something **on** someone *Fig. Inf.* to blame something on someone; to frame someone for a crime; to make it appear that an innocent person has actually committed a crime. (See also **pin** something **on** someone or something.) ☐ *Don't try to pin that crime on me! I didn't do it.* ☐ *The gang member tried to pin the crime on a rival gang.*

pin something **on** someone or something to hang something on someone or something by pinning. (See also **pin** something **on** someone.) ☐ *The mayor pinned the medal on the boy who had rescued the swimmer.* ☐ *I pinned a yellow ribbon on my lapel.*

pin something **(on)to** something to attach or fix something to someone or something by pinning. ☐ *The mayor pinned the medal onto the lapel of the brave young hero.* ☐ *She pinned a medal to his lapel.*

pin something **up† 1.** to raise something and hold it up with pins. ☐ *I will pin this hem up and then sew it later.* ☐ *Please pin up the hem so I can see where to sew it.* **2.** Go to next.

pin something **up on(to)** something and **pin** something **up†** to attach something to something, for display, with pins. ☐ *I pinned the picture up onto the bulletin board where everyone could see it.* ☐ *I pinned up the picture.*

pinch and scrape Go to **scrimp and save.**

pinch someone **for** something *Sl.* to arrest someone for something. ☐ *The cops pinched Max for driving without a license.* ☐ *Max was pinched for speeding.*

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pinch something **back†** to pinch off a bit of the top of a plant so it will branch and grow more fully. ☐ *You should pinch this back so it will branch.* ☐ *Pinch back the new leaves at the top.*

pinch something **from** someone or something *Sl.* to steal something from someone or something. ☐ *Sam pinched an apple from the produce stand.* ☐ *We saw a pickpocket pinch a wallet from an old man.*

pinch something **off†** Go to next.

pinch something **off (of)** something and **pinch** something **off†** to sever something from something by pinching. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Pinch the buds off the lower branches so the one at the top will bloom.* ☐ *Pinch off the lower buds.*

pinch-hit for someone **1.** *Fig.* to bat for someone else in a baseball game. ☐ *Wally Wilson will pinch-hit for Gary Franklin.* ☐ *Rodney Jones is pinch-hitting for Babe DiMaggio.* **2.** *Fig.* to substitute for someone in any situation. ☐ *Bart will pinch-hit for Fred, who is at another meeting today.* ☐ *Who will pinch-hit for me while I am on vacation?*

pine after someone or something and **pine for** someone or something; **pine over** someone or something to long for or grieve for someone or something. ☐ *Bob pined after Doris for weeks after she left.* ☐ *Dan is still pining for his lost dog.* ☐ *There is no point in pining over Claire.*

pine away (after someone or something**)** to waste away in melancholy and longing for someone or something. ☐ *A year later, he was still pining away after Claire.* ☐ *Still, he is pining away.*

pine for someone or something Go to pine after someone or something.

pine over someone or something Go to pine after someone or something.

pins and needles *Fig.* a tingling feeling in some part of one's body, especially the arms and legs. (See also on pins and needles.) ☐ *I've got pins and needles in my legs.* ☐ *Mary gets pins and needles if she crosses her arms for long.*

pipe down to become quiet; to cease making noise; to shut up. (Especially as a rude command.) ☐ *Pipe down! I'm trying to sleep.* ☐ *Come on! Pipe down and get back to work!*

a **pipe dream** *Fig.* a wish or an idea that is impossible to achieve or carry out. (From the dreams or visions induced by the smoking of an opium pipe.) ☐ *Going to the West Indies is a pipe dream. We'll never have enough money.* ☐ *Your hopes of winning a lot of money are just a silly pipe dream.*

pipe something **away†** to conduct a liquid or a gas away through a pipe. ☐ *We will have to pipe the excess water away.* ☐ *They piped away the water.*

pipe something **from** some place **(to** some place**)** to conduct a liquid or a gas from one place to another place through a pipe. ☐ *One oil company wanted to pipe oil all the way from northern Alaska to a southern port on the Pacific.* ☐ *The company pipes gas from the storage tanks in the middle of the state.*

pipe something **into** some place and **pipe** something **in†** **1.** *Lit.* to conduct a liquid or a gas into some place through a pipe. ☐ *An excellent delivery system piped oxygen into every hospital room.* ☐ *They piped in oxygen to every room.* ☐ *They piped it in.* **2.** *Fig.* to bring music or other sound into a place over wires. ☐ *They piped music into the stairways and elevators.* ☐ *The elevators were nice except that the management had piped in music.*

pipe up (with something**)** *Fig.* to interject a comment; to interrupt with a comment. ☐ *Nick piped up with an interesting thought.* ☐ *You can always count on Alice to pipe up.*

piping hot [of food] extremely hot. ☐ *On a cold day, I like to eat piping hot soup.* ☐ *Be careful! This coffee is piping hot!*

pipped (up) *Sl.* intoxicated. ☐ *I'm not drunk. Just a little pipped up.* ☐ *She's pipped and ready to get sick.*

pique someone's **curiosity** and **pique** someone's **interest** to arouse interest; to arouse curiosity. ☐ *The advertisement piqued my curiosity about the product.* ☐ *The professor tried to pique the students' interest in French literature.*

pique someone's **interest** Go to previous.

piss someone **off†** *Inf.* to make someone angry. (Crude. Potentially offensive, even though it is widely used. Use with discretion.) ☐ *She really pissed me off!* ☐ *That's enough to piss off anybody.*

pissed (off) *Inf.* angry. (Crude. Potentially offensive, even though it is heard widely. Use with discretion.) ☐ *I was so pissed off I could have screamed.* ☐ *He's come back, and he's sure pissed.*

the **pit of** one's **stomach** *Fig.* the middle of one's stomach; the location of a "visceral response." ☐ *I got a strange feeling in the pit of my stomach when they told me the bad news.*

pit one's **shoulder to the wheel** Go to have one's shoulder to the wheel.

pit someone or something **against** someone or something to set someone or something in opposition to someone or something. ☐ *The rules of the tournament pit their team against ours.* ☐ *John pitted Mary against Sally in the tennis match.*

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pitch a tent to erect a tent at a campsite. ☐ *The campers pitched their tent in a clearing in the woods.* ☐ *I pitched my tent next to a large oak tree.*

pitch black very black; as black as pitch. ☐ *The hearse was pitch black.* ☐ *The bandit rode on a pitch black horse and wore black clothing.*

pitch camp to set up or arrange a campsite. ☐ *We pitched camp near the stream.* ☐ *Two campers went ahead of us to pitch camp while it was still light.*

pitch dark very dark; as dark as pitch. ☐ *I couldn't see anything outside because it was pitch dark.* ☐ *The room was pitch dark, and I couldn't find the light switch!*

pitch forward to jerk or thrust forward. ☐ *Suddenly the car pitched forward, jerking the passengers around.* ☐ *We pitched forward inside the car as we went over the bumpy road.*

pitch in (and help) (with something**)** *Fig.* to join in and help someone with something. ☐ *Would you please pitch in and help with the party?* ☐ *Come on! Pitch in!*

pitch someone **a curve(ball)** *Fig.* to surprise someone with an unexpected act or event. (Referring to a curveball in baseball. It is the route of the ball that is curved, not the ball itself. See also **throw** someone **a curve(ball).**) ☐ *You really pitched me a curveball when you said I had done a poor job. I did my best.* ☐ *You asked Tom a trick question. You certainly pitched him a curve.*

pitch someone or something **out (of)** something and **pitch** someone or something **out**† to throw someone or something out of something or some place. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *The usher pitched the drunk out of the theater.* ☐ *The usher pitched out the annoying person.*

pitch someone or something **over** something to toss someone or something over something. ☐ *Then Max tried to pitch Lefty over the railing onto the tracks.* ☐ *Billy pitched the stone over the wall.*

pitch something **at** someone or something **1.** to throw something at someone or something. ☐ *The boys pitched cans at the tree.* ☐ *We all pitched rocks at the big boulder.* **2.** to aim advertising at a particular group. ☐ *They pitched the ad campaign at teenagers.* ☐ *These comedy programs are pitched at the lowest level of mentality.*

pitch something **away**† to toss or throw something away. ☐ *He pitched the broken stick away, and looked around for something stronger.* ☐ *He pitched away the stick.*

pitch something **into** something and **pitch** something **in**† to toss or throw something into something. ☐ *Please pitch your aluminum cans into this container.* ☐ *She pitched in the can.*

pitch something **out**† to throw something away; to discard something. ☐ *This cottage cheese is so old, I'm going to pitch it out.* ☐ *They pitched out the bad food.*

pitch (the) woo *Inf.* to kiss and caress; to woo someone. (Old but still heard.) ☐ *They were out by the barn pitching woo.* ☐ *Old Ted can hardly see any more, but he can still pitch the woo.*

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pivot on something to rotate on something; to spin around, centered on something. ☐ *This part spins around and pivots on this little red spot, which is what they call a jewel.* ☐ *If the lever will not pivot on the bar, it needs some lubrication.*

place a price on one's **head** Go to a **price on** one's **head.**

place a strain on someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to burden and nearly overwhelm someone or something. ☐ *The weight of all the trucks placed a strain on the bridge.* **2.** *Fig.* to tax the resources or strength of someone, a group, or something to the utmost. ☐ *All of the trouble at work placed a strain on Kelly.* ☐ *The recession placed a strain on the economy.*

place an order to submit an order. ☐ *My secretary placed an order for a new computer.* ☐ *I placed my order only yesterday.*

A **place for everything, and everything in its place.** *Prov.* Everything in order and put away where it belongs. (Used to describe a very orderly thing or place.) ☐ *I like to put my books in alphabetical order by author. She has a place for everything, and everything in its place.* ☐ *Barbara's room is so tidy. A place for everything, and everything in its place.*

place of business a place where business is done; a factory or office. ☐ *Our place of business opens at 9:00* A.M. *each day.* ☐ *You will have to come to our place of business to make a purchase.*

a **place of concealment** a hiding place. ☐ *She brought her little safe out of a place of concealment where it had been for decades.*

place one's **trust in** someone or something to trust someone or something. ☐ *If you place your trust in me, everything will work out all right.* ☐ *You should place your trust in your own proven talent.*

place someone to recall someone's name; to recall the details about a person that would help you identify the person. ☐ *I am sorry, I can't seem to place you. Could you tell me your name again?* ☐ *I can't place her. Did I meet her once before?*

place someone **by** someone or something Go to **by** someone or something.

place someone **in an awkward position** *Fig.* to put someone in an embarrassing or delicate situation. ☐ *Your decision places me in an awkward position.* ☐ *I'm afraid I have put myself in sort of an awkward position.*

place someone **on a pedestal** Go to **on a pedestal.**

place someone or something **above** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to put someone or something in a place that is higher than someone or something else. ☐ *I placed Sally above everyone else in a place where she could see everything.* ☐ *I placed the book above Sally on a shelf.* ☐ *Who placed the mirror above the fireplace?* **2.** *Fig.* to hold someone or something in higher regard than someone or something else. ☐ *I place her above all others in honesty.* ☐ *She seems to place money above her family.* ☐ *She placed herself above almost everyone else.*

place someone or something **at** something **1.** to put someone or something somewhere. ☐ *The king placed extra guards at the door for the night.* ☐ *I placed the wine bottle at the left of the host.* **2.** to figure that someone or something was in a certain place. ☐ *The detective placed Randy at the scene of the crime about midnight.* ☐ *I place the getaway car at the first tollbooth at dawn.*

place someone or something **before** someone or something and **put** someone or something **before** someone or something **1.** to put someone or something in front of someone or something, especially in a line. ☐ *The teacher placed George before Bob, because Bob was a little taller.* ☐ *Tom placed himself before the group and began to speak.* **2.** to consider someone or something more important than someone or something. ☐ *I am sorry, but I place my wife and her welfare before yours!* ☐ *He places his job before his family!*

place someone or something **behind** someone or something **1.** to move someone or something to a place behind or to the rear of someone or something else. ☐ *Place the taller boy behind John in the second row.* ☐ *Place the iris behind the nasturtium.* **2.** to rank or estimate someone or something behind someone or something else. ☐ *I would place George behind Fred in this contest.* ☐ *Frank placed the white horse well behind the black one in the race.*

place someone or something **in jeopardy** to put someone or something at risk. ☐ *Do you realize that what you just*

said places all of us in jeopardy? ☐ *She has placed the entire project in jeopardy.*

place someone or something **in** someone's **care** Go to in the care of someone.

place someone or something **in the trust of** someone Go to in the trust of someone.

place someone or something **into the care of** someone Go to in the care of someone.

place someone or something **next to** someone or something to put someone or something immediately adjacent to someone or something. ☐ *Please don't place Donna next to Betty for the class photograph. They are wearing identical dresses.* ☐ *Please don't place the flowers next to me. I have hay fever.*

place someone or something **on** someone or something to put or lay someone or something on someone or something. ☐ *The archbishop placed the crown on the new queen.* ☐ *The police officer placed Timmy on the sergeant's desk and gave him an ice-cream cone.*

place someone or something **under** someone's **care** Go to in the care of someone.

place someone **with** someone or something to get someone a job with someone or some company. ☐ *The agency was able to place me with Dave, who runs a small candy store on Maple Street.* ☐ *They placed me with a firm that makes doghouses.*

place something **aside**† to set something aside or out of the way. ☐ *Place this one aside and we'll keep it for ourselves.* ☐ *Place aside some of the smaller ones for later.*

place something **at a premium** to force up the value of something so that its price is higher. ☐ *The rapid changes in the market placed all the medical stocks at a premium.* ☐ *The goods had been placed at a premium by the changing market conditions.*

place something **back** **1.** to move something backwards. ☐ *Place this chair back a little. It is in the walkway.* ☐ *Would you please place the boxes back so there is more room to get through?* **2.** to return something to where it was. ☐ *You found it on the table. Place it back when you finish.* ☐ *When you finish examining the book from the shelf, place it back.*

place something **down**† **(on** something**)** to put something down on something. ☐ *Place the book down on the top of the table.* ☐ *Please place down the book on the table.*

place something **in** something to put something inside something. ☐ *Place the rabbit in the pen with the others.* ☐ *Please place your dishes in the sink when you finish.*

place something **under** someone or something to put something beneath someone or something. ☐ *Bill was in the tree trying to get down, so we placed a ladder under him.* ☐ *I placed my wallet under my pillow.*

place something **up against** something Go to up against something.

place something **with** someone or something to leave something in the care of someone or something. ☐ *We placed the trunk with Fred and his wife.* ☐ *Mary placed the problem with the committee, hoping a solution could be found.*

place the blame on someone or something **(for** something**)** to blame someone or something for something. ☐ *Please don't try to place the blame on me for the accident.* ☐ *The insurance company placed the blame on the weather.*

a **place to call** one's **own** a home of one's very own. ☐ *I am tired of living with my parents. I want a place to call my own.*

plague someone or something **with** something to bother or annoy someone or something with something. ☐ *Stop plaguing me with your requests.* ☐ *We plagued the committee with ideas.*

plain and simple Go to pure and simple.

plain as a pikestaff Go to next.

***plain as day** and ***plain as a pikestaff** **1.** *Cliché* very plain and simple. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *Although his face was as plain as day, his smile made him look interesting and friendly.* ☐ *Fred: I have a suspicion that Marcia is upset with me. Alan: A suspicion? Come on, Fred, that's been plain as a pikestaff for quite some time!* **2.** and ***plain as the nose on** one's **face** *Cliché* clear and understandable. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *The lecture was as plain as day. No one had to ask questions.* ☐ *Jane: I don't understand why Professor Potter has been so friendly this week. Alan: It's plain as the nose on your face. He wants to be nominated for Professor of the Year.*

plan for someone to prepare enough [of something] for someone. ☐ *Fred just called and said he can show up for dinner after all. Please plan for him.* ☐ *Tony wasn't planned for, and there is no place for him to sit.*

plan for something **1.** to prepare for something. ☐ *I need to take some time and plan for my retirement.* ☐ *We carefully planned for almost every possibility.* **2.** to prepare or estimate for a certain number [of people or things]. ☐ *I am planning for twelve. I hope everyone can come.*

plan on someone to be ready for someone; to anticipate someone's arrival. ☐ *Don't plan on Sam. He has a cold and probably won't come.* ☐ *We are planning on Ted and Bill.*

plan on something to prepare for something; to be ready for something; to anticipate something. ☐ *If I were you, I would plan on a big crowd at your open house.* ☐ *This was not planned on.*

plan something **out**† to make thorough plans for something. ☐ *Let us sit down and plan our strategy out.* ☐ *We sat down and planned out our strategy.*

plane something **away**† to smooth off bumps or irregularities with a plane. ☐ *Please plane the bumps away so that the board is perfectly smooth.* ☐ *Sam planed away the bumps.*

plane something **down**† to smooth something down with a plane; to remove some material from something with a plane. ☐ *I will have to plane the door down before I hang it again.* ☐ *I planed down the edge of the door for you.*

plane something **off**† to remove bumps, nicks, or scrapes by planing. ☐ *Plane the rough places off so the surface will be as smooth as possible.* ☐ *Sam planed off the bumps.*

plank over something to cover something over with planking. ☐ *The county planked over the old bridge so bicyclists could use it.*

plant something **in** something **1.** *Lit.* to set out a plant in something; to sow seeds in something. ☐ *Are you going to plant tomatoes in these pots?* ☐ *What have you planted in*

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the garden? **2.** *Fig.* to put an idea in someone's brain, head, or thinking. ☐ *Who planted that silly idea in your head?* ☐ *I want to plant this concept in her thinking.* **3.** *Fig. Inf.* to conceal something in something. ☐ *The crook planted the money in the back of the refrigerator.* ☐ *What did the cops plant in your pockets?*

plant something **on** someone **1.** to hide incriminating evidence on a person for later discovery and use in prosecution. (Drugs. Allegedly a police practice used to entrap drug offenders.) ☐ *The cops planted crack on Richard and then arrested him for carrying it.* ☐ *Don't touch me! You'll plant something on me!* **2.** to conceal narcotics or other contraband on an unsuspecting person for the purpose of smuggling. (This person will bear the risk of discovery and arrest.) ☐ *The crooks planted the stuff on a passenger, but couldn't find him when the plane landed.* ☐ *Someone had planted coke on me, and the airport security officer found it.*

plaster one's **hair down**† *Fig.* to use water, oil, or cream to dress the hair for combing. (The result looks plastered to the head.) ☐ *Tony used some strange substance to plaster his hair down.* ☐ *He plastered down his hair with something that smells good.*

plaster over something to cover over something with plaster. ☐ *I think that we will just plaster over the cracks in the wall.*

plaster something **onto** something and **plaster** something **on**† to spread a substance onto something. ☐ *She plastered great globs of the jam onto the toast.* ☐ *She plastered on lots of butter.*

plaster something **up**† to close something up with plaster; to cover over holes or cracks in a wall with plaster. ☐ *He plastered the cracks up and then painted over them.* ☐ *You have to plaster up the cracks.*

plaster something **with** something to spread some substance onto something. ☐ *Jane plastered each slice of bread with butter and then heaped on a glob of jam.* ☐ *She plastered the wall with a thin coat of fine white plaster.*

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play a big part (in something**)** and **play a large part (in** something**)** *Fig.* to serve as a major part of some situation or event. ☐ *The incredible amount of duplicative paperwork played a large part in my decision to find employment elsewhere.*

play a bit part to perform a small part in a play or a movie. ☐ *She played a few bit parts in minor Broadway plays, and then got the lead in an exciting new musical.*

play a joke on someone to make a joke that tricks someone. ☐ *The children played a joke on their teacher.* ☐ *I don't like it when you play jokes on me.*

play a large part (in something**)** Go to **play a big part (in** something**)**.

play a part in something and **play a role in** something **1.** to participate in something in a specific way. ☐ *I hope to play a part in the development of the new product.* ☐ *I want to play a role in this procedure.* **2.** to portray a character in a performance. ☐ *He played a part in* The Mikado, *but it was not a major role.* ☐ *Larry wanted to play a role in the next play.*

play a prank on someone Go to **play a trick on** someone.

play a role in something Go to **play a part in** something.

play a trick on someone and **play a prank on** someone to do a trick that affects someone. ☐ *Somebody played a trick on me by hiding my shoes.* ☐ *The little boys planned to play a trick on their teacher by turning up the heat in the classroom.*

play about (with someone or something**)** Go to **play around (with** someone or something**)**.

play against someone or something to compete against someone or something in a team sport. ☐ *We won't be ready to play against the other team this weekend.* ☐ *We refuse to play against you until the field is in better condition.*

play along (with someone or something**) 1.** *Lit.* to play a musical instrument with someone or a group. ☐ *The trombonist sat down and began to play along with the others.* ☐ *Do you mind if I play along?* **2.** *Fig.* to pretend to cooperate with someone or something in a joke, scam, etc. ☐ *I decided that I would play along with Larry for a while and see what would happen.* ☐ *I don't think I want to play along.*

play an old warhorse Go to **an old warhorse**.

play around (with someone or something**) 1.** and **play about (with** someone or something**)** to play and frolic with someone or something. ☐ *Kelly likes to play around with the other kids.* ☐ *The boys are out in the yard, playing about with the neighbor girls.* ☐ *Will you kids stop playing about and get busy?* ☐ *Stop playing around and get busy!* **2.** *Euph.* to have a romantic or sexual affair with someone or persons in general. ☐ *Kelly found out that her husband had been playing around with Susan.* ☐ *I can't believe that Roger is playing around!*

play at full blast Go to **at full blast**.

play at something to pretend to be doing something. ☐ *You are not fixing the car, you are just playing at repair work!* ☐ *Stop playing at doing the dishes and get the job done.*

play ball with someone **1.** *Lit.* to toss a ball back and forth with someone. ☐ *Carla is out playing ball with the little kids.* ☐ *Will you play ball with us?* **2.** *Lit.* to play baseball or some other team sport with someone. ☐ *Do you want to play ball with our team?* ☐ *I decided I wouldn't play ball with the school team anymore.* **3.** *Fig.* to cooperate with someone. ☐ *Why can't you guys play ball with us?* ☐ *Max won't play ball with the gang anymore.*

play both ends (against the middle) *Fig.* [for one] to scheme in a way that pits two sides against each other (for one's own gain). ☐ *I told my brother that Mary doesn't like him. Then I told Mary that my brother doesn't like her. They broke up, so now I can have the car this weekend. I succeeded in playing both ends against the middle.* ☐ *If you try to play both ends, you're likely to get in trouble with both sides.*

play by ear Go to **play** something **by ear**.

play by the book Go to **by the book**.

play cat and mouse with someone *Fig.* to be coy and evasive with someone. ☐ *I know what you are up to. Don't play cat and mouse with me!* ☐ *I wish that they wouldn't play cat and mouse with me!*

play dead to pretend to be dead. ☐ *When the bear attacked me, I just dropped down and played dead.*

play down to someone to condescend to one's audience. ☐ *Why are you playing down to the audience? They will walk out on you!* ☐ *Don't play down to the people who have paid their money to see you.*

play dumb Go to **play ignorant.**

play fair to do something by the rules; to play something in a fair and just manner. ☐ *John won't play with Bill anymore because Bill doesn't play fair.* ☐ *You moved the golf ball with your foot! That's not playing fair!*

play fast and loose (with someone or something**)** *Fig.* to act carelessly, thoughtlessly, and irresponsibly. ☐ *I'm tired of your playing fast and loose with me. Leave me alone.* ☐ *Bob got fired for playing fast and loose with the company's money.*

play first chair 1. to be the leader of a section of instruments in an orchestra or a band. (More literal than the following sense.) ☐ *Sally learned to play the violin so well that she now plays first chair in the orchestra.* ☐ *I'm going to practice my flute so I can play first chair.* **2.** *Fig.* to act as a leader. ☐ *I need to get this job done. Who plays first chair around here?* ☐ *You're not the boss! You don't play first chair.*

play footsie with someone **1.** to get romantically or sexually involved with someone. (Refers literally to secretly pushing or rubbing feet with someone under the table.) ☐ *Someone said that Ruth is playing footsie with Henry.* ☐ *Henry and Ruth are playing footsie with each other.* **2.** to get involved in a scheme with someone; to cooperate with someone. ☐ *The guy who runs the butcher shop was playing footsie with the city meat inspector.* ☐ *Henry was playing footsie with the mayor in order to get the contract.*

play for keeps to do things with permanent effect; to be serious in one's actions. (From the game of marbles, where the winner actually keeps all the marbles won.) ☐ *Are we playing for keeps or can we give everything back at the end of the game?* ☐ *We are playing for keeps, so be careful of what you do.*

play for something **1.** to gamble for something; to use something as the medium of exchange for gaming or gambling. ☐ *Let's just play for nickels, okay?* ☐ *We will play for dollar bills.* **2.** to play for a particular reason, other than winning. ☐ *We are just playing for fun.* ☐ *They are not competing. They are playing for practice.*

play for time *Fig.* to stall; to act in such a way as to gain time. ☐ *I'll play for time while you sneak out the window.* ☐ *The lawyers for the defense were playing for time while they looked for a witness.*

play freeze-out to open windows and doors, or turn down a thermostat, making someone cold. ☐ *Wow, it's cold in here! Who's playing freeze-out?* ☐ *Is someone trying to play freeze-out?*

play games (with someone**)** *Fig.* to use clever strategies against someone. ☐ *Come on! Stop playing games with me. Let's talk this over.*

play hard to get *Fig.* to be coy, intentionally shy, and fickle. (Usually refers to someone of the opposite sex.) ☐ *Why can't we go out? Why do you play hard to get?* ☐ *Sally annoys all the boys because she plays hard to get.*

play hardball (with someone**)** *Fig.* to act strong and aggressive about an issue with someone. ☐ *Things are getting a little tough. The president has decided to play hardball on this issue.* ☐ *If he wants to play hardball with us, we can play that way, too.*

play havoc with someone or something Go to **raise havoc with** someone or something.

play hell with someone or something *Fig.* to cause enormous disruptions with someone or something. (Use discretion with *hell.*) ☐ *Your proposal would play hell with Gerry and his plans.* ☐ *This new event really plays hell with my schedule.*

play hob with someone or something Go to **raise hob with** someone or something.

play hooky to fail to attend school or some other event. ☐ *Why aren't you in school? Are you playing hooky?* ☐ *I don't have time for the sales meeting today, so I think I'll just play hooky.*

play ignorant and **play dumb** to pretend to be ignorant [of something]. ☐ *I played ignorant even though I knew about the surprise party.* ☐ *John played dumb when I asked him if he knew who had been on the telephone.*

play in something **1.** to play a musical instrument in some musical organization. ☐ *I used to play in a band.* ☐ *I wanted to play in the orchestra but I wasn't good enough.* **2.** [for someone] to play the action of a game in a particular position or location. ☐ *Fred played in left field for the rest of the game.* ☐ *I will play in the backfield for the rest of the game.* **3.** to perform in a specific production. ☐ *She played in the Broadway production of* Major Barbara. ☐ *Once, I played in* The Mikado.

play in the big leagues *Fig.* to be involved in something of large or important proportions. (Alludes to playing a professional sport at the highest level.) ☐ *You had better shape up if you want to play in the big leagues.* ☐ *The conductor shouted at the oboist, "You're playing in the big leagues now. Tune up or ship out."*

play innocent to pretend to be innocent and not concerned. ☐ *There is no need to play innocent. I know you broke the lamp!* ☐ *John is playing innocent, and he knows more than he is telling us.*

play into someone's **hands** *Fig.* [for a person one is scheming against] to assist one in one's scheming without realizing it. ☐ *John is doing exactly what I hoped he would. He's playing into my hands.* ☐ *John played into my hands by taking the cash he found in my desk. I caught him and had him arrested.*

play it cool 1. *Inf.* to do something while not revealing insecurities or incompetence; to act blasé. ☐ *Play it cool, man. Look like you belong there.* ☐ *If the boss walks in, just play it cool.* **2.** *Inf.* to hold one's temper. ☐ *Come on now. Let it pass. Play it cool.* ☐ *Don't let them get you mad. Play it cool.*

play it for all it's worth *Fig.* to exploit a problem, disability, or injury to get as much sympathy or compensation as possible. ☐ *He injured his hand before the examination and he played it for all it was worth in order to get the exam delayed.*

play it safe to be or act safe; to avoid taking a risk. ☐ *You should play it safe and take your umbrella.* ☐ *If you have a cold or the flu, play it safe and go to bed.*

play like someone or something to pretend to be someone or a type of a person. ☐ *Sam is playing like Mr. Watson,*

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the teacher. □ *He is playing like a teacher and helping Mary with her homework.*

play on to continue to play. □ *The band played on and the dance continued until the wee hours of the morning.* □ *We played on and on until the last guests left the party.*

play on someone's **heartstrings** *Fig.* to attempt to get sympathy from someone. □ *She is crying so she can play on your heartstrings and try to get you to take her home.*

play on something to have an effect on something; to manage something for a desired effect. (The *on* can be replaced by *upon.*) □ *The clerk played on my sense of responsibility in trying to get me to buy the book.* □ *See if you can get her to confess by playing on her sense of guilt.*

play one's **cards close to** one's **chest** and **play** one's **cards close to** one's **vest; keep** one's **cards close to** one's **chest; keep** one's **cards close to** one's **vest** *Fig.* to keep to oneself or be very cautious in one's dealing with people. (As if one were playing cards and not permitting anyone to see any of the cards.) □ *He is very cautious. He plays his cards close to his chest.* □ *You seem to be playing your cards close to your vest.*

play one's **cards right** and **play** one's **cards well** *Fig.* to work or negotiate correctly and skillfully. □ *If you play your cards right, you can get whatever you want.* □ *She didn't play her cards well, and she ended up with something less than what she wanted.*

play one's **cards well** Go to previous.

play one's **heart out** Go to **cry** one's **heart out**.

play one's **trump card 1.** *Lit.* [in certain card games] to play a card that, according to the rules of the game, outranks certain other cards and is thus able to take any card of another suit. □ *Bob played his trump card and ended the game as the winner.* **2.** *Fig.* to use a special trick; to use one's most powerful or effective strategy or device. □ *I won't play my trump card until I have tried everything else.* □ *I thought that the whole situation was hopeless until Mary played her trump card and solved the whole problem.*

play out [for a process] to run out; to finish. □ *The whole incident is about to play out. Then it all will be forgotten.* □ *When the event plays out, everything will return to normal.*

play politics 1. *Lit.* to negotiate politically. □ *Everybody at city hall is playing politics as usual.* □ *If you're elected as a member of a political party, you'll have to play politics.* **2.** to allow politics to dominate in matters where principle should prevail. □ *Look, I came here to discuss the legal issues of this trial, not play politics.* □ *They're not making reasonable decisions. They're playing politics.*

play possum *Fig.* to pretend to be inactive, unobservant, asleep, or dead. (The *possum* refers to an opossum.) □ *I knew that Bob wasn't asleep. He was just playing possum.* □ *I can't tell if this animal is dead or just playing possum.*

play second fiddle (to someone**)** *Fig.* to be in a subordinate position to someone. □ *I'm tired of playing second fiddle to John.* □ *I'm better trained than he, and I have more experience. I shouldn't always play second fiddle.*

play someone **against** someone else to cause someone to dispute with someone else. □ *Don tried to play George against David, but they figured out what he was up to.* □ *Alice never managed to play Tom against Fred.*

play someone **for a fool** *Fig.* to treat someone like a fool; to assume someone is naive or stupid. □ *Don't play me for a fool. I won't have it.* □ *You are playing me for a fool! Stop it!*

play someone **off against** someone else to scheme in a manner that pits two of your adversaries against one another. □ *Bill wanted to beat me up and so did Bob. I did some fast talking, and they ended up fighting with each other. I really played Bill off against Bob.* □ *The president played the House off against the Senate and ended up getting his own way.*

play someone or something **down**† to lessen the effect or importance of someone or something. □ *John is a famous actor, but the director tried to play him down as just another member of the cast.* □ *Her lawyer tried to play down her earlier arrest.*

play someone or something **up**† to make someone or something seem to be more important. □ *The director tried to play Ann up, but she was not really a star.* □ *Try to play up the good qualities of our product.*

play something **as** something to deal with something as if it were something else. □ *I will play this matter as a simple case of mistaken identity.* □ *We will play this lapse as an instance of forgetfulness and not make too much of it.*

play something **at full blast** Go to **at full blast**.

play something **back**† **(to** someone**)** to play a recording to someone. □ *Can you play the speech back to me?* □ *Please play back the speech to me, so I can hear how I sound.*

play something **by ear 1.** to be able to play a piece of music after just listening to it a few times, without looking at the notes. □ *I can play "Stardust" by ear.* □ *Some people can play Chopin's music by ear.* **2.** and **play by ear** to play a musical instrument well, without formal training. □ *John can play the piano by ear.* □ *If I could play by ear, I wouldn't have to take lessons—or practice!* **3.** to improvise; to decide one's next steps after one is already involved in a situation. □ *If we go into the meeting unprepared, we'll have to play everything by ear.* □ *He never prepared his presentations. He always played things by ear.*

play something **off**† to play a game to break a tied score. □ *They decided not to play the tie off because it had grown so late.* □ *They went ahead and played off the tie after all.*

play something **on** someone or something to aim a light or a hose on someone or something. □ *The fireman played water on the burning building.* □ *The stagehand played a spotlight on the singer.*

play something **out**† **1.** to play something, such as a game, to the very end. □ *I was bored with the game, but I felt I had to play it out.* □ *She played out the rest of the game.* **2.** to unwind, unfold, or unreel something. (See also **pay** something **out**.) □ *Please play some more rope out.* □ *They played out many feet of cable.*

play something **over** to replay something, such as a game, a videotape, an audio recording, etc. □ *There was an objection to the way the referee handled the game, so they played it over.* □ *Let's play that song over again.*

play something **through**† to play something, such as a piece of recorded music, all the way through. □ *I played the album through, hoping to find even one song I liked.* □ *As I played through the album, I didn't hear anything I liked.*

play something **up**† to emphasize something; to be a booster of something. ☐ *The press played the scandal up so much that everyone became bored with it.* ☐ *They really played up the scandal.*

play something **with** someone or something **1.** to play a game with someone or a group. ☐ *Do you want to play checkers with me?* ☐ *Fran played ball with the dog for a while.* **2.** to assume a particular role with someone or some group. ☐ *Don't play the fool with me!* ☐ *Don always tried to play the successful entrepreneur with the board of directors.*

play (the) devil's advocate *Fig.* to put forward arguments against or objections to a proposition—which one may actually agree with—purely to test the validity of the proposition. (The devil's advocate opposes the canonization of a saint in order to prove that the grounds for canonization are sound.) ☐ *I agree with your plan. I'm just playing the devil's advocate so you'll know what the opposition will say.* ☐ *Mary offered to play devil's advocate and argue against our case so that we would find out any flaws in it.*

play the devil with something *Fig.* to cause disruption with something; to foul something up. ☐ *Your being late really played the devil with my plans for the day.* ☐ *This weather is really playing the devil with my arthritis.*

play the field to date many different people rather than just one. ☐ *When Tom told Ann good-bye, he said he wanted to play the field.* ☐ *He said he wanted to play the field while he was still young.*

play the fool *Fig.* to act in a silly manner in order to amuse other people. ☐ *The teacher told Tom to stop playing the fool and sit down.* ☐ *Fred likes playing the fool, but we didn't find him funny last night.*

play the heavy *Fig.* to act the part of a mean person; to do the unpleasant tasks that no one else wants to do. (Refers originally to playing the role of someone evil in a movie, etc.) ☐ *I'm a nice guy, but at work, I am required to play the heavy. The boss makes me do all the cruel things.*

play the horses Go to next.

play the ponies and **play the horses** to wager on horse races. ☐ *I used to play the ponies every afteroon during the summer. Then I ran out of money.*

play the race card Go to the **the race card**.

play the (stock) market to invest in the stock market. (As if it were a game or as if it were gambling.) ☐ *Would you rather put your money in the bank or play the market?* ☐ *I've learned my lesson playing the market. I lost a fortune.*

play through [for golfers] to pass someone on the golf course. ☐ *Do you mind if we play through? We have to get back to the courtroom by two o'clock.* ☐ *We let them play through because they were moving so fast.*

play to someone or something **1.** to perform something for someone or a group. ☐ *The cast played to one of their classmates who was confined to the hospital.* ☐ *Gerald Watson will play to a small gathering of wealthy socialites this Saturday evening.* **2.** to aim one's performance only toward a particular person, group, or a particular taste. ☐ *The comedian was playing only to the juveniles in the audience.* ☐ *It was clear that she was playing to the people in the cheaper seats.*

play to the crowd Go to next.

play to the gallery and **play to the crowd** to perform in a manner that will get the strong approval of the audience; to perform in a manner that will get the approval of the lower elements in the audience. ☐ *John is a competent actor, but he has a tendency to play to the crowd.* ☐ *When he made the rude remark, he was just playing to the gallery.*

play tricks on someone **1.** *Lit.* to pull pranks on someone. ☐ *You had better not play any tricks on me!* ☐ *Stop playing tricks on people!* **2.** *Fig.* [for something, such as the eyes] to deceive someone. ☐ *Did I see him fall down or are my eyes playing tricks on me?* ☐ *My brain is playing tricks on me. I can't remember a word you said.*

play up to someone to flatter someone; to try to gain influence with someone. ☐ *It won't do any good to play up to me. I refuse to agree to your proposal.* ☐ *I played up to him and he still wouldn't give in to me.*

play (up)on something **1.** *Lit.* to make music on a musical instrument. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Can you play upon this instrument, or only the one you are holding?* ☐ *I can't play on this! It's broken.* **2.** *Lit.* to play a game on a field or court. ☐ *Shall we play on the floor or on the table?* ☐ *Let's play on the field. It's dry enough now.* **3.** *Fig.* to exploit something—including a word—for some purpose; to develop something for some purpose. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *You are just playing on words!* ☐ *You are playing on a misunderstanding.* **4.** *Fig.* [for light] to sparkle on something. ☐ *The reflections of the candles played on the surface of the wall.* ☐ *The lights played on the crystal goblets.*

play with a full deck 1. *Lit.* to play cards with a complete deck, containing all the cards. ☐ *Are we playing with a full deck or did some card drop on the floor? I haven't seen the three of hearts all evening!* **2.** *Fig.* to operate as if one were mentally sound. (Usually in the negative. One cannot play cards properly with a partial deck.) ☐ *That guy's not playing with a full deck.* ☐ *Look sharp, you dummies! Pretend you are playing with a full deck.*

play with fire 1. *Lit.* to use fire as a toy; to experiment with flames and fire. ☐ *Jimmy! I've told you never to play with fire!* **2.** *Fig.* to do something dangerous or risky. (Usually *playing with fire.*) ☐ *Be careful with that knife! You are playing with fire!* ☐ *If you mess with Max, you are playing with fire.*

play with someone or something **1.** to play games with someone or a group. ☐ *I love to play Ping-Pong. Will you play with me?* ☐ *They won't play with our team. We are too good.* **2.** to toy with someone or something. ☐ *You are just playing with me. Can't you take me seriously?* ☐ *Please don't play with that crystal vase.*

play-by-play description a description of an event given as the event is taking place. (Usually in reference to a sporting event.) ☐ *And now here is Bill Jones with a play-by-play description of the baseball game.* ☐ *John was giving me a play-by-play description of the argument going on next door.*

played out too exhausted to continue. ☐ *At the end of the race, Donna was played out.* ☐ *After the race, we were played out for the rest of the day.*

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plead for someone to beg for someone to be spared. ☐ *Tom pleaded for Dave, but it was no use. Dave was found guilty.* ☐ *She pleaded for her husband, but the judge sentenced him to ten years in prison.*

plead for something to beg for something. ☐ *I don't want to have to plead for what's already mine.* ☐ *The children were pleading for ice cream, so we got some for them.*

plead guilty to something to state that one is guilty of a crime before a court of law. ☐ *Gerald refused to plead guilty to the crime and had to stand trial.* ☐ *Max pleaded guilty to the charge and then fled town.*

plead to something to enter an admission of guilt to a specific crime. ☐ *Max pleaded to the lesser charge of larceny.* ☐ *Lefty pleaded to the grand larceny charge.*

plead with someone to beg something of someone; to make an emotional appeal to someone. ☐ *Do I have to plead with you to get you to do it?* ☐ *You can plead with me as much as you want. I won't permit you to go.*

(Please) don't get up. Please, there is no need to rise to greet me or in deference to me. ☐ *Mary approached the table to speak to Bill. Bill started to push his chair back as if to rise. Mary said, "Don't get up. I just want to say hello."* ☐ *Tom (rising): Hello, Fred. Good to see you. Fred (standing): Don't get up. How are you?*

Please hold. Go to Hold the phone.

please oneself to do what one wishes. ☐ *We don't mind whether you stay or not. Please yourself!* ☐ *The boss preferred me to work late, but he told me to please myself.*

***pleased as Punch** delighted; very pleased. (*Also: **as ~**.) (This refers to Punch from the "Punch and Judy" shows.) ☐ *Child: Do you think Grandma will like the picture I'm making for her? Father: I think she'll be as pleased as Punch.* ☐ *Fred was pleased as Punch to discover that Ellen was making lemon pie, his favorite, for dessert.*

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pleased for someone or something happy for someone or a group. ☐ *I am very pleased for you.* ☐ *We were all pleased for the committee. The members got all the praise they deserved.* ☐ *Everyone could see how pleased Sam was for himself and his whole family.*

***pleased with** someone or something happy and satisfied with someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *I am quite pleased with you. You did a fine job.* ☐ *We are pleased with your work.*

pledge something **to** someone to promise something to someone. ☐ *I pledged one hundred dollars to Ralph for his cause.* ☐ *We pledged a lot of money to our favorite charity.*

plenty of something lots of something; an abundance of something; enough of something. ☐ *I have plenty of candy. Do you want some?* ☐ *This project is giving me plenty of trouble.*

plight one's **troth to** someone to become engaged to be married to someone. (Literary or jocular.) ☐ *I chose not to plight my troth to anyone who acts so unpleasant to my dear aunt.* ☐ *Alice plighted her troth to Scott.*

plod along to move along slowly but deliberately. ☐ *I'm just plodding along, but I am getting the job done.* ☐ *The old man plodded along, hardly able to stand.* ☐ *The movie plodded along putting most of the audience to sleep.*

plod away at something to keep trying to do something. ☐ *He continues to plod away at writing his novel. It's been three years now.* ☐ *How long have you been plodding away at that book?*

plod through something to work one's way through something laboriously. ☐ *I just plodded through my work today. I had no energy at all.* ☐ *This is certainly a lot of papers to have to plod through.*

plonk something **down**† to slap something down; to plop something down. ☐ *He plonked a dollar down and demanded a newspaper.* ☐ *He plonked down his beer mug on the bar.*

plot against someone or something to make a scheme against someone or something. ☐ *All the counselors plotted against the czar.* ☐ *We plotted against the opposing party.*

plot something **on** something to draw a route or outline on something. ☐ *He plotted the course they would be taking on a map of the area.* ☐ *The captain plotted the course on a chart of the upper reaches of the Nile.*

plot something **out**† to map something out; to outline a plan for something. ☐ *I have an idea about how to remodel this room. Let me plot it out for you.* ☐ *I plotted out my ideas for the room.*

The **plot thickens.** Things are becoming more complicated or interesting. ☐ *The police assumed that the woman was murdered by her ex-husband, but he has an alibi. The plot thickens.* ☐ *John is supposed to be going out with Mary, but I saw him last night with Sally. The plot thickens.*

plot with someone to scheme with someone. ☐ *Mary looks as though she is plotting with Jerry to make some sort of mischief.* ☐ *I am not plotting with anyone. I am planning everything myself.*

plow into someone or something to crash into someone or something; to bump hard into someone or something. ☐ *The car plowed into the ditch.* ☐ *The runner plowed into another player.*

plow something **back into** something and **plow** something **back**† to put something, such as a profit, back into an investment. ☐ *We plowed all the profits back into the expansion of the business.* ☐ *Bill and Ted plowed back everything they earned into the company.*

plow something **in**† to work something into soil by plowing. ☐ *Lay the fertilizer down and plow it in.* ☐ *Plow in the fertilizer as soon as you can.*

plow something **under (**something**)** to turn something under the surface of soil by plowing. ☐ *The farmer plowed the wheat stubble under the surface of the soil.* ☐ *The farmer plowed the stubble under.*

plow something **up**† to uncover something by plowing. ☐ *The farmer plowed some old coins up and took them to the museum to find out what they were.* ☐ *He plowed up some valuable coins.*

plow through something **1.** *Lit.* to move through something such as snow or mud with a plow. ☐ *The huge truck plowed through the snow-covered streets so traffic could move again.* **2.** *Fig.* to work through something with determination. ☐ *She plowed through the book to learn everything she could.* ☐ *Billy plowed through dinner and ran outside to play.*

pluck at someone or something to pull or pick at someone or something. ☐ *Kelly plucked at Ed, picking off the burrs that had caught on his clothing.* ☐ *Kelly plucked at the strings of the guitar.*

pluck something **from** someone or something to pick, grab, or snatch something from someone. ☐ *Sally plucked a chocolate from the box and popped it into her mouth.* ☐ *He stooped over and plucked a rose from the bush.*

pluck something **off (of)** someone or something and **pluck** something **off**† to pick something off someone or something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *She plucked the mosquito off his back before it could bite him.* ☐ *She plucked off the bud.*

pluck something **out of** something and **pluck** something **out**† to snatch something out of something. ☐ *She plucked the coin out of his hand and put it in her pocket.* ☐ *Reaching into the fountain, Jane plucked out the coin.*

pluck up someone's **courage** to bolster someone's, including one's own, courage. ☐ *I hope you are able to pluck up your courage so that you can do what has to be done.* ☐ *Some good advice from a friend helped pluck up my courage.*

plug away (at something**)** and **peg away (at** something**)** to keep trying something; to keep working at something. ☐ *John kept pegging away at the trumpet until he became pretty good at it.* ☐ *I'm not very good at it, but I keep plugging away.*

plug (oneself**) in(to** something**)** to become attached to something; to become attached to some sort of network or system. ☐ *As soon as I have plugged my laptop into the local network, I will have access to the Internet.* ☐ *I plugged myself into the computer network and began to communicate quickly and efficiently.*

plug something **into** something and **plug** something **in**† to connect something to something else, usually by connecting wires together with a plug and socket. ☐ *Plug this end of the wire into the wall.* ☐ *Plug in the lamp and turn it on.*

plug something **up**† to stop or fill up a hole, crack, or gap. ☐ *Take out the nail and plug the hole up with something.* ☐ *You have to plug up the cracks to keep out the cold.*

plumb loco *Rur.* completely crazy. (*Loco* is from a Spanish word meaning "mad.") ☐ *You're plumb loco if you think I'll go along with that.* ☐ *All those people were running around like they were plumb loco.*

plummet to earth to fall rapidly to earth from a great height. ☐ *The rocket plummeted to earth and exploded as it struck.* ☐ *As the plane plummeted to earth, all the people on the ground were screaming.*

plummet to something to drop or fall to some level or low point. ☐ *Stock prices plummeted to record low levels.* ☐ *The rock plummeted to the river at the base of the cliff.*

plump for someone or something to support or promote someone or something. ☐ *Henry spent a lot of energy plumping for Bill, who was running for vice president.* ☐ *She spent a lot of time plumping for our candidate.*

plump something **down**† **1.** to drop a heavy load of something. ☐ *She plumped the load of groceries onto the bench and looked through her purse for the keys.* ☐ *Jill plumped down her packages.* **2.** to drop something as if it were a heavy load. ☐ *He plumped the potatoes down on each plate, making a loud noise each time.* ☐ *Dave plumped down a huge slab of meat onto the grill.*

plump something **up**† to pat or shake something like a pillow into a fuller shape. ☐ *Todd plumped his pillow up and finished making the bed.* ☐ *He plumped up his pillow.*

plunge down something to run or fall down something. ☐ *The car plunged down the hill and ran into a tree at the bottom.* ☐ *The bicyclist plunged down the side of the hill at a great speed.*

plunge from something to fall or flee from something or some place. ☐ *The eagle plunged from the sky to the lake to capture its prey.* ☐ *Lily plunged from the room in embarrassment.*

plunge in(to something**)** to dive or rush into something; to immerse oneself in something. ☐ *Ned took off his shoes and plunged into the river, hoping to rescue Frank.* ☐ *He plunged into his work and lost track of time.*

plunge something **into** someone or something and **plunge** something **in**† to drive or stab something into someone or something. ☐ *The murderer plunged the knife into his victim.* ☐ *She plunged in the dagger.*

plunge to something **1.** to fall or drop down to something. ☐ *The temperature plunged to zero last night.* ☐ *The burning car plunged to the floor of the canyon.* **2.** to dive or fall to one's death. ☐ *She walked straight to the edge of the cliff and plunged to her death.* ☐ *The burro slipped and plunged to an untimely end.*

plunk (oneself**) down** to sit or fall down hard. ☐ *Nancy pulled up a chair and plunked herself down.* ☐ *She pulled the chair up and plunked down.* ☐ *She plunked herself down in the middle of the kids and began to sing.*

plunk someone or something **down**† to place, drop, or plop someone or something down hard. ☐ *He picked her up and plunked her down in a chair and began to shout at her.* ☐ *Sally plunked down the book in anger.*

ply between something **and** something else to travel between things or places regularly or constantly. ☐ *There are a number of small craft that ply between Santerem and Manaus on a regular basis.* ☐ *Our little ship was unable to ply the entire distance between the two islands.*

ply someone **with** something else to try to supply or give something to someone. (Implies an attempt to influence or fawn upon someone.) ☐ *We plied the mayor with gifts and favors, but it got us nowhere.* ☐ *Don't try to ply the police officer with gifts. That is considered a bribe.*

pock something **with** something to cause dents or small craters by shooting or throwing something at something. ☐ *The hail pocked the roof of the car with dents.* ☐ *The side of the house was pocked with tiny dents where the hail had struck.*

a **pocket of resistance** *Fig.* a small group of people who resist change or domination. ☐ *The accounting department seems to be a pocket of resistance when it comes to automating.*

poetic justice appropriate, ideal, or ironic punishment. ☐ *It was poetic justice that Jane won the race after Mary tried to get her banned from the race.* ☐ *The car thieves tried to steal a car with no gas. That's poetic justice.*

poetic license liberties or license of the type taken by artists, especially poets, to violate patterns of rhyme, harmony, structure, etc. ☐ *I couldn't tell whether he kept making spelling mistakes or if it was just poetic license.*

point at someone or something **1.** [for someone] to direct an extended finger at someone or something; to point one's finger at someone or something. ☐ *You should not point at people.* ☐ *Harry pointed at the mess Jerry had made and scowled.* **2.** [for something] to aim at someone or something. ☐ *The gun pointed directly at him. He was frightened.* ☐ *The sign pointed at a small roadside cafe, populated by truck drivers.*

point down to something to aim downward to something. ☐ *The sign pointed down to the little bell sitting on the counter.* ☐ *The room clerk pointed down the stairs to a little cafe on the lower level.*

the **point of no return** the halfway point; the point at which it is too late to turn back. (Often with *past*.) ☐ *The flight was past the point of no return, so we had to continue to our destination.* ☐ *The entire project is past the point of no return; we will have to continue with it.*

point of view a way of thinking about something; [someone's] viewpoint; an attitude or expression of self-interest. ☐ *From my point of view, all this talk is a waste of time.* ☐ *I can understand her point of view. She has made some good observations about the problem.*

point someone or something **out†** to select or indicate someone or something (from a group). ☐ *Everyone pointed the error out.* ☐ *She pointed out the boy who took her purse.*

point something **at** someone or something to aim or direct something at someone or something. ☐ *Don't ever point a gun at anyone!* ☐ *Point the rifle at the target and pull the trigger.*

point something **up† 1.** *Fig.* to emphasize something; to emphasize one aspect of something. ☐ *This is a very important thing to learn. Let me point it up one more time by drawing this diagram on the board.* ☐ *This points up what I've been telling you.* **2.** *Fig.* to tuck-point something; to repair the joints in masonry. ☐ *I hired someone to point the chimney up.* ☐ *Carl pointed up the brick wall.*

point the finger at someone *Fig.* to blame someone; to identify someone as the guilty person. ☐ *Don't point the finger at me! I didn't take the money.* ☐ *The manager refused to point the finger at anyone in particular and said that everyone was sometimes guilty of being late.*

point to someone or something to aim at someone or something. ☐ *Who is she pointing to?* ☐ *He pointed to the door.*

point to something to indicate, reveal, or suggest something. ☐ *All the evidence seems to point to his guilt.* ☐ *The signs point to a very cold winter.*

point to something **as** something to identify something as something. ☐ *All the indications pointed to Jill as the next president.*

point toward someone or something to direct an extended finger toward someone or something. ☐ *The teacher pointed toward Laura and asked her to come to the front of the room.* ☐ *Randy pointed toward the door and frowned at the dog.*

poise oneself **for** something to get ready for something. ☐ *She poised herself for her dive.* ☐ *Fred poised himself for a fall, but everything worked out all right.*

poise over someone or something to hover or hang over someone or something. ☐ *She spent the entire afternoon poised over her desk, pouting.* ☐ *The dog poised over the downed duck, waiting for the hunter.*

poised for something ready for something; in the right position and waiting for something. ☐ *The cat stared at the mouse, poised for action.* ☐ *The army was poised for battle.*

poised to do something ready to do something; in the right position to do something. ☐ *The cat is poised to jump on the mouse.* ☐ *The army is poised to attack at dawn.*

poison someone **against** someone or something to cause someone to have negative or hateful thoughts about someone, a group, or something. ☐ *You have done nothing more than poison Gerald against all of us! Stop talking to him!* ☐ *Your negative comments poisoned everyone against the proposal.*

poison someone or an animal **with** something to render someone or an animal sick or dead with a poison. ☐ *He intended to poison his wife with arsenic.* ☐ *Barry wanted to poison the cat with something that left no trace.* ☐ *He poisoned himself with the cleaning compound.*

poison something **with** something to render something poisonous with something. ☐ *She poisoned the soup with arsenic.* ☐ *They are poisoning our water supply with pollutants.*

poke a hole in something and **poke a hole through** something to make a hole by pushing something through something; to push something through a hole. ☐ *The carpenter poked a hole in the wall with a nail.* ☐ *The fisherman poked a hole through the ice with a pick.*

poke about Go to poke around.

poke about (in something**)** and **poke around (in** something**)** to rummage around in something or some place; to look through things in something or some place. ☐ *I'll have to go up and poke about in the attic to see if I can find it.* ☐ *Janet went to the attic and spent the rest of the afternoon poking around.*

poke along to move along slowly; to lag or tarry. ☐ *Get moving. Stop poking along.* ☐ *I was just poking along, taking my time, not paying attention to what was going on around me.*

poke around 1. and **poke about** to look or search around. ☐ *I've been poking around in the library looking for some statistics.* ☐ *I don't mind if you look in my drawer for a paper clip, but please don't poke about.* **2.** to waste time while moving about. ☐ *I just poked around all afternoon and didn't accomplish much.* ☐ *Stop poking around and get moving.*

poke around (in something**)** Go to poke about (in something).

poke at someone or something to thrust or jab at someone or something. ☐ *Stop poking at me!* ☐ *Don't poke at the turtle. It might bite you.*

poke fun at someone or something to make fun of someone or something. ☐ *You shouldn't poke fun at me for my*

mistakes. ☐ *They are just poking fun at the strange architecture.*

poke one's **nose in(to** something**)** and **stick** one's **nose in(to** something**)** *Fig.* to interfere with something; to be nosy about something. ☐ *I wish you'd stop poking your nose into my business.* ☐ *She was too upset for me to stick my nose in and ask what was wrong.*

poke out (of something**)** to stick out of something; to extend out of something. ☐ *The bean sprouts were beginning to poke out of the soil of the garden.* ☐ *I knew there were little birds in the birdhouse, because a little head poked out now and then.*

poke someone **in** something to strike or jab someone in some body part. ☐ *Billy poked Bobby in the tummy and made him cry.* ☐ *She poked herself in the eye accidentally.*

poke something **at** someone or something to jab or thrust something at someone or something. ☐ *Don't poke that thing at me!* ☐ *The hunter poked his spear at the pig one more time and decided it was dead.*

poke something **into** something and **poke** something **in**† to stick or cram something into something. ☐ *He poked his finger into the jam, pulled it out again, and licked it.* ☐ *Jeff poked in his finger.*

poke something **out of** something and **poke** something **out**† to thrust something out of something. ☐ *The lobster poked its antennae out of the little cave and wiggled them around.* ☐ *It poked out its antennae.*

poke something **through** someone or something to jab or stab something through someone or something. ☐ *The evil knight poked his weapon through Arthur and withdrew it again.* ☐ *Danny poked his finger through the plastic pool liner by mistake.*

poke through (something**)** to stick through something; to extend through something. ☐ *The tips of Tommy's toes poked through his sneakers and looked very cold.* ☐ *The end of the lost spoon poked through the piecrust on the freshly baked pie. Now we knew where it had disappeared to.*

polarize something **into** something to divide a group into two segments. ☐ *Your actions have just polarized the students into two opposing groups!* ☐ *We polarized the entire population into two factions.*

***poles apart** very different; far from coming to an agreement. (Alludes to the distance between the north and south poles. *Typically: **be ~; become ~; grow ~**.) ☐ *Mr. and Mrs. Jones don't get along well. They are poles apart.* ☐ *They'll never sign the contract because they are poles apart.*

polish something **off**† to eat, consume, exhaust, or complete all of something. ☐ *Who polished the cake off?* ☐ *Who polished off the cake?*

polish something **up**† to rub something until it shines. ☐ *Polish the silver up and make it look nice and shiny.* ☐ *If you will polish up the silver, I will put it away.*

a **political football** *Fig.* an issue that becomes politically divisive; a problem that doesn't get solved because the politics of the issue get in the way. ☐ *The question of campaign contributions has become a political football. All the politicians who accept questionable money are pointing fingers at each other.*

Politics makes strange bedfellows. *Prov.* People who would normally dislike and avoid one another will work together if they think it is politically useful to do so. ☐ *Jill: I never would have thought that genteel, aristocratic candidate would pick such a rabble-rousing, rough-mannered running mate. Jane: Politics makes strange bedfellows.*

pollute something **with** something to adulterate something with something; to dirty something with something. ☐ *You should not pollute the stream with chemicals.* ☐ *Someone polluted the sewer with automotive oil.*

ponder (up)on something to think on something; to consider something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Ponder upon this awhile. See what you come up with.* ☐ *I need to ponder on this.*

pontificate on something to speak and act dogmatically and pompously. ☐ *Must you pontificate on your own virtues so much?* ☐ *The speaker was pontificating on the virtues of a fat-free diet.*

pooch out to stick or bulge out, as with a belly. ☐ *His chubby tummy pooched out when he relaxed.*

poop out *Inf.* to quit; to wear out and stop. ☐ *He pooped out after about an hour of hard work.* ☐ *I think I'm going to poop out pretty soon.*

poop someone or something **out** *Inf.* to cause someone to become exhausted or give out. ☐ *All that exercise really pooped everyone out.* ☐ *A full day of play at the beach had pooped the dog out.* ☐ *The activity pooped out the dog.*

pooped (out) 1. *Inf.* [of a person or an animal] exhausted; worn out. ☐ *I'm really pooped out.* ☐ *The horse looked sort of pooped in the final stretch.* **2.** *Inf.* intoxicated. ☐ *How much of that stuff does it take to get pooped?* ☐ *He's been drinking all night and is totally pooped out.*

***poor as a church mouse** and ***poor as church mice** very poor. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *My aunt is as poor as a church mouse.* ☐ *The Browns are poor as church mice.*

P

poor but clean *Cliché* having little money but clean and of good habits, nonetheless. (Either extremely condescending or jocular. Some people would consider it offensive.) ☐ *My salary isn't very high, and I only have one old car. Anyway, I'm poor but clean.* ☐ *When Fred uttered the phrase "poor but clean" in reference to some of the people working in the yard, Ellen went into a rage.*

pop around (for a visit) and **pop by (for a visit); pop in (for a visit); pop over (for a visit)** to come by [someone's residence] for a visit. ☐ *You simply must pop around for a visit sometime.* ☐ *I will pop by about noon.* ☐ *I can pop in for only a minute.*

pop back (for something**)** to come back to a place for just a moment. ☐ *Okay, I think I can pop back for a minute.* ☐ *I have to pop back for something I forgot.*

pop by (for a visit) Go to pop around (for a visit).

pop down (for a visit) to come or go to someone's home that is downstairs or in a place on a lower level. ☐ *You simply must pop down for a visit whenever you get a chance.* ☐ *I'll try to pop down tomorrow evening after dinner.*

pop for something *Inf.* to pay for a treat (for someone). ☐ *Let's have some ice cream. I'll pop for it.* ☐ *It's about time you popped for coffee.*

pop in (for a visit) Go to pop around (for a visit).

pop in(to something**)** **1.** *Lit. Inf.* to come or go into some place, such as a store, shop, etc., for a moment. ☐ *Let me pop into the bakery for a minute.* ☐ *I have to pop into the drugstore for some shampoo.* **2.** *Fig.* to snap into place in something. ☐ *The little plastic thing popped into its slot, and the model plane was finished.* ☐ *It pops in and holds tight if you do it right.*

pop off **1.** *Sl.* to make an unnecessary remark; to interrupt with a remark; to sound off. ☐ *Please don't pop off all the time.* ☐ *Bob keeps popping off when he should be listening.* **2.** *Sl.* to lose one's temper. ☐ *Now, don't pop off. Keep your cool.* ☐ *I don't know why she popped off at me. All I did was say hello.* **3.** *Sl.* to die. ☐ *My uncle popped off last week.* ☐ *I hope I'm asleep when I pop off.* **4.** *Sl.* to leave; to depart in haste. ☐ *Bye, I must pop off.* ☐ *Got to pop off. I'm late.*

pop one's **cork** **1.** *Fig.* to suddenly become mentally disturbed; to go crazy. ☐ *I was so upset that I nearly popped my cork.* ☐ *They put him away because he popped his cork.* **2.** *Fig.* to become very angry. ☐ *My mother popped her cork when she heard about my low grades.* ☐ *Calm down! Don't pop your cork.*

pop out (of something**)** to jump out of something; to burst out of something. ☐ *Suddenly, a little mouse popped out of the drawer.* ☐ *I opened the drawer and a mouse popped out.*

pop over (for a visit) Go to pop around (for a visit).

pop (some) tops *Sl.* to drink beer. ☐ *Wanna go out tonight and pop some tops?* ☐ *We are going to pop tops and watch the B-ball game.*

pop someone **off**† *Inf.* to kill someone. ☐ *Max was told to pop Lefty off because he was trying to muscle in on the gang's turf.* ☐ *Max intended to pop off Lefty.*

pop someone **on** something *Inf.* to strike someone on some body part. ☐ *If you don't sit down, I'll pop you on the chin!* ☐ *Max popped Lefty on the nose.*

pop something **into** something and **pop** something **in**† to fit, snap, or press something into place in something. ☐ *Lee popped the lever into place, and the machine began to function.* ☐ *Lee popped in the plastic part, and the toy ran beautifully.*

pop something **on(to)** something and **pop** something **on**† to snap something onto something. ☐ *Denise took one more sip of the medicine and popped the lid onto the bottle.*

pop something **out of** something and **pop** something **out**† to release something from something so that it jumps or bursts out, possibly with a popping sound. ☐ *Sue popped the cork out of the champagne bottle.* ☐ *It took a little effort to pop the cork out.* ☐ *She popped out the cork with a quick tug.*

pop something **up**† to remove something by making it jump or burst upwards. ☐ *Henry popped the lid up and helped himself to the strawberry preserves.* ☐ *He popped up the lid and cleaned out the jam jar.*

pop the question [for a man] to ask a woman to marry him. (Could also be used by a woman asking a man.) ☐ *She waited for years for him to pop the question.* ☐ *Finally she popped the question.*

pop up **1.** [for a baseball batter] to hit a baseball that goes high upward rather than outward. ☐ *The catcher came to bat and popped up.* ☐ *I hope I don't pop up this time.* **2.** [for a baseball] to fly high upward rather than outward. ☐ *The ball popped up and went foul.* ☐ *The ball will always pop up if you hit it in a certain way.* **3.** to arise suddenly; to appear without warning. ☐ *New problems keep popping up all the time.* ☐ *Billy popped up out of nowhere and scared his mother.*

pop up (some place**)** to appear suddenly and unexpectedly some place. ☐ *I never know where Henry is going to pop up next.* ☐ *A new problem has popped up.*

pore over something to look over something carefully. ☐ *She pored over the reports, looking for errors.* ☐ *I need to take a few hours to pore over these contracts and see if they are ready to be signed.*

pork out (on something**)** *Inf.* to overeat on something; to become fat as a pig from eating something. (A play on pig out.) ☐ *I pork out on french fries whenever I get the chance.* ☐ *I wish I didn't pork out all the time.*

portent of things to come Go to a harbinger of things to come.

portion something **out**† to give out shares of something. ☐ *Who will portion the cake out?* ☐ *She portioned out the chocolate carefully, making sure everyone got an equal share.*

portray someone **as** someone or something to represent or describe someone as someone or a type of person. ☐ *Fred portrayed his political opponent as an evil man.* ☐ *She tried to portray herself as a grand lady, but she fooled no one.*

portray someone or something **as** someone to develop a character that one is playing in a dramatic production as a kind of person or someone having certain characteristics or a particular personality. ☐ *Tom portrayed Scrooge as an evil old man.* ☐ *Randy hopes to portray his character as a sympathetic friend.*

pose a question to ask a question; to imply the need for asking a question. ☐ *Genetic research poses many ethical questions.* ☐ *My interviewer posed a hypothetical question.*

pose as someone to pretend to be someone else. ☐ *The impostor posed as the president of the company.* ☐ *My twin posed as me while I went on vacation.*

pose as someone or something to pretend to be someone or a type of person. ☐ *I posed as Gerald and got the job.* ☐ *I posed as a nurse and got a job at a summer camp.*

pose for someone or something to assume a posture appropriate to the subject of a photograph or painting. ☐ *Paul wanted me to pose for him, but I declined.* ☐ *Will you pose for my painting?*

***possessed by** something obsessed or driven by something. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *Ned was possessed by a desire to become the best at everything he did.* ☐ *Jan acts as if she is possessed by the need to be right all the time.*

***possessed of** something having something; possessing something. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *She is possessed of a large amount of money.* ☐ *Todd wishes he were possessed of a large car and a fine house.*

Possession is nine-tenths of the law. *Prov.* If you actually possess something, you have a stronger legal claim to owning it than someone who merely says it belongs to

him or her. □ *Dana may say he owns this house, but we actually live in it, and possession is nine-tenths of the law.*

post someone somewhere to place someone, as if on guard, at something or some place. □ *The police chief posted a guard at the hospital door.* □ *The boss posted himself at the water cooler to catch up on the gossip.*

post something **on** something to fasten a notice onto something. □ *Please post this notice on the door where everyone will see it.* □ *I will post this photo on the bulletin board.*

post something **to** someone to mail something to someone. □ *I posted it to him over a month ago. I can't imagine where it is now.* □ *The letter was posted last week.*

post something **up**† to record a transaction in an account. □ *I'll post this charge up right away, and then you can check out.* □ *Please post up the charges a little later.*

postage and handling charges for shipping [something] and for wrapping and handling the item. □ *The cost of the book was quite reasonable, but the postage and handling was outrageous.* □ *They did not charge postage and handling because I prepaid the order.*

a **poster child (for** something**)** *Fig.* someone who is a classic example of a state or type of person. □ *She is a poster child for soccer moms.*

postpone something **until** something to delay something until something happens or until a later time. □ *Can we postpone our meeting until tomorrow?* □ *The picnic was postponed until Saturday.*

posture as someone or something to pretend to be someone or a particular type of person. □ *Why is the secretary posturing as the manager and giving out assignments?* □ *Carla entered the ballroom, posturing as a grand duchess of somewhere or another.*

The **pot is calling the kettle black.** and **That's the pot calling the kettle black.** *Prov.* You should not criticize someone for a fault that you have too. (Not polite to say about the person you are addressing.) □ *Bill told Barbara she was sloppy, but Bill never cleans up after himself, either. That's the pot calling the kettle black.* □ *My sister says I dress funny, but if you've seen some of the clothes she wears, you know it's a case of the pot calling the kettle black.*

a **pot of gold 1.** *Lit.* a container filled with gold, as in myth guarded by a leprechaun. □ *I was hoping to find a pot of gold in the cellar, but there were only cobwebs.* **2.** *Fig.* an imaginary reward. □ *Whoever gets to the porch first wins a pot of gold.*

pot something **up**† to put plants into pots. □ *If you would like one of these tomato plants, I'll pot one up for you.* □ *Jan potted up a plant for me.*

pounce (up)on someone or something to spring or swoop upon someone or something; to seize someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) □ *As Gerald came into the room, his friend Daniel pounced on him and frightened him to death.* □ *The cat pounced upon a mouse.*

pound a beat *Fig.* to walk a regular route. □ *The cop pounded the same beat for years and years.* □ *Pounding a beat will wreck your feet.*

pound along something **1.** *Fig.* to walk or run along something awkwardly or heavily. □ *As the horse pounded along the street, the rider tried hard to get it to slow down.* □ *Tom pounded along the pavement, looking a bit angry.* **2.** *Fig.* to tap or hammer along something. □ *The worker pounded along the edge of the roof, looking for rotten places.* □ *I pounded along the wall, looking for a stud to nail into.*

pound away (at someone or something**)** to hammer or batter constantly on someone or something. □ *The cops pounded away at the poor guy, and then they put him in handcuffs.* □ *The jackhammer kept pounding away at the pavement.*

pound for pound [Usually of value, quality, strength, etc.] considering the amount of weight involved. □ *Pound for pound, a dog fed properly is much stronger than a dog that has to fend for itself.* □ *Pound for pound, there is more food value in beef than in chicken.*

*a **pound of flesh** *Fig.* a payment or punishment that involves suffering and sacrifice on the part of the person being punished. (*Typically: **give** someone **~; owe** someone **~; pay** someone **~; take ~**.) □ *He wants revenge. He won't be satisfied until he takes his pound of flesh.*

pound on someone or something to beat or hammer on someone or something. □ *She kept pounding on him until he released her.* □ *Will you please stop pounding on that drum?*

pound one's **ear** *Sl.* to sleep. □ *I've got to spend more time pounding my ear.* □ *She went home to pound her ear an hour or two before work.*

pound someone's **head in**† *Fig.* to beat someone, especially about the head. □ *Fred looked like he wanted to pound Mike's head in; he was so mad!* □ *You want me to pound in your head?*

pound something **down**† to hammer, flatten, or batter something. □ *Please pound that nail down so that no one gets hurt on it.* □ *Yes, please pound down that nail!*

pound something **in**† Go to **hammer** something **into** something.

pound something **into** someone Go to **hammer** something **into** someone.

pound something **on** someone or something to hit or strike someone or something with something. □ *Sarah pounded the vase on the robber until it broke.* □ *Betty stood pounding her shoe on the radiator, hoping the racket would magically bring heat.*

pound something **out**† **1.** *Lit.* to flatten something by pounding. □ *He pounded the gold leaf out very thin.* □ *He pounded out the gold leaf.* **2.** *Fig.* to play something loudly on the piano, perhaps with difficulty or clumsily. □ *Here, pound this one out. A little softer, please.* □ *She was pounding out a nice little tune.* **3.** *Fig.* to type something on a keyboard. □ *I have finished writing it. Can I borrow your laptop so I can pound it out?* □ *All the reporters were pounding out stories for the next edition of the paper.*

pound something **up**† to break something up by pounding. □ *Pound the crackers up into crumbs and use them to coat the chicken before you fry it.* □ *Pound up the crackers and put the crumbs in a jar.*

pound the books Go to **hit the books.**

P

pound the pavement *Fig.* to walk through the streets looking for a job. ☐ *I spent two months pounding the pavement after the factory I worked for closed.* ☐ *Hey, Bob. You'd better get busy pounding those nails unless you want to be out pounding the pavement.*

pour (all) over someone or something to flood over someone or something. (Compare this with pore over something.) ☐ *The water from the broken dam poured all over the rocks standing at its base.* ☐ *The spilled milk poured over my lap.*

pour along something to rush along something in great numbers or in a great amount. ☐ *Hundreds of people poured along the street during the lunch hour.* ☐ *The rainwater poured along the gutter, heading toward the sewer basin.*

pour cold water on something **1.** *Lit.* to douse something with cold water. ☐ *Pour cold water on the vegetables to freshen them.* ☐ *I poured cold water on my head to cool myself off.* **2.** and **dash cold water on** something; **throw cold water on** something *Fig.* to discourage doing something; to reduce enthusiasm for something. (Alludes to cooling passion with cold water.) ☐ *When my father said I couldn't have the car, he poured cold water on my plans.* ☐ *John threw cold water on the whole project by refusing to participate.*

pour down (on someone or something**) 1.** *Lit.* [for water, as with rain] to shower down on someone. ☐ *The rain poured down on us, soaking us to the bone.* **2.** *Fig.* [for blessings, criticism, praise, kudos, etc.] to flow down on someone or something. ☐ *Criticism poured down on the mayor until he resigned.* ☐ *Blessings poured down on the early settlers in the form of good harvests and plentiful game.*

pour forth to gush out; to gush forth. ☐ *The milk gushed out of the hole in the container.* ☐ *A tremendous amount of water poured forth when the fire hydrant was knocked over.*

pour in(to something**) 1.** *Lit.* to flow or flood into something. ☐ *The rain poured into the open window.* ☐ *I left the window open and the rain just poured in.* **2.** *Fig.* [for people or things] to continue to arrive in great numbers. ☐ *Complaints poured into the television station after the scandalous broadcast.* ☐ *Cards and letters are still pouring in.*

pour it on thick Go to lay it on thick.

pour money down the drain *Fig.* to waste money; to throw money away. ☐ *What a waste! Buying that old car is just pouring money down the drain.* ☐ *Don't buy any more of that low-quality merchandise. That's just throwing money down the drain.*

pour oil on troubled water(s) *Fig.* to calm someone or something down. (A thin layer of oil will actually calm a small area of a rough sea.) ☐ *Don can calm things down. He's good at pouring oil on troubled waters.* ☐ *Alice is very good at pouring oil on troubled water.*

pour one's **heart out to** someone and **pour** one's **heart out**† *Fig.* to tell one's personal feelings to someone else. ☐ *I didn't mean to pour my heart out to you, but I guess I just had to talk to someone.* ☐ *She poured out her heart to her friend.*

pour oneself **into** something **1.** *Fig.* to get deeply involved with something. ☐ *He distracted himself from his grief by pouring himself into his work.* ☐ *She poured herself into the project and got it done on time.* **2.** *Fig.* to fit oneself into clothing that is very tight. (Usually jocular.) ☐ *Marilyn didn't put that dress on, she poured herself in!* ☐ *She looks as if she poured herself into those jeans.*

pour out (of something**) 1.** *Lit.* [for something] to stream, fall, or gush out of something or some place. ☐ *The water poured out of the broken pipe and flooded the basement.* ☐ *The pipe split and the water just poured out.* **2.** *Fig.* [for people] to come out of a place in great numbers. ☐ *At the end of the game, people poured out of the stadium for an hour.*

pour out one's **soul** *Fig.* to confess something [to someone]; to reveal one's deepest concerns. ☐ *Every time she calls me up, she takes an hour or more to pour out her soul.*

pour something **back**† **(in(to** something**))** to replace a liquid into something. ☐ *Larry poured the extra glass of orange juice back into the pitcher.* ☐ *Lily took too much and poured some back.* ☐ *Pour back the extra juice into the pitcher.*

pour something **into** something and **pour** something **in**† to guide a flow of liquid into something. ☐ *She poured the lemonade into the pitcher and carried it to the porch.* ☐ *She held the glass and poured in the lemonade.*

pour something **off (of)** something and **pour** something **off**† to drain liquid off the top of something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Valerie poured the cream off the milk.* ☐ *Valerie poured off the cream.*

pour something **on(to)** something to discharge a vessel of something onto something. ☐ *Don broke open the piggy bank and poured the money onto the kitchen table.* ☐ *Don spread out a towel on the table and poured the money on it.*

pour something **out on(to)** someone or something and **pour** something **out**† to empty something onto someone or something. ☐ *She poured the pitcher of ice water out onto Dave, making him scream.* ☐ *Sarah poured out the pitcher on the floor by accident.*

pour something **over** someone or something to cover or douse someone or something with something. ☐ *As I poured the cooling water over myself, I felt relaxed for the first time since I began the long hike.* ☐ *Mary poured some milk over her cereal.*

pour something **through** something to cause something to flow through something, such as a filter. ☐ *The chemist poured the mixture through the filter or opening.* ☐ *I can't get the syrup into the bottle without pouring it through a funnel.*

pour through something to flow freely through something. ☐ *The water poured through the leak in the window frame.* ☐ *The rain poured through the hole in the roof.*

pour with rain to rain heavily. (Said of the sky, day, morning, night, the weather, etc.) ☐ *The sky was pouring with rain and the sun never shone from dawn to dusk.* ☐ *It poured with rain the entire night.*

pouring rain very heavy rain. ☐ *The children's clothes were soaked after they played out in the pouring rain.* ☐ *I waited in the pouring rain for the next bus.*

pout about someone or something to be sullen about someone or something. ☐ *There is no need to pout about the cat. She'll come back.* ☐ *Sally is pouting about her lost dog.*

Poverty is no sin. Go to next.

Poverty is not a crime. and **Poverty is no sin.** *Prov.* You should not condemn someone for being poor. ☐ *Ellen: I wish there were a law to make all those poor people move out of our neighborhood. Jim: Poverty is not a crime, Ellen.*

powder one's **face** Go to next.

powder one's **nose** and **powder** one's **face** to depart to the bathroom. (Usually said by women, or jocularly by men.) ☐ *Excuse me, I have to powder my nose.* ☐ *She just went out to powder her face.*

powder up *Sl.* to drink heavily; to get drunk. ☐ *Let's go out and powder up.* ☐ *He's at the tavern powdering up.*

the **power behind the throne** *Fig.* the person who actually controls the person who is apparently in charge. ☐ *Mr. Smith appears to run the shop, but his brother is the power behind the throne.* ☐ *They say that the vice president is the power behind the throne.*

a **power play** *Fig.* a strategy using one's power or authority to carry out a plan or to get one's way. ☐ *In a blatant power play, the manager claimed he had initiated the sales campaign.*

power something **up**† to start something, such as an engine. ☐ *You should power the engine up and let it run awhile before you drive away.* ☐ *Power up the engine and mow the grass.*

power something **with** something to provide something as the source of energy for something to operate. ☐ *The government decided to power its vans with natural gas engines.* ☐ *We will power the generators with coal as long as it is cheap.*

power up to start an engine. ☐ *Well, let's power up so we will be ready to leave with the others.* ☐ *It's time to power up and get going.*

the **powers that be** the people who are in authority. ☐ *The powers that be have decided to send back the immigrants.* ☐ *I have applied for a license, and the powers that be are considering my application.*

A **pox on** someone or something! *Fig.* A curse on someone or something! (Old. Now usually jocular.) ☐ *A pox on you, you creep!* ☐ *I've been trying to make this computer work all day. A pox on it!*

Practice makes perfect. *Prov. Cliché* Doing something over and over again is the only way to learn to do it well. ☐ *Jill: I'm not going to try to play the piano anymore. I always make so many mistakes. Jane: Don't give up. Practice makes perfect.* ☐ *Child: How come you're so good at peeling potatoes? Father: I did it a lot in the army, and practice makes perfect.*

practice (up)on someone or something to train or drill on someone or something. (In preparation for the real thing. *Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *I do not want a dental student practicing upon me.* ☐ *I want to learn how to braid hair. Can I practice on you?*

Practice what you preach. *Prov. Cliché* You yourself should do the things you advise other people to do. ☐ *Dad always told us we should only watch an hour of television every day, but we all knew he didn't practice what he preached.*

praise someone or something **to the skies** *Fig.* to give someone or something much praise. ☐ *He wasn't very good, but his friends praised him to the skies.* ☐ *They liked your pie. Everyone praised it to the skies.*

prance around to dance, jump, or strut around. ☐ *The little deer were prancing around, enjoying the spring air.* ☐ *Stop prancing around and get to work.*

prance around something to dance or jump in celebration around something or throughout some place. (Compare this with **waltz around something**.) ☐ *The kids pranced around the room, celebrating.* ☐ *They pranced around the table that held the ice cream and cake.*

prattle (away) about someone or something to chatter idly and endlessly about someone or something. ☐ *The little girl prattled away for an hour about her school, her friends, and her toys.* ☐ *I wish you would stop prattling about your friends.*

pray for someone or something **1.** to beseech God, or some other deity, on behalf of someone or something. ☐ *I will pray for you to recover from your illness quickly.* ☐ *As the fire spread throughout the old church, the congregation prayed for its preservation.* **2.** to ask God, or some other deity, to grant something. ☐ *The family prayed for David's safety.* ☐ *All the people prayed for peace.*

pray over something **1.** to say grace over a meal. ☐ *Do you pray over your meals?* ☐ *We prayed over dinner just after we sat down to eat.* **2.** to seek divine guidance about something through prayer. ☐ *I will have to think about it and pray over it awhile. I'll have an answer next week.* ☐ *She prayed over the problem for a while and felt she had a solution.*

pray to someone or something to utter prayers of praise or supplication to some divine or supernatural being or something. ☐ *I pray to God that all this works out.* ☐ *The high priest prayed to the spirits of his ancestors that the rains would come.*

P

pray to the porcelain god *Sl.* to kneel at the toilet bowl and vomit from drunkenness. ☐ *Wally spent a while praying to the porcelain god last night.* ☐ *I think I have to go pray to the porcelain god.*

preach about something to give a moral or stern discourse on something. ☐ *Please don't preach about the evils of fried food. I like the stuff, and people eat it all the time and don't die!* ☐ *She was preaching about the value of a fat-free diet.*

preach against someone or something to exhort against someone or something. ☐ *The evangelist preached against the operator of the town's only saloon.* ☐ *The principal kept preaching against drinking and drugs.*

preach at someone to lecture or moralize at someone. ☐ *Don't preach at me! I don't need any of your moralizing.* ☐ *I really don't wish to be preached at.*

preach to someone to give a moral discourse to someone. ☐ *Please don't preach to me. I know that I did wrong.* ☐ *When you preach to us like that, we don't pay any attention to you.*

preach to the choir and **preach to the converted** *Fig.* to make one's case primarily to one's supporters; to make one's case only to those people who are present or who are already friendly to the issues. ☐ *There is no need to convince us of the value of hard work. We already know*

that. You are just preaching to the choir. ☐ *Don't waste your time telling us about the problem. That's preaching to the choir.* ☐ *Bob found himself preaching to the converted when he was telling Jane the advantages of living in the suburbs. She already hates city life.*

preach to the converted Go to previous.

***precedence over** someone or something the right to come before someone or something else; greater importance than someone or something else. (*Typically: **take ~; have ~; be given ~**.) ☐ *Ambulances have precedence over regular cars at intersections.* ☐ *My manager's concerns take precedence over mine.*

precious few and **precious little** very few; very little. (*Few* for people or things that can be counted, and *little* for amounts.) ☐ *We get precious few tourists here in the winter.* ☐ *There's precious little food in the house and there is no money.*

precious little Go to previous.

precipitate into something **1.** *Lit.* [for a chemical] to go out of solution into solid form. ☐ *The sodium chloride precipitated into a salt.* ☐ *Will this compound precipitate into anything if I cool it?* **2.** *Fig.* [for something] to become a more serious matter. ☐ *By then, the street fight had precipitated into a riot.* ☐ *We were afraid that the argument would precipitate into a fight.*

precipitate something **into** something **1.** *Lit.* to cause a chemical to go out of a solution into a solid form. ☐ *Adding just one salt grain at the right time will precipitate the salt dissolved into the water into large crystals.* ☐ *One grain precipitated the dissolved salt into crystals.* **2.** *Fig.* to cause something to become more serious. ☐ *The gunshot precipitated the incident into a riot.* ☐ *The rally was precipitated into a serious brawl.*

preclude someone or something **from** something to prevent someone or something from being included in something; to eliminate someone from something in advance. ☐ *Your remarks do not preclude me from trying again, do they?* ☐ *These facts do not preclude my company from consideration, do they?*

P

predicate something **(up)on** something to base something on something. ☐ *There is no need to predicate my promotion upon the effectiveness of my secretary!* ☐ *You can hardly predicate the picnic on the weather, can you?*

predispose someone or something **to(ward)** something to make someone or something susceptible to something. ☐ *Your comments will not predispose me toward a favorable treatment of your case.* ☐ *Do you think that this weather will predispose me to catching a cold?*

preface something **by** something to begin something by saying, writing, or reading something. ☐ *I would like to preface my prepared remarks by making a personal observation.* ☐ *Her remarks were prefaced by the reading of a poem.*

preface something **with** something to begin something with a particular message. ☐ *She prefaced her speech with a recitation of one of her favorite poems.* ☐ *Alice prefaced her remarks with a few personal comments.*

prefer someone or something **to** someone or something else to rank the desirability of someone or something over someone or something else. ☐ *For the post of treasurer, I prefer Don to Jill.* ☐ *I prefer missing a meal to Jill's cooking.*

prefer something **against** someone to file legal charges against someone [with the police]; to file a complaint or a charge against someone. ☐ *The neighbors preferred charges against the driver of the car who ruined their lawns.* ☐ *I will not prefer charges against the driver, since it was partly my fault.*

prefix something **to** something to place something at the beginning of a word or part of a word. ☐ *If you prefix a* re- *to some verbs, you get an entirely different meaning.* ☐ *You can't prefix anything to some verbs.*

prejudice someone or something **against** someone or something to turn someone or a group against someone or something. ☐ *I believe that the lawyer was trying to prejudice the jury against the defendant.* ☐ *The discussion about how calves are raised prejudiced me against eating veal.*

a **prelude to** something an act or event that comes before and signals another act or event. ☐ *Her rudeness to her boss was a prelude to her resignation.* ☐ *The Munich Pact was a prelude to World War II.*

prepare someone **for** something to build someone up for shocking news. ☐ *I went in and had a talk with her to prepare her for the report.* ☐ *You should prepare yourself for the worst.*

prepare someone or something **for** something to get someone or something ready for something. ☐ *I prepared her for her trip by going over her itinerary.* ☐ *I prepared the garden for planting.*

prescribe something **for** someone to order a medication to be given to or sold to someone. ☐ *I asked the doctor to prescribe a painkiller for me.* ☐ *What can you prescribe for me for this illness?*

prescribe something **for** something to suggest or recommend something for a particular disease. ☐ *Could you prescribe something for my cold?* ☐ *What can you prescribe for this illness?*

present someone **(to** someone**) (at** something**)** to introduce someone to someone at some event. ☐ *They presented him to the queen at her birthday party.* ☐ *I will present you to the rest of the committee.*

present someone **with** something Go to **present** something **to** someone.

present something **on a silver platter** Go to **on a silver platter.**

present something **to** someone and **present** someone **with** something to give something to someone, especially if done ceremoniously. ☐ *They presented a watch to me when I retired.* ☐ *They presented me with a watch when I retired.*

preserve someone or something **against** something to guard or protect someone or something against something. (Stilted or old-fashioned in reference to people.) ☐ *I hope that the vaccine will preserve us against influenza.* ☐ *There is nothing in the jam to preserve it against spoilage.*

preserve someone or something **from** someone or something to protect or guard someone or something from someone or something. ☐ *Please help preserve our people from the attacks of our enemies.* ☐ *Is there any way to preserve my skin against the harmful rays of the sun?*

preserve something **for** someone or something to save, maintain, or protect something for someone or some-

thing. ☐ *Try to preserve some of these memories for your grandchildren.* ☐ *We learned how to preserve leaves for future reference.*

preside at something to manage or act as chair at a meeting or a ceremony. ☐ *The mayor presided at the meeting, assuring that the speeches would be very short.* ☐ *She presided at the ceremony.*

preside over something to be in control of the order and procedures of a meeting or ceremony. ☐ *The vice president will have to preside over the next meeting.* ☐ *I will be glad to preside over the discussion.*

press against someone or something to push or bear upon someone or something. ☐ *I pressed against Henry, trying gently to get him to move out of the way.* ☐ *Don't press against the glass door!*

press charges (against someone**)** and **file charges (against** someone**)** *Fig.* to make a formal charge of wrongdoing against someone. ☐ *They agreed not to press charges against me if I agreed to pay for the damages.*

press down on someone or something to push down on someone or something. ☐ *The weight of all the covers was pressing down on me, and I couldn't sleep.* ☐ *Press down on this lever and the recorder will start.*

press for something **1.** to urge for something to be done; to request something. ☐ *The mayor is pressing for an early settlement to the strike.* ☐ *I will press her for an answer.* ☐ *The citizens are pressing for an investigation of the incident.* **2.** to press a button for service. ☐ *If you need any help, just press for service.* ☐ *Here is the steward's button. Just press for immediate service.*

press forward to move forward; to struggle forward; to continue. ☐ *Do not be discouraged. Let us press forward.* ☐ *We must press forward and complete this work on time.*

press on something to push or depress something, such as a button, catch, snap, etc. ☐ *Press on this button if you require room service.* ☐ *Don't press on this because it rings a loud bell.*

press one's **luck** Go to push one's luck.

press on(ward) to continue; to continue to try. ☐ *Don't give up! Press onward!* ☐ *I have lots to do. I must press on.*

press someone or something **into service** to force someone or something to serve or function. ☐ *I don't think you can press him into service just yet. He isn't trained.* ☐ *I think that in an emergency, we could press this machine into service.*

press someone **to the wall** Go to push someone to the wall.

press something **against** someone or something to push or force something against someone or something. ☐ *The person in line behind Betty kept pressing his elbow against her.* ☐ *I pressed my hand against the door and it opened.*

press something **into** something and **press** something **in**† **1.** to force something into something, such as a mold. ☐ *Now, you need to press the clay into the mold carefully.* ☐ *Now, hold the mold with one hand and press in the clay.* **2.** to force or drive something into the surface of something. ☐ *You are standing on my chewing gum, and you have pressed it into the carpet!* ☐ *Don't press in the gum by standing on it.*

press something **on**† Go to next.

press something **onto** something and **press** something **on**† to put pressure on something and cause it to stick to the surface of something. ☐ *I pressed the label onto the envelope and took it to the post office.* ☐ *I pressed on the label.*

press something **out of** something and **press** something **out**† to squeeze something out of something by applying pressure. ☐ *The Indians press the acid out of the manioc before they use it as food.* ☐ *Gene used an iron to press the wrinkles out of his suit coat.* ☐ *Go back and press out all the wrinkles!*

press something **together** to use pressure to close or unite things. ☐ *He pressed his lips together and would say no more.* ☐ *Why are his lips pressed together so tightly?*

press something **(up)on** someone to urge or force something on someone; to try to get someone to accept something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *He always presses second helpings upon his guests.* ☐ *She pressed a gift on us that we could not refuse.*

press (the) flesh *Sl.* to shake hands. ☐ *Hey, chum! Glad to press flesh with you!* ☐ *He wanted to press the flesh, but I refused even to touch him.*

press the panic button Go to hit the panic button.

press (up)on someone or something to put pressure on someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *The crowd pressed upon the child, squeezing out all his breath.* ☐ *The load presses on your car's springs very heavily.*

pressed for cash Go to next.

***pressed for money** and ***pressed for cash; *pushed for cash; *pushed for money** *Fig.* needful of money; short of money. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~; get ~**.) ☐ *We are usually pushed for money at this time of year.* ☐ *I'm a little pressed for money just now.*

***pressed for time** and ***pushed for time** *Fig.* needing time; in a hurry. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~; get ~; seem ~**.) ☐ *If I weren't so pressed for time, I could help you.* ☐ *I can't talk to you. I'm too pushed for time.* ☐ *Can't talk to you now. I'm pressed for time.*

pressure someone **into** something to force someone into doing something. ☐ *Please don't try to pressure me into taking that promotion.* ☐ *You can't pressure me into it. I won't do it!*

presume (up)on someone or something to take unwelcome advantage of someone or something. ☐ *I didn't mean to seem to presume upon you. I apologize.* ☐ *I did not feel that you presumed on me.*

pretend to something to claim to have a skill or quality. ☐ *I can hardly pretend to the artistry that Wally has, but I can play the piano a bit.* ☐ *I can't pretend to that level of skill.*

***pretty as a picture** very pretty. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Sweet little Mary is as pretty as a picture.* ☐ *Their new house is pretty as a picture.*

Pretty is as pretty does. *Prov.* It is more important to treat people well than to be good-looking; just because you are good-looking does not mean you are a good person. (Said only of girls and women.) ☐ *Janice may have a*

P

pretty face, but pretty is as pretty does; the way she behaves isn't pretty at all.

pretty oneself or something **up**† *Rur.* to make oneself or something more attractive; to tidy oneself or something up. ☐ *I tried to pretty myself up for him, but he didn't notice.* ☐ *Let's try to pretty up this room.*

a **pretty pickle** *Fig.* a difficult situation. (*Pickle* = a bad situation.) ☐ *Well, this is a pretty pickle you've gotten us into.*

Pretty please? an emphasised form of *please?* ☐ *Pretty please? I need an answer!* ☐ *Can I have my book back? Pretty please?*

a **pretty state of affairs** and a **fine state of affairs** an unpleasant state of affairs. ☐ *This is a pretty state of affairs, and it's all your fault.* ☐ *What a fine state of affairs you've got us into.*

prevail against someone or something to win out over someone or something; to dominate someone or something. ☐ *You will not prevail against me!* ☐ *I am sure that our team will prevail against the challengers.*

prevail (up)on someone or something **(to** do something**)** to appeal to someone or a group to do something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on.*) ☐ *I will prevail upon her to attend the meeting.* ☐ *I prevailed on the committee to no avail.*

prevent someone **from** doing something to keep someone from doing something. ☐ *You can't prevent me from doing it!* ☐ *We must try to prevent her from going back there.*

Prevention is better than cure. *Prov.* It is better to try to keep a bad thing from happening than it is to fix the bad thing once it has happened. (See also An **ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure.**) ☐ *If we spend more money on education, so that children learn to be responsible citizens, we won't have to spend so much money on prisons. Prevention is better than cure.*

P

prey on something [for an animal] to feed on another animal as a matter of habit or preference. ☐ *Owls prey on mice.* ☐ *Many birds prey on snakes.*

prey (up)on someone or something *Fig.* to take advantage of someone or something. (See also **prey on something**. *Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on.*) ☐ *The people of that island prey on tourists and do not give them good treatment.* ☐ *I really don't want to seem to prey upon your kindness.*

***a price on** one's **head** a reward for one's capture. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; put ~; place ~**.) ☐ *We captured a thief who had a price on his head, and the sheriff gave us the reward.* ☐ *The crook was so mean, he turned in his own brother, who had a price on his head.*

the **price** one **has to pay** the sacrifice that one has to make; the unpleasantness that one has to suffer. ☐ *Being away from home a lot is the price one has to pay for success.*

price someone or something **out of the market** to raise or lower a price and drive someone or something out of the marketplace. ☐ *You are a very good singer, but your agent has priced you out of the market.* ☐ *The discount prices posted by the chain store were meant to price us out of the market.*

price something **down**† to lower the price of something. ☐ *When they start pricing this stuff down at the end of the season, I'll come in and buy something.* ☐ *I hope to price down the merchandise soon.*

price something **out** to list and total all the component prices of goods and services for a complex project. ☐ *I have finished listing all the materials required for the project, and now I have to price it out so that we can decide if we can afford it.*

price something **up**† to raise the price of something. ☐ *They have priced oranges up so high that I can't afford any.* ☐ *Why do they price up these common foods so high?*

prick up its ears† and **prick up** one's **ears**† *Fig.* [for an animal or a person] to become attentive. (The animal will adjust its ears toward the sound.) ☐ *The sound made the dog prick its ears up.* ☐ *When Fred heard his name, he pricked up his ears.* ☐ *She pricked her ears up when she heard her name.*

pride and joy *Fig.* something or someone that one is very proud of. (Often in reference to a baby, a car, a house, etc. Fixed order.) ☐ *And this is our little pride and joy, Roger.* ☐ *Fred pulled up in his pride and joy and asked if I wanted a ride.*

Pride goes before a fall. and **Pride goeth before a fall.** *Prov.* If you are too proud and overconfident, you will make mistakes leading to your defeat. (Biblical.) ☐ *Sue: I'm the best student in my history class. I'm sure I can pass the exam without studying very hard. Sam: Be careful. Pride goes before a fall, you know.*

pride oneself **in** something and **pride** oneself **on** something to take pride in one of one's qualities or accomplishments. ☐ *She prides herself in her ability to spot a shoplifter.* ☐ *I pride myself on my ability to find compromises.*

prime mover *Fig.* the force that sets something going; someone or something that starts something off. ☐ *The assistant manager was the prime mover in getting the manager sacked.* ☐ *Discontent with his job was the prime mover in John's deciding to retire early.*

prime something **with** something to enable something to start working or functioning with something. ☐ *Larry primed the pump with a little water, and it began to do its work.* ☐ *We will prime the market for our new product with a free coupon offer.*

primp (oneself**) up** to get dressed up; to fix oneself up by combing, brushing, adjusting, etc. ☐ *Let me stop in the powder room and primp myself up a bit.* ☐ *I have to go in here and primp up.*

the **primrose path** *Fig.* earthly delights that come to an end. ☐ *She led him down the primrose path until she got tired of him.*

print something **in** something **1.** to make block letters in a specific location on a paper. ☐ *Please print your name in the box.* ☐ *Would you please print the information in the space provided?* **2.** to publish something in a publication. ☐ *They printed my letter in today's paper.* ☐ *Her stories have been printed in several magazines.*

print something **out**† **1.** to write something out by using block letters. ☐ *Please print it out. I can't read your handwriting.* ☐ *Print out your name, please.* **2.** to use a com-

puter printer to print something. ☐ *I will print a copy out and send it to you.* ☐ *Please print out another copy.*

print something **up**† to set something in type and print it; to print something by any process. ☐ *This looks okay to me. Let's print it up now.* ☐ *Print up the final version.*

privy to something *Fig.* knowledgeable about something secret or private. ☐ *The reporter became privy to the senator's evil plan.* ☐ *Why are you privy to this secret information?*

prize someone or something **above** someone or something to value someone or something more than anyone or anything else. ☐ *He prized his only daughter above everyone else in the world.* ☐ *Scott seemed to prize his sports car above all the members of his family.*

probe into something to investigate something. ☐ *The police will probe into the matter and report to the commissioner.* ☐ *We will take some time and probe into that for you.*

probe something **for** something to poke around in something for something. ☐ *He probed his memory for some clue as to where he had been on that date.* ☐ *Sam probed the darkened space for the tool that he had mislaid.*

proceed against someone or something **1.** to begin to move against someone or something. ☐ *The entire platoon proceeded against the single enemy soldier who refused to surrender.* ☐ *The army proceeded against the fortress as planned.* **2.** to start legal action against someone or something. ☐ *The district attorney will proceed against the suspect next week.* ☐ *The state prosecutor will proceed against the company as soon as one of the witnesses is located.*

proceed (from something**) (to** something**)** to go from something or some place to something or some place. ☐ *Next, we will proceed from Vienna to Budapest.* ☐ *We proceeded from Detroit, passing through rural Michigan.*

proceed with something to move ahead with something; to continue something. ☐ *Now, we will proceed with the reading of the minutes of the last meeting.* ☐ *When will you proceed with the needed action?*

Procrastination is the thief of time. *Prov.* If you put off doing what you ought to do, you will end up not having enough time to do it properly. ☐ *Jim: Have you started looking for a job yet? Jane: Oh, that can wait till tomorrow. Jim: Procrastination is the thief of time.*

procure something **(from** someone or something**) (for** someone or something**)** to get something from someone or something for someone or some purpose. ☐ *I will procure a copy of the paper from Kelly for you.* ☐ *I have to procure a book for my sister.*

prod at someone or something to poke at someone or something. ☐ *The boys prodded at the prone body of the man to see if he was dead or sleeping.* ☐ *If you prod at the turtle, it will never come out of its shell.*

prod someone **into** something to motivate someone into doing something; to provoke someone into action. ☐ *Do I have to prod you into going? Can't you volunteer for once?* ☐ *We will prod her into getting it done on time.*

produce an attack (of an illness**)** Go to an **attack (of** an illness**)**.

produce something **for** something **1.** to make something for some purpose. ☐ *This production line produces brackets for the installation of the circuit boards in the next production line.* ☐ *We produce the seats for the trucks that they assemble on the other side of town.* **2.** to bring something out for some purpose. ☐ *Lee quickly produced a penknife for cutting the string on the package.* ☐ *Ruth can always produce the right tool for the job.*

produce something **from** something to create something from something; to make something out of something. ☐ *We are able to produce a high-quality writing paper from the scraps we trim off the edges of the books as we bind them.* ☐ *Jane produces an excellent jelly from the grapes she grows in her backyard.*

profit by something and **profit from** something **1.** *Lit.* to gain money from something. ☐ *You will surely profit by investing in this stock.* ☐ *I know I will profit from this investment.* **2.** *Fig.* to learn from something. ☐ *I am sure you will profit by your unpleasant experience.* ☐ *Yes, I will profit from my failure.*

progress to something to reach all the way to something or some place. ☐ *The crisis has progressed to its final stage.* ☐ *Things had progressed to a serious stage where nothing more could be done for him.*

progress toward something to move partway toward some goal. ☐ *Nancy is progressing toward her degree quite nicely.* ☐ *We are progressing toward the end of the project.*

progress with something to continue to move toward something or completing something. ☐ *I can't seem to progress with this project.* ☐ *How are you progressing with the building of your model ship?*

prohibit someone **from** something **1.** to prevent someone from doing something. ☐ *The committee voted to prohibit people from leaving before the meeting was over.* ☐ *They prohibit anyone from being seated after the first act has started.* **2.** to keep someone out of some place. ☐ *Our policy is to prohibit people from the beach area after dark.* ☐ *State law prohibits children from this dangerous area while the machines are running.*

prohibit something **from** something **1.** to prevent something from happening or from doing something. ☐ *My mother prohibits me from going out with friends on school nights.* ☐ *Why do you want to prohibit the cars from traveling on this street during rush hour?* **2.** to keep something out of or away from something or some place. ☐ *The law prohibited bicycles from the sidewalks.* ☐ *The city council prohibits unleashed dogs from the public parks.*

project into something to extend into something. ☐ *The end of the grand piano projected into the next room, but she had to have a grand, nonetheless.* ☐ *The front of the car projected into the flower bed when it was parked, but that was all right.*

project something **onto** someone to imagine that someone else experiences one's feelings, especially one's guilt or anger. ☐ *Since you project your anger onto your best friends, you imagine you have gathered a number of angry people around you.* ☐ *You should not project your feelings onto other people.*

project something **on(to)** someone or something and **project** something **upon** someone or something to show a pic-

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ture, such as from a film, transparency, etc., onto something, such as a screen, wall, etc., or even onto a person. ☐ *Henry projected the pictures onto the screen as he discussed each one.* ☐ *The teacher had to project the slides upon the wall.*

promise someone **the moon** Go to promise the moon (to someone).

promise something **to** someone to pledge something to someone. ☐ *I promised this vase to my niece.* ☐ *Is this book promised to anyone?*

promise the moon (to someone**)** and **promise** someone **the moon** to make extravagant promises to someone. ☐ *Bill will promise you the moon, but he won't live up to his promises.* ☐ *My boss promised the moon, but never gave me a raise.*

Promises are like piecrust, made to be broken. *Prov.* It is useless to make promises, because people always break their promises. ☐ *Lisa made Andrew promise not to drink anymore, but promises are like piecrust, made to be broken.*

promote someone **(from** something**) (to** something**)** to raise someone's rank from something to something. ☐ *They promoted her from teller to vice president.* ☐ *Carl promoted his daughter to supervisor.*

prone to something likely to [do] something; apt to have something. ☐ *My boss is prone to anger when my work isn't done on schedule.* ☐ *My sister is prone to sneezing because of her allergies.*

pronounce something **on** someone or something to make a statement, usually a judgment, about someone or something. ☐ *The judge pronounced final judgment on the prisoner.* ☐ *The family all pronounced a positive opinion on the cake.*

The **proof is in the pudding.** *Prov.* You cannot be sure that you have succeeded until you have examined the result of your efforts. ☐ *Jill: I think we've done a good job of fixing the lawn mower. Jane: Well, the proof is in the pudding. We haven't tried to mow the lawn with it yet.*

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prop someone or something **up† (against** someone or something**)** to stand or lean someone or something against someone or something. ☐ *He was so tired I had to prop him up against the wall while I looked for the door key.* ☐ *I propped up the man against the wall.* ☐ *I propped the mop up against the wall.*

A **prophet is not without honor save in his own country.** *Prov.* Everyone recognizes that a wise person is wise, except for the people close to him or her. (Biblical.) ☐ *No one in the novelist's country would publish her books, but last year she won the Nobel Prize. A prophet is not without honor save in his own country.*

propose a toast to make a toast before a celebratory drink. ☐ *I'd like to propose a toast in honor of your birthday.* ☐ *At the wedding reception, the bride's father proposed a toast to the new couple.*

propose something **to** someone to suggest something to someone. ☐ *I have an idea I would like to propose to you.* ☐ *Sam wanted to propose a new plan to Sarah.*

propose to someone to suggest marriage to someone, usually a male to a female. ☐ *Guess who proposed to me last night?* ☐ *Do you think that Sam will propose to Mary?*

prospect for something to search for something, especially for metals or minerals. ☐ *The old men said they were prospecting for gold.* ☐ *What are they prospecting for out in the desert?*

prosper from something to gain wealth from something. ☐ *Carla prospered from trading on the options exchange.* ☐ *I hope you prosper from your new enterprise.*

prostrate oneself **before** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to lay oneself out in respect or obedience in front of someone or something. ☐ *The members of the cult prostrated themselves before their leader.* ☐ *They prostrated themselves before the altar.* **2.** *Fig.* to submit to someone's dominance. ☐ *If you think I'm going to prostrate myself before you and do as you ask, you are wrong.* ☐ *I will not prostrate myself before the high council!*

protect someone or something **against** someone or something and **protect** someone or something **from** someone or something to shield or preserve someone or something against someone or something. ☐ *Please come along and protect us against muggers as we walk home.* ☐ *What will protect my car against thieves?*

protest about someone or something and **protest against** someone or something **1.** to complain about someone or something. ☐ *Valerie is always protesting about some problem at work.* ☐ *She filed a complaint that protested against her supervisor.* **2.** to rally or demonstrate against someone or something. ☐ *A number of people protested about the war.* ☐ *They were mainly protesting against the draft.*

protrude from someone or something to stick out from someone or something. ☐ *Even in the dark, I knew he was hurt because I could see the knife protruding from him.* ☐ *A knife protruded from the victim's back.*

***proud as a peacock** and ***vain as a peacock** overly proud; vain. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *Mike's been strutting around proud as a peacock since he won that award.* ☐ *I sometimes think Elizabeth must spend all day admiring herself in a mirror. She's as vain as a peacock.*

prove oneself **as** something to demonstrate that one can serve in a certain office or capacity. ☐ *It's time to promote her. She has proved herself as a teller.* ☐ *I proved myself as an investor by making a lot of money in the stock market.*

prove something **to** someone to substantiate a claim about something to someone; to make someone believe or accept a statement about something. ☐ *What do I have to do to prove my innocence to you?* ☐ *Nothing you say will prove it to me.*

prove to be something to be shown to be someone or something; to be found to be someone or something. ☐ *Susan proved to be a good friend when she lent me some money.* ☐ *The food proved to be spoiled when I smelled it.*

provide against something to plan against something happening. ☐ *Have you provided against the possible collapse of the agreement?* ☐ *We have not provided against financial disaster.*

provide for someone or something to supply the needs of someone or something. ☐ *Don't worry, we will provide for you.* ☐ *We will provide for the committee in the budget.*

provide someone **with** something to supply something to someone. ☐ *I will provide you with an escort to your car.*

☐ *Jane provided herself with just enough food to get through the weekend.*

provide something **for** someone or something to supply something for someone or something. ☐ *I will provide salad for the guests.* ☐ *Ted provided food for his dog.*

provide something **under** something to supply something in keeping with a contract, rule, guideline, agreement, etc. ☐ *We have agreed to provide two tons of coal per month under our contract. Do you want more?* ☐ *We will agree to provide ample insurance for our employees under union guidelines.*

provided that on the condition that. ☐ *I will come, provided that I am invited.* ☐ *I will help you, provided that you pay me.*

provoke someone **into** something to incite someone into doing something. ☐ *The soldiers sought to provoke the demonstrators into starting a riot.* ☐ *They provoked us into leaving.*

prowl about and **prowl around** to sneak around, looking for someone or something. ☐ *Something is prowling about out there in the yard.* ☐ *There is someone outside prowling around.*

prune something **away**† to cut away something unwanted or unneeded. ☐ *Please prune the lower branches of the trees away. They are starting to annoy pedestrians.* ☐ *We pruned away the dead branches.*

prune something **of** something to clear, clean, or groom something of something by pruning. ☐ *Sally was out in the orchard pruning the apple trees of dead branches.* ☐ *They pruned the roses of their unneeded branches.*

prune something **off (of)** something and **prune** something **off**† to cut something off something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Claire pruned the dead branch off the apple tree.* ☐ *She pruned off the dead branch.*

pry around to sneak or prowl around looking for something. ☐ *Why are you prying around? Mind your own business!* ☐ *Please don't pry around. You might find out something you don't want to know.*

pry into something to snoop into something; to get into someone else's business. ☐ *Why are you prying into my affairs all the time?* ☐ *I wish you wouldn't pry into my personal life.*

pry something **from** someone and **pry** something **out of** someone to work information out of someone; to force someone to reveal information. ☐ *I couldn't even pry her name from her.* ☐ *The police tried to pry the name of the killer out of Max.*

pry something **from** something and **pry** something **out (of** something**)** to remove something from something with or as if with a lever. ☐ *See if you can pry this wedge from its slot.* ☐ *I pried the rotted board out of the side of the house.*

pry something **off (of)** something and **pry** something **off**† to use a lever to get something off something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Tom pried the top off the jelly jar.* ☐ *He pried off the jar top.*

pry something **out of** someone Go to **pry** something **from** someone.

pry something **out (of** something**)** Go to **pry** something **from** something.

pry something **up**† to raise something with or as with a lever. ☐ *See if you can pry that trapdoor up.* ☐ *Pry up that lid.*

psych out 1. *Inf.* to have a nervous or emotional trauma; to go mad for a brief time. ☐ *Another day like this one and I'll psych out for sure.* ☐ *He looked at the bill and psyched out.* **2.** *Inf.* to become very excited; to lose mental control. ☐ *I was so angry, I almost psyched out.* ☐ *The kids were psyching out over the rock star.*

psych someone **out**† **1.** *Inf.* to get someone very excited; to cause someone to lose mental control. ☐ *Wow! What you just said really psyched me out!* ☐ *He psyched out his friends.* **2.** *Inf.* to figure someone out; to know how someone thinks. ☐ *It took me a while to psych out Fred, but I have him figured out now.* ☐ *Don't waste time trying to psych me out. I am an enigma.*

psych someone **up**† *Inf.* to get someone excited or mentally prepared for something. ☐ *I psyched myself up to sing in front of all those people.* ☐ *The coach psyched up the team for the game.*

psych up *Inf.* to get mentally ready for something. ☐ *I have to psych up before the big game tonight.* ☐ *We want to psych up so we can play a good game.*

psyched (out) 1. *Inf.* excited; overwhelmed; thrilled. ☐ *She's really psyched out.* ☐ *That's great. I'm really psyched about my new job!* **2.** *Inf.* intoxicated. ☐ *She's just lying there psyched out.* ☐ *Two beers and a shot of whiskey and he was psyched out.*

psyched (up) *Inf.* completely mentally ready (for something). ☐ *I'm really psyched for this test.* ☐ *The team isn't psyched up enough to do a good job.*

psyched up (for something**)** *Inf.* excited and enthusiastic. ☐ *I can play a great tennis game if I'm psyched up.* ☐ *She is really psyched up for the game.*

publish or perish *Fig.* [for a professor] to try to publish scholarly books or articles to prevent getting released from a university or falling into disfavor in a university. (Also occurs as other parts of speech. See the examples.) ☐ *Alice knew she would have to publish or perish if she took the teaching job.* ☐ *This is a major research university and publish or perish is the order of the day.*

pucker something **up**† to cause something to wrinkle up, especially the edges of the mouth, as when tasting something very sour. ☐ *She puckered her lips up and pouted for a while.* ☐ *She puckered up her lips when she tasted the lemon juice.*

pucker up 1. *Lit.* to tighten one's lips together into a circle as if to kiss. ☐ *He puckered up and kissed her once, and then again.* **2.** *Fig.* [for something] to shrink up and get wrinkled. ☐ *The material puckered up when I washed it.* ☐ *The top edge of the drapes puckered up and I don't know how to straighten it out.*

puff along 1. [for someone] to run along, puffing to breathe. ☐ *Sam puffed along, jogging on his morning route.* ☐ *As Wally puffed along, he thought again about going on a diet.* **2.** [for an engine] to move along, putting out puffs of smoke or steam. ☐ *The old engine puffed along, driving the small boat slowly up the river.* ☐ *The locomotive puffed along, not making very much headway up the hill.*

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puff (away) at something **1.** to blow at or into something in puffs. ☐ *She puffed away at the beach ball, blowing it up as fast as she could.* ☐ *Todd puffed at the fire until it grew larger.* **2.** and **puff (away) on** something to smoke something, such as a cigar, cigarette, or pipe. ☐ *Scott was puffing away at his pipe.* ☐ *She is always puffing on a cigarette.*

puff out to swell out. ☐ *The frog's throat puffed out, and we expected to hear a croak.* ☐ *The sail puffed out, and the boat began to move.*

puff someone or something **up**† to boost or promote someone or something. ☐ *Judy puffed Nell up so much that Nell could not begin to live up to her reputation.* ☐ *Don't puff up your own accomplishments so much.*

puff something **out**† to cause something to swell out or expand outward. ☐ *The frog puffed its throat out and croaked.* ☐ *The frog puffed out its throat and croaked a mighty croak.*

puff up to swell up. ☐ *Her finger puffed up and she thought she might have an infection.* ☐ *His eyelids had puffed up during the night.*

puff up (into something**)** to assume a larger shape by filling up with air or water; to swell up into something. ☐ *The strange-looking fish puffed up into a round ball.* ☐ *The fish puffed up and stuck out its spines.*

pull a boner *Inf.* to do something stupid or silly. ☐ *Boy, I really pulled a boner! I'm so dumb.* ☐ *If you pull a boner like that again, you're fired!*

pull a fast one *Inf.* to succeed in an act of deception. ☐ *She was pulling a fast one when she said she had a headache and went home.* ☐ *Don't try to pull a fast one with me! I know what you're doing.*

pull a few strings Go to pull (some) strings.

pull a gun (on someone**)** and **pull a knife (on** someone**)** to bring out a gun or knife suddenly so that it is ready for use against someone. ☐ *I screamed when the mugger pulled a knife on me.* ☐ *The police shot the thief when he pulled a gun.*

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pull a job *Sl.* to carry out a crime, especially a robbery. (Police and underworld. Note the variations in the examples.) ☐ *Richard decided that it was not a good time to pull a bank job.* ☐ *Willie and Richard left town after they pulled the job.*

pull a knife (on someone**)** Go to pull a gun (on someone).

pull a muscle to strain a muscle and suffer the attendant pain. ☐ *I pulled a muscle in my back and can't play golf today.*

pull a stunt (on someone**)** and **pull a trick (on** someone**)** to deceive someone; to play a trick on someone. ☐ *Let's pull a trick on the teacher.* ☐ *Don't you dare pull a stunt like that!*

pull a trick (on someone**)** Go to previous.

pull ahead (of someone or something**)** to pass someone or something and continue moving. ☐ *The runner pulled ahead of the rest of the field.* ☐ *Our car pulled ahead of theirs.*

pull all the stops out† *Fig.* to use everything available; to not hold back. (Alludes to pulling out all of the stops on an organ so that it will sound as loud as possible.) ☐ *The mayor decided to pull out all the stops and campaign in every district.* ☐ *Todd pulled all the stops out for his exhibition and impressed everyone with his painting artistry.*

pull around to something to drive around to something or some place. ☐ *Please pull around to the back and deliver the furniture there.* ☐ *We told the driver to pull around to the service entrance.*

pull at someone to vie for someone's attention or concern. (See also pull at someone or something.) ☐ *There are too many demands pulling at me. I need to cut down on my responsibilities.* ☐ *I don't see how I can function with so many different things pulling at me.*

pull at someone or something to tug at someone or something. (See also pull at someone.) ☐ *The child kept pulling at her mother to get her attention.* ☐ *Don't keep pulling at your hair. It will come out.*

pull away from someone or something to jerk away or draw away from someone or something. ☐ *Suddenly, she pulled away from me and fled.* ☐ *The car pulled away from the curb and drove off.*

pull back (from someone or something**)** to move back from someone or something. ☐ *When I saw how sick he looked, I pulled back from him in shock.* ☐ *I took one look at the snake and pulled back.*

pull down (an amount of money**)** *Fig. Inf.* to earn a stated amount of money. ("An amount of money" is expressed as a figure or other indication of an actual amount.) ☐ *She pulls down about $40,000 a year.* ☐ *They pull down pretty good salaries.*

pull for someone or something to support and cheer for someone, a group, or something. ☐ *We're pulling for you. We know you can do it!* ☐ *All the students were pulling for the team.*

pull in one's **ears** *Fig.* to stop listening in on someone or something. (The opposite of prick up one's ears.) ☐ *Now, pull in your ears. This is none of your business.* ☐ *Pull in your ears and mind your own business.*

pull in one's **horns** Go to draw in one's horns.

pull in some place [for a wheeled vehicle] to steer or drive to a point off the main route. ☐ *Let's pull in at the next motel and get some rest.* ☐ *I want to pull in at a service station and have my tires checked.*

pull in(to some place**)** to drive into some place. ☐ *A strange car just pulled into our driveway.* ☐ *Some stranger just pulled in.*

pull off (something**)** to steer or turn a vehicle off the road. ☐ *I pulled off the road and rested for a while.* ☐ *I had to pull off and rest.*

pull on something to tug something. ☐ *I pulled on the rope, hoping to get it loose.* ☐ *Please help me pull on the anchor chain so we can raise the anchor.*

pull one over on someone to deceive someone. ☐ *Don't try to trick me! You can't pull one over on me.*

pull one's **belt in**† **(a notch)** Go to take one's belt in† (a notch).

pull one's **(own) weight** Go to carry one's (own) weight.

pull one's **punches 1.** [for a boxer] to strike with light blows to enable the other boxer to win. ☐ *Bill has been*

barred from the boxing ring for pulling his punches. ☐ *"I never pulled punches in my life!" cried Tom.* **2.** *Fig.* to hold back in one's criticism. (Usually in the negative. The *one's* can be replaced with *any* in the negative.) ☐ *I didn't pull any punches. I told her exactly what I thought of her.* ☐ *The teacher doesn't pull any punches when it comes to discipline.*

pull oneself **together 1.** *Fig.* to compose oneself; to gather one's wits about one. ☐ *I have to pull myself together and try it again.* ☐ *Now try to pull yourself together and get through this crisis.* **2.** *Fig.* to gather up one's things; to pull one's things together. ☐ *I'll be ready to leave as soon as I pull myself together.* ☐ *I want to pull myself together and leave.*

pull oneself **up by** one's **(own) bootstraps** *Fig.* to improve or become a success by one's own efforts. ☐ *If Sam had a little encouragement, he could pull himself up by his bootstraps.* ☐ *Given a chance, I'm sure I can pull myself up by my own bootstraps.*

pull (out) in front of someone or something to drive out into the road in front of someone or some vehicle. ☐ *A car pulled out in front of me, and I almost hit it.* ☐ *The car pulled in front of a truck and there was a terrible wreck.*

pull out (of something**) 1.** to withdraw from something. ☐ *For some reason, he pulled out of the coalition and went his own way.* ☐ *The other side got impatient with the negotiations and pulled out.* **2.** to drive out of something, such as a driveway, parking space, garage, etc. ☐ *The car pulled out of the driveway and nearly hit a truck.* ☐ *Look out! A car is about to pull out!*

pull over (to something**)** to steer over to something, such as the side of the road. ☐ *Betty pulled over to the side of the road and waited for the traffic to thin.* ☐ *The police officer ordered her to pull over.*

pull rank (on someone**)** *Fig.* to assert one's rank, authority, or position over someone when making a request or giving an order. ☐ *Don't pull rank on me! I don't have to do what you say!* ☐ *When she couldn't get her way politely, she pulled rank and really got some action.*

pull (some) strings and **pull a few strings** to use influence (with someone to get something done). ☐ *I can get it done easily by pulling a few strings.* ☐ *Is it possible to get anything done around here without pulling some strings?*

pull someone **about 1.** *Lit.* to drag someone around. ☐ *The boys were pulling one another about and playing very rough.* ☐ *Don't pull your little brother about so!* **2.** *Fig.* to give someone a hard time. ☐ *I'm tired of your double-talk! Stop pulling me about!* ☐ *You can't believe what she tells people. She is always pulling people about.*

pull someone **apart 1.** *Lit.* to separate people who are entangled. ☐ *The teacher pulled the fighting boys apart and sent them home.* ☐ *They hugged each other so tightly that no one could have pulled them apart.* **2.** *Fig.* to upset someone very much; to cause someone grief and torment. ☐ *This whole terrible affair has just pulled me apart.* ☐ *Don't let this matter pull you apart. Things won't always be this bad.*

pull someone **aside†** to grasp and pull a person to one side. ☐ *I pulled the child aside and scolded him for trying to sneak into the theater.* ☐ *I pulled aside the child to say something to him.*

pull someone **down†** *Fig.* to degrade someone; to humiliate someone. (See also **pull** someone or something **down**.) ☐ *I'm afraid that your so-called friends are pulling you down behind your back.* ☐ *There is no need to pull down everyone.*

pull someone **in†** Go to **pull** someone **into** something; **pull** someone **into** a place.

pull someone **into** a place and **pull** someone **in†** *Lit.* to bring someone into a place; to draw someone into a place. ☐ *Advertising will pull hundreds of customers in.* ☐ *The sale pulled in a lot of customers.*

pull someone **into** something and **pull** someone **in†** *Fig.* to get someone involved in something. ☐ *Please don't pull me into this argument.* ☐ *Don't pull in anyone else.*

pull someone or an animal **down†** to drag or force someone or an animal down. ☐ *The wolves pulled the hunter down and set upon him.* ☐ *They pulled down the hunter.*

pull someone or an animal **through (**something**) 1.** *Lit.* to manage to get someone or an animal through an opening. ☐ *Do you think you can pull the cow through this narrow door to the shed?* **2.** *Fig.* to help someone or an animal survive a difficult time or situation. ☐ *All her friends worked hard to pull her through the crisis.* ☐ *The vet worked hard to pull the cat through the illness.*

pull someone or something **apart†** to separate or dismember someone or something. ☐ *The murderer pulled his victim apart and sought to dispose of the parts.* ☐ *He pulled apart his victim.* ☐ *Nick pulled the parts of the box apart.*

pull someone or something **around†** to drag or haul someone or something around. ☐ *The woman had pulled her children around all day while she did the shopping. All of them were glad to get home.* ☐ *Nick pulled around his wagon and collected discarded aluminum cans.*

pull someone or something **away from** someone or something and **pull** someone or something **away†** to grasp and haul someone or something away from someone or something. ☐ *The lady pulled the child away from the edge of the well.* ☐ *Please pull your dog away from my hedge.* ☐ *Pull away that dog, or I will call the police!*

pull someone or something **back† (from** someone or something**)** to grasp and haul someone or something away from someone or something. ☐ *The cop pulled the kid away from the other kid and made them stop fighting.* ☐ *I pulled back the child from the dangerous hole.*

pull someone or something **by** something to grasp someone or something by something and tug or haul. ☐ *I pulled him by the hand, trying to get him to follow me.* ☐ *Timmy pulled the toy duck by its string and it quacked as it waddled along.*

pull someone or something **into** something and **pull** someone or something **in†** to haul or drag someone or something into something or some place. ☐ *She pulled him into the room and closed the door.* ☐ *Lisa pulled in her friend and closed the door.*

pull someone or something **over (to** something**)** [for someone] to cause someone or a vehicle to drive over to something, such as the side of the road. ☐ *The cop pulled Betty over to the side of the road.* ☐ *I pulled the car over to the side.*

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pull someone or something **to pieces** to pull someone or something apart; to separate someone or something into pieces. ☐ *The machine almost pulled him to pieces when he got his arm caught in it.*

pull someone or something **under 1.** *Lit.* to drag someone or something beneath the surface of something. ☐ *The strong undertow pulled John under the surface.* ☐ *The whirlpool nearly pulled the boat under.* **2.** *Fig.* to cause someone or something to fail. ☐ *The heavy debt load pulled Don under. He went out of business.* ☐ *The recession pulled his candy shop under.*

pull someone or something **up**† to drag or haul someone or something upward or to an upright position. ☐ *Bob had slipped down into the creek, so I reached down and pulled him up.* ☐ *I pulled up Bob and nearly fell in myself.* ☐ *Nick pulled the cushion up and propped it against the back of the sofa.*

pull someone's **leg** *Fig.* to kid, fool, or trick someone. ☐ *You don't mean that. You're just pulling my leg.* ☐ *Don't believe him. He's just pulling your leg.*

pull someone's or something's **teeth** *Fig.* to reduce the power or efficacy of someone or something. ☐ *The mayor tried to pull the teeth of the new law.* ☐ *The city council pulled the teeth of the new mayor.*

pull someone **through (**something**)** to help someone survive or get through something difficult. ☐ *With the help of the doctor, we pulled her through her illness.* ☐ *With lots of encouragement, we pulled her through.*

pull someone **up short** to cause someone to stop short. ☐ *My scream pulled him up short.* ☐ *The sudden thought that everything might not be all right pulled Tom up short.*

pull something **down**† **1.** to demolish something; to raze something. ☐ *Why do they want to pull the building down? Why not remodel it?* ☐ *They are going to pull down the old building today.* **2.** to lower or reduce the amount of something. ☐ *That last test pulled my grade down.* ☐ *Let's see if we can pull down your temperature with aspirin.*

pull something **down over** someone or something to draw something down over someone or something. ☐ *Lucy's mother pulled the dress down over Lucy and buttoned it up in back.* ☐ *Sarah pulled the cover down over the birdcage and turned out the lights.*

pull something **off**† **1.** *Inf.* to manage to make something happen. ☐ *Yes, I can pull it off.* ☐ *Do you think you can pull off this deal?* **2.** and **pull** something **off (of)** someone or something *Lit.* to tug or drag something off someone or something else. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Sam pulled the covers off the bed and fell into it, dead tired.* ☐ *He pulled off his clothes and stepped into the shower.*

pull something **on**† to draw on an article of clothing. ☐ *He pulled his pants on.* ☐ *He pulled on his pants quickly and ran outside while putting on his shirt.*

pull something **on** someone to play a trick on someone; to deceive someone with a trick. (The word *something* is often used.) ☐ *You wouldn't pull a trick on me, would you?* ☐ *Who would pull something like that on an old lady?*

pull something **out**† Go to **pull** something **out of** someone or something.

pull something **out of a hat** and **pull** something **out of thin air 1.** *Lit.* [for a magician] to make something, such as a live rabbit, seem to appear by pulling it out of a top hat or out of the air. ☐ *He pulled a rabbit out of a hat and then pulled a chicken out of thin air.* **2.** *Fig.* to produce something seemingly out of nowhere. ☐ *Where am I going to get the money? I can't just pull it out of a hat!* ☐ *I don't know where she found the book. She pulled it out of thin air, I guess.*

pull something **out of** someone to draw or force information out of someone. ☐ *The cops finally pulled a confession out of Max.* ☐ *I thought I would never pull her name out of her.*

pull something **out of** someone or something and **pull** something **out**† to withdraw something from someone or something. ☐ *I pulled the arrow out of the injured soldier and tried to stop the bleeding.* ☐ *I pulled out the arrow.*

pull something **out of** someone's **hands** Go to **out of** someone's **hands**.

pull something **out of the fire 1.** *Lit.* to drag or take something out of a fire before it is consumed. ☐ *The fire was too big, so he pulled a few logs out of the fire.* **2.** *Fig.* to rescue something; to save something just before it's too late. ☐ *Can we rescue this project? Is there time to pull it out of the fire?* ☐ *There is no way we can pull this one out of the fire.*

pull something **out of thin air** Go to **pull** something **out of a hat**.

pull something **over** someone or something to draw something over someone or something. ☐ *The doctor pulled a sheet over Gerald and left the room.* ☐ *Sharon pulled the cover over the birdcage for the night.*

pull something **to** to close something, usually a door of some type. ☐ *The door is open a little. Pull it to so no one will hear us.* ☐ *Please pull the door to.*

pull something **together 1.** *Lit.* to close something, such as a pair of drapes or sliding doors. ☐ *Please pull the doors together when you finish in the closet.* ☐ *Would you pull the drapes together before you turn on the lights?* **2.** *Fig.* to assemble something, such as a meal. ☐ *I will hardly have time to pull a snack together.* ☐ *I will pull a nice dinner together for the two of us.* **3.** *Fig.* to organize something; to arrange something. ☐ *How about a party? I'll see if I can pull something together for Friday night.* **4.** *Fig.* to tidy things up; to straighten things up and make them orderly. ☐ *This place is a mess. Please pull things together.*

pull something **toward** oneself to draw something closer to oneself. ☐ *He pulled his plate toward himself and began eating like a starving man.* ☐ *Mary pulled the basket of fruit toward herself and chose a nice juicy peach.*

pull something **up**† Go to **pull** something **up to** something.

pull something **up**† **(out of** something**)** to draw something upward out of something. ☐ *The worker pulled a cold wet dog up out of the pond.* ☐ *He pulled up the dog out of the pond.*

pull something **up to** something and **pull** something **up**† to draw something close to something else. ☐ *She pulled the chair up to the table and began to examine the papers.* ☐ *She pulled up a chair.*

pull the plug (on someone**) 1.** *Lit.* to turn off someone's life-support system in a hospital. (Based on **pull the plug (on** something**)** ①. This results in the death of the person whose life support has been terminated.) ☐ *They had to get a court order to pull the plug on their father.* ☐ *Fred signed a living will making it possible to pull the plug on him without a court order.* **2.** *Fig.* to put an end to someone's activities or plans. (Based on **pull the plug (on** something**)** ②.) ☐ *The mayor was doing a fine job until the treasurer pulled the plug on him.* ☐ *David pulled the plug on Fred, who was taking too long with the project.*

pull the plug (on something**) 1.** *Lit.* to terminate the functions of something by pulling a connector from a socket. ☐ *While she was working at the computer, I accidentally pulled the plug.* ☐ *I pulled the plug on the vacuum because the switch was broken.* **2.** *Fig.* to reduce the power or effectiveness of something; to disable something. ☐ *Jane pulled the plug on the whole project.* ☐ *The treasurer pulled the plug because there was no more money in the budget.*

pull the rug out† (from under someone**)** *Fig.* to make someone or someone's plans fall through; to upset someone's plans. ☐ *Don pulled the rug out from under me in my deal with Bill Franklin.* ☐ *I was close to getting the contract until Don came along and pulled out the rug.*

pull the wool over someone's **eyes** *Fig.* to deceive someone. ☐ *You can't pull the wool over my eyes. I know what's going on.* ☐ *Don't try to pull the wool over her eyes. She's too smart.*

pull through (something**)** to survive something. ☐ *I am sure that your uncle will pull through the illness.* ☐ *I'm glad he pulled through.*

pull together (as a team) to cooperate; to work well together. ☐ *Let's all pull together and get this done.* ☐ *If we pull together as a team, we can get this job done on time.*

Pull up a chair. Please get a chair and sit down and join us. (Assumes that there is seating available. The speaker does not necessarily mean that the person spoken to actually has to move a chair.) ☐ *Tom: Well, hello, Bob! Bob: Hi, Tom. Pull up a chair.* ☐ *The three men were sitting at a table for four. Bob came up and said hello. Bill said, "Pull up a chair." Bob sat in the fourth chair at the table.*

pull (up) alongside ((of) someone or something**)** to move to a point beside someone or something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *The car pulled up alongside the truck and honked and the people inside waved and waved.* ☐ *Please pull alongside the curb.*

pull up (somewhere**)** Go to **haul up (**somewhere**)**.

pull up stakes 1. *Lit.* to pull up tent stakes to take down a tent in preparation to leaving. ☐ *Let's pull up stakes and head home before the storm hits.* **2.** *Fig.* to end one's ties to a particular place; to get ready to move away from a place where one has lived or worked for a long time. ☐ *Even after all these years, pulling up stakes is easier than you think.* ☐ *It's time to pull up stakes and move on.*

pull up to something to drive up close to something. ☐ *I pulled up to the drive-in window and placed my order.* ☐ *When the taxi pulls up to the curb, open the door and get in.*

pulse through someone or something to flow or surge through someone or something. ☐ *A jolt of electricity pulsed through Sam, causing him to jerk his hand away from the wire.* ☐ *They repaired the power lines and electricity began to pulse through the wires again.*

pump (some) iron *Sl.* to lift weights for exercise. ☐ *Andy went down to the gym to pump some iron.* ☐ *Mary's hobbies are pumping iron and running.*

pump someone **for** something *Inf.* to try to get information about something out of someone. ☐ *The representative of the other company pumped Harry for information, but he refused to say anything.* ☐ *Are you trying to pump me for company secrets?*

pump someone **up (for** something**)** *Inf.* to get someone, including oneself, mentally ready for something. ☐ *The coach tried to pump the team up so they would win.* ☐ *The coach talked and talked to pump them up.*

pump something **into** someone or something and **pump** something **in†** to try to force something, such as a gas, liquid, information, or money into someone or something. ☐ *First you have to pump some air into the ball to make it hard.* ☐ *I pumped in the air.* ☐ *The hospital oxygen system pumped life-giving oxygen into Karen's lungs.*

pump something **out of** someone or something and **pump** something **out†** to remove something from someone or something by force or suction. ☐ *The doctors pumped the poison out of her stomach.* ☐ *They pumped out the poison.*

pump something **through** something to force something, such as a gas or fluid, through something. ☐ *They pumped crude oil through this pipeline, all the way to the south shore.* ☐ *They pumped fresh air through the sewers while the workers were working inside.*

pump something **up† 1.** to inflate something. ☐ *Do you have something with which I can pump my basketball up?* ☐ *I pumped up the ball just an hour ago.* **2.** *Sl.* to exercise to make muscles get bigger and stronger. ☐ *The bodybuilder pumped her muscles up in preparation for the competition.* ☐ *She pumped up her muscles.*

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pumped (up) *Sl.* excited; physically and mentally ready. ☐ *The team is really pumped up for Friday's game.* ☐ *She really plays well when she's pumped!*

punch a hole in something to make a hole in something with something. ☐ *John punched a hole in the wall with his fist.* ☐ *Mary punched a hole in the paper with her pencil.*

punch in to record one's arrival at one's workplace at a certain time. ☐ *What time did you punch in?* ☐ *I punched in at the regular time.*

punch out to record that one has left one's workplace at a certain time. ☐ *Why didn't you punch out when you left last night?* ☐ *I punched out at the regular time.*

punch someone **in** something to strike someone in some body part. ☐ *Tony punched Nick in the side.* ☐ *Why didn't you punch that mean guy in the nose?*

punch someone **on** something to strike someone on some body part, typically the shoulder. (Not with the intention of causing harm.) ☐ *Sally punched Frank on the shoulder just to show they were still friends.* ☐ *Tom punched Fred on the shoulder in a friendly way.*

punch someone **out†** *Sl.* to overcome or beat someone by punching. ☐ *He threatened to punch me out.* ☐ *The thug punched out the cop and ran down an alley.*

punch someone's **lights out** *Sl.* to knock someone out with a fist. ☐ *You had better stop that, or I will punch your lights out!* ☐ *Do you want me to punch your lights out?*

punch something **down**† to press something down. ☐ *Punch this lever down and then try to place your telephone call.* ☐ *Punch down this lever and push this button.*

punch something **in**† to crush or smash something in. ☐ *Who punched the cereal box in?* ☐ *Who punched in the cereal box?*

punch something **into** something to stick or press something into something. ☐ *She punched her finger into the cake and ruined my lovely icing job.* ☐ *He finally punched a spoon into the cereal box to get it open.*

punch something **out of** something and **punch** something **out**† to press on something and make it pop out of something. ☐ *She punched the perforated stickers out of the page and stuck them onto her schoolbooks.* ☐ *Jane punched out the stickers.*

punch something **up**† to register a figure on a cash register or calculator. ☐ *Jake punched the total up, and the register drawer opened.* ☐ *He punched up the total too carelessly.*

Punctuality is the soul of business. *Prov.* You should be on time for all your business appointments. ☐ *The office manager insisted on everyone's coming to work on time, not a minute late. "Punctuality is the soul of business," she said.*

punctuate something **with** something **1.** to add a particular punctuation mark to a piece of writing. ☐ *You have punctuated this ad with too many exclamation points.* ☐ *This letter is punctuated with dashes to emphasize the key points.* **2.** to add emphasis to one's speaking by adding phrases, exclamations, or other devices. ☐ *Her comments were punctuated with a few choice swear words.* ☐ *Tom punctuated his address with a few choice comments about politicians.*

punish someone **by** something to discipline someone by doing something. ☐ *The headmaster punished the children by forcing them to go to bed early.* ☐ *She punished herself by not eating.*

punish someone **for** something to discipline someone for [doing] something. ☐ *Someone will punish you for what you did.* ☐ *Please don't punish me for doing it. I'm sorry.*

punish someone **with** something to use something to discipline someone. ☐ *The captain punished the sailor with the lash.* ☐ *Sally threatened to punish Timmy with a spanking.*

punk out *Sl.* to chicken out (of something); to withdraw from something in cowardice. ☐ *He was supposed to ask her out, but he punked out at the last minute.* ☐ *Come on! Stick with it! Don't punk out!*

puppy love *Fig.* mild infatuation; infatuation as in a crush. (Used especially of adolescent relationships.) ☐ *Is it really love or just puppy love?* ☐ *Look at them together. It may be puppy love, but it looks wonderful.*

purchase something **for** someone to buy something for someone else; to buy something to give to someone. ☐ *Tony purchased a number of toys for the children in the orphanage.* ☐ *Who did you purchase this gift for?*

pure and simple and **plain and simple** absolutely; without further complication or elaboration. ☐ *I told you what you must do, and you must do it, pure and simple.* ☐ *Will you kindly explain to me what it is, pure and simple, that I am expected to do?* ☐ *Just tell me plain and simple, do you intend to go or don't you?*

***pure as the driven snow** pure and chaste. (Often used ironically. *Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *Jill: Sue must have gone to bed with every man in town. Jane: And I always thought she was as pure as the driven snow.* ☐ *Robert was notoriously promiscuous, but tried to convince all his girlfriends that he was pure as the driven snow.*

pure luck and **blind luck** complete luck; nothing but plain luck. ☐ *I have no skill. I won by pure luck.*

purge someone or something **from** something to rid something of someone or something. ☐ *We are going to purge the delinquent members from the list.* ☐ *The court purged her arrest from the records.*

purge someone or something **of** someone or something to rid someone or something of someone or something. ☐ *The medicine is designed to purge the patient of the deadly toxin.* ☐ *We purged the list of the delinquent members.*

purge something **away**† to wash or flush something away. ☐ *We will purge the rusty water away and then start up the pump again. We will have fresh, clean water again in no time.* ☐ *Laura purged away the rusty water.*

purr like a cat and **purr like a kitten 1.** *Fig.* [for an engine] to run well and smoothly. ☐ *My car really purred after I got it tuned up.* ☐ *New spark plugs and this old heap will really purr like a cat.* **2.** *Fig.* [for a person] to be very pleased, and perhaps moan or purr with pleasure. ☐ *She was so pleased that she purred like a cat.* ☐ *Sarah really purrs like a kitten when she is happy.*

purr like a kitten Go to previous.

purse something **up**† to bunch or pucker something up. (Usually the lips.) ☐ *When he tasted the lemon juice, he pursed his lips up and spat it out.* ☐ *Don pursed up his lips as if to spit it out.*

push ahead (with something**) 1.** *Lit.* to go on ahead, pushing with something. ☐ *The worker pushed ahead with the plow, moving the snow to the side of the road.* ☐ *Our car followed the snowplow, which was pushing ahead at a fast clip.* **2.** and **push ahead (on** something**)** *Fig.* to continue to progress with something. ☐ *Let's push ahead with this project immediately.* ☐ *I want to push ahead on this project.*

push along to move along; to travel along as with a purpose. ☐ *We must push along. We have a long way to travel before morning.* ☐ *They pushed along at a steady clip until they arrived at their destination.*

push at someone or something to apply pressure to and try to move someone or something. ☐ *She pushed at him, trying to get him to get out of the way, but he wouldn't budge.* ☐ *Mary pushed at the door, trying to open it against the wind.* ☐ *There is no need for you to push at me so hard.*

push down on something to press down on something, such as a button, stamp, lever, etc. ☐ *Push down on this button if you want room service.* ☐ *Don't push down on the door handle too hard. It will break.*

push for something to request or demand something. ☐ *The citizens are pushing for an investigation of the police department.* ☐ *My secretary is pushing for a raise.*

push forward to move forward; to move onward toward a goal. ☐ *We have lots to do. We must push forward!* ☐ *They are pushing forward, hoping to complete the project on time.*

push off and **shove off** to leave. (As if one were pushing a boat away from a dock.) ☐ *Well, it looks like it's time to push off.* ☐ *It's time to go. Let's shove off.*

push on someone or something to put pressure on someone or something. ☐ *Don't push on me! I can't move any faster than the person in front of me!* ☐ *Push on this button if you want the steward to come.* ☐ *Push on the door a little. It will open.*

push on (to something**)** **1.** to move on to another topic; to stop doing one thing and move on to another. ☐ *Okay. Let's push on to the next topic.* ☐ *Let us push on. We are nearly finished with the list.* **2.** to travel onward to something or some place. ☐ *We left Denver and pushed on to Omaha.* ☐ *Let us push on. We are nearly there.*

push on (with something**)** to continue to try to make progress with something. ☐ *Let's push on with this project. We must finish it soon.* ☐ *Yes, let's push on and finish.*

push one's **luck** and **press** one's **luck** to expect continued good fortune; to expect to continue to escape bad luck. (Often implies unreasonable expectation.) ☐ *You're okay so far, but don't push your luck.* ☐ *Bob pressed his luck too much and got into a lot of trouble.*

push (oneself**) away (from** something**)** to move oneself back and away from something. ☐ *The skater pushed herself away from the wall.* ☐ *Tom pushed himself away from the table when he had eaten enough.*

push (oneself**) by (**someone or something**)** to shove or thrust oneself past someone or something. ☐ *In a hurry, I pushed myself by the security guard, and almost got arrested for doing so.* ☐ *I pushed by Jane and went in first.*

push (oneself**) off (on** something**)** [for someone in a boat] to apply pressure to something on the shore, thus propelling the boat and oneself away. ☐ *The weekend sailor pushed himself off on the boat he had been moored to.* ☐ *We pushed off on the dock.*

push out to spread out; to expand outward. ☐ *The sides of the box pushed out, and I was afraid it would break.* ☐ *His little tummy pushed out when he was full.*

push past (someone or something**)** to force one's way past someone or something. (Considered a rude act.) ☐ *Nick pushed past the others and made himself first in line.* ☐ *I pushed past the gate and went right in.*

push someone **around** *Fig.* to harass someone physically; to jostle someone. (See also **push** someone or something **about**.) ☐ *I wish you would stop pushing me around all the time.* ☐ *Stop pushing Max around if you know what's good for you.*

push someone **into** something and **push** someone **in**† to force someone into a situation; to force someone to do something. ☐ *They are trying to push me into signing the contract.* ☐ *Please don't push me into it!* ☐ *You pushed me in!*

push someone or something **about** and **push** someone or something **around** to jostle someone around. ☐ *The crowd pushed the visitors around and made them feel unwelcome.* ☐ *People on the sidewalk pushed the delegation about during the noon rush hour.*

push someone or something **about in** something and **push** someone or something **around in** something; **push** someone or something **around**† to propel someone or something about on wheels. ☐ *Freddie pushed his brother about in the wagon.* ☐ *The nurse pushed around Aunt Mary in her wheelchair.*

push someone or something **across (**something**)** to move or propel someone or something across something. ☐ *Jill pushed Fred across the ice. He simply could not skate at all.* ☐ *The old car stalled just before the bridge, so we pushed it across.*

push someone or something **ahead of** someone to push someone or something forward from behind. ☐ *I pushed Gerald ahead of me so he could get a better view.* ☐ *Sally pushed the cart ahead of her and filled it from the supermarket shelves.*

push someone or something **along** to apply pressure to move someone or something along. ☐ *The mother tried to push her child along, but he wouldn't go.* ☐ *Jane pushed the cart along, down the supermarket aisle.*

push someone or something **around** Go to **push** someone or something **about.**

push someone or something **around in** something Go to **push** someone or something **about in** something.

push someone or something **aside**† to shove someone or something to one side. ☐ *Martha pushed Bill aside and went in ahead of him.* ☐ *He pushed aside the papers and laid his books on the desk.*

push someone or something **(away) (from** someone or something**)** to move or force someone or something away from someone or something. ☐ *The police pushed the crowd away from the movie star.* ☐ *They pushed away the hecklers from the stage.*

push someone or something **back**† **(from** someone or something**)** to move or force someone or something back from someone or something. ☐ *I quickly pushed her back from the edge. She almost fell over.* ☐ *There wasn't enough room, so we pushed back the furniture.* ☐ *Tony pushed Jane back from the edge.*

push someone or something **down**† to force someone or something downward. ☐ *Every time he tried to get up, the other boys pushed him down again.* ☐ *I pushed down the button and the machine began to operate.*

push someone or something **forward** to shove or move someone or something to the front. ☐ *Mary's mother pushed her forward where she would be seen.* ☐ *Let me push the piano bench forward for you.*

push someone or something **into** someone or something to cause someone or something to bump into someone or something. ☐ *Todd accidentally pushed Marlene into Bill.* ☐ *I pushed the lawn mower into the tree by accident.*

push someone or something **off (of)** someone or something and **push** someone or something **off**† to apply pressure to and force someone or something off someone or something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *He con-*

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tinued to come at me, but I managed to push him off me and escape. ☐ *I pushed off the attacker.*

push someone or something **on (ahead) (of** someone or something**)** to move or propel someone or something ahead. ☐ *He did not want to go in with me, but I pushed him on forward or ahead of me.* ☐ *I went into each room to clean it, pushing the laundry cart on ahead.* ☐ *She paused for a moment to rest, and then pushed the baby stroller on.*

push someone or something **out of** something and **push** someone or something **out**† to force someone or something out of something. ☐ *Nick pushed the intruder out of the house.* ☐ *Tony pushed out the intruder.*

push someone or something **over**† to make someone or something fall over or fall down. ☐ *When you ran into me, you nearly pushed me over.* ☐ *You nearly pushed over your friend.*

push someone or something **over (**something**)** to cause someone or something to move over something. ☐ *The convict pushed his buddy over the wall and followed after him.* ☐ *He climbed up to the top of the fence and I pushed him over.*

push someone or something **to** someone or something to propel someone or something to or as far as someone or something. ☐ *Max pushed Lefty to the window and made him look out.* ☐ *I pushed the chair to the window.*

push someone or something **toward** someone or something to propel someone or something to someone or something. ☐ *The drama coach got behind the shy young actor playing Romeo and pushed him toward Juliet.* ☐ *Clyde pushed his victim toward the edge of the cliff.*

push someone or something **up**† to raise or lift someone or something. ☐ *Jake is sliding down again. Push him up.* ☐ *Push up the window, please.*

push someone, something, or an animal **into** something to guide, shove, or press someone, something, or an animal inside of something. ☐ *I pushed the lawn mower into the garage and closed the door.* ☐ *I opened the garage door and pushed the dog in.*

push someone **to** something to try to drive or force a person to do something. ☐ *After the bankruptcy the board pushed the president to resign.* ☐ *We pushed her to reconsider, but her mind was made up.*

push someone **to the wall** and **press** someone **to the wall** to force someone into a position where there is only one choice to make; to put someone in a defensive position. ☐ *There was little else I could do. They pushed me to the wall.*

push someone **too far** *Fig.* to antagonize someone too much; to be too confrontational with someone. ☐ *I guess I pushed him too far, because he began shouting at me and threatening to hit me.*

push someone **up against the wall** Go to up against the wall.

push something **in**† to crush something in; to make something cave in. ☐ *He ran at the door and pushed it in.* ☐ *He pushed in the door.*

push something **off on(to)** someone to place one's task onto another person; to make someone else do an unwanted job. ☐ *Don't push the dirty work off onto me.* ☐ *Kelly pushed some of her workload off on me.*

push something **through (**something**) 1.** *Lit.* to force something to penetrate something. ☐ *Tony pushed the needle through the cloth, and drew the thread tight.* ☐ *He pushed the needle through just like a tailor.* **2.** *Fig.* to force passage of a motion or law. ☐ *The committee chairman managed to push the bill through the committee.* ☐ *With a little lobbying, they pushed it through.*

push something **to** to close or nearly close something, such as a door. ☐ *The door is open a little. Please push it to.* ☐ *Todd came in and pushed the door to.*

push something **(up) against** someone or something to press something against someone or something. ☐ *I pushed the chair up against the door to prevent the robber from getting in.* ☐ *Accidentally, I pushed the door against Donna and hurt her sore elbow.*

push the envelope *Fig.* to expand the definition, categorization, dimensions, or perimeters of something. ☐ *The engineers wanted to completely redesign the product, but couldn't push the envelope because of a very restricted budget.*

push the panic button Go to hit the panic button.

push through (something**)** to work through or force one's way through something. ☐ *I pushed through the snow, trying to get to the post office on time.* ☐ *The snow was very deep, but I pushed through.*

push toward someone or something to move or struggle toward someone or something. ☐ *The crowd pushed toward the convicted man, but the police held them back.* ☐ *The horses pushed toward the corral gate.*

push (up) against someone or something to put pressure on someone or something. ☐ *The small dog pushed up against me, wagging its tail.* ☐ *Push up against the ceiling tile while I try to tack it back in place.*

push up on something to raise something upward; to push something up from below. ☐ *Larry pushed up on the trapdoor and lifted it so he could climb out.* ☐ *Push up on this lever if you want the lights to get brighter.*

pushed for money Go to pressed for money.

pushed for time Go to pressed for time.

pushing up (the) daisies *Fig.* dead and buried. (Usually in the future tense.) ☐ *I'll be pushing up daisies before this problem is solved.* ☐ *If you talk to me like that again, you'll be pushing up the daisies.*

pussyfoot around *Fig.* to go about timidly and cautiously. (Alludes to a cat walking carefully.) ☐ *Stop pussyfooting around! Get on with it!* ☐ *I wish that they would not pussyfoot around when there are tough decisions to be made.*

put a bee in someone's **bonnet (about** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to give someone an idea about someone or something; to urge someone to do something. ☐ *Julie put a bee in my bonnet about a way to solve our money problems.* ☐ *Sam put a bee in my bonnet about having a party for Jane.* ☐ *He put a bee in my bonnet about Jane.* ☐ *I'm glad he put a bee in my bonnet.*

put a cap on something *Fig.* to put a limit on something. ☐ *We need to put a cap on spending in every department.* ☐ *The city put a cap on the amount each landlord could charge.*

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put a contract out on someone [for an underworld character] to order someone to kill someone else. ☐ *The mob put out a contract on some crook from Detroit.*

put a damper on something *Fig.* to have a dulling or numbing influence on something. ☐ *The bad news really put a damper on everything.* ☐ *The rainy weather put a damper on our picnic.*

put a dog off the scent to distract a dog from trailing the scent of someone or an animal. ☐ *The odor of a skunk put the dogs off the scent.*

put a hold on something to place restriction on something so that it is reserved, delayed, or inactivated. ☐ *The bank put a hold on my credit card until I paid my bill.* ☐ *The committee agreed to put a hold on the troublesome piece of business.*

put a horse out to pasture to retire a horse by allowing it to live out its days in a pasture with no work. (See also **put** someone **out to pasture**.) ☐ *The horse could no longer work, so we put it out to pasture.*

put a lid on something Go to **a lid on** something.

put a plug in† (for someone or something**)** to say something favoring someone or something; to advertise someone or something. ☐ *I hope that when you are in talking to the manager, you put a plug in for me.* ☐ *I could use some help. While you're there, put in a plug.*

put a premium on something to make something harder or more expensive to obtain or do. ☐ *The recent action of the bank directors put a premium on new home loans.* ☐ *The scarcity of steel put a premium on the cost of new cars.*

put a price on one's **head** Go to **a price on** one's **head.**

put a smile on someone's **face** *Fig.* to please someone; to make someone happy. ☐ *We are going to give Andy a pretty good raise, and I know that'll put a smile on his face.* ☐ *The surprise birthday party really put a smile on my dad's face.*

Put a sock in it! Go to **Stuff a sock in it!**

put a spin on something to twist a report or story to one's advantage; to interpret an event to make it seem favorable or beneficial to oneself or one's cause. ☐ *The mayor tried to put a positive spin on the damaging polls.* ☐ *The pundit's spin on the new legislation was highly critical.*

put a stop to something and **put an end to** something to bring something to an end. ☐ *I want you to put a stop to all this bad behavior.* ☐ *Please put an end to this conversation.*

put a strain on someone or something to burden or overload someone or something. ☐ *All this bad economic news puts a strain on everyone's nerves.* ☐ *The epidemic put a strain on the resources of the hospital.*

put all one's **eggs in one basket** *Fig.* to make everything dependent on only one thing; to place all one's resources in one place, account, etc. (If the basket is dropped, all is lost.) ☐ *Don't invest all your money in one company. Never put all your eggs in one basket.* ☐ *I advise you to diversify and not to put all your eggs in one basket.*

put an amount of time **in on** something to spend an amount of time (doing something). ☐ *You put how much time in?* ☐ *I put in four months on that project.*

put an animal **down†** *Euph.* to take the life of an animal mercifully. ☐ *We put down our old dog last year.* ☐ *It's kind to put fatally ill animals down.*

put an animal **out†** to send an animal, such as a pet, outdoors. ☐ *Did you put the cat out?* ☐ *Yes, I put out the cat.*

put an end to something Go to **put a stop to** something.

put another way Go to **to put it another way.**

put balls on something *Sl.* to make something more masculine or powerful; to give something authority and strength. (Potentially offensive. Use only with discretion.) ☐ *Come on, sing louder. Put some balls on it.* ☐ *This story is too namby-pamby. Put some balls on it.*

Put 'em up! Go to **Hands up!**

Put 'er there(, pal). *Inf.* Please shake hands with me. ☐ *Glad to meet you. Put 'er there, pal.*

put hair on someone's **chest** *Fig.* to do or take something to invigorate or energize someone, always a male, except in jest. ☐ *Here, have a drink of this stuff! It'll put hair on your chest.* ☐ *That stuff is powerful. It will really put hair on your chest.*

put ideas into someone's **head** *Fig.* to suggest something—usually something bad—to someone (who would not have thought of it otherwise). ☐ *Bill keeps getting into trouble. Please don't put ideas into his head.* ☐ *Bob would get along all right if other kids didn't put ideas into his head.*

put in a good word (for someone**)** *Fig.* to say something (to someone) in support of someone else. ☐ *I hope you get the job. I'll put in a good word for you.* ☐ *Yes, I want the job. If you see the boss, please put in a good word.*

put in a hard day at work and **put in a hard day's work** *Fig.* to work very hard at one's job. ☐ *I put in a hard day at work at the office, and now I want to be left alone to rest.*

put in an appearance (at something**)** to appear briefly at some place or at some event. ☐ *I only wanted to put in an appearance at the reception, but I ended up staying for two hours.* ☐ *Do we have to stay a long time, or can we just put in an appearance?*

put in for something to apply for something; to make a request for something. ☐ *I put in for a transfer, but I bet I don't get it.* ☐ *She put in for a new file cabinet, but she never got one.*

put in some place to dock [a vessel] temporarily some place. ☐ *The ship put in at Bridgetown, Barbados, for repairs.* ☐ *We will put in at Honolulu for a few hours.*

put it on the line Go to **lay it on the line.**

put money up† (for something**)** to provide the funding for something. ☐ *The government put the money up for the cost of construction.* ☐ *Who will put up the money for my education?*

put off by someone or something distressed or repelled by someone or something. ☐ *I was really put off by your behavior.* ☐ *We were all put off by the unfairness of the rules.*

put on to pretend; to act as if something were true. ☐ *Ann wasn't really angry. She was just putting on.* ☐ *I can't believe she was just putting on. She really looked mad.*

put on a (brave) front Go to **put up a (brave) front.**

P

put on airs and **give** oneself **airs** *Fig.* to act better than one really is; to pretend to be good or to be superior. ☐ *Pay no attention to her. She is just putting on airs.* ☐ *Stop giving yourself airs and act like the rest of us.*

put on an act to pretend that one is something other than what one is. ☐ *Be yourself, Ann. Stop putting on an act.* ☐ *You don't have to put on an act. We accept you the way you are.*

put on the dog and **put on the ritz** to make things extra special or dress formally for a special event. ☐ *Frank's really putting on the dog for the big party Friday night.* ☐ *They really put on the ritz for us.*

put on the ritz Go to previous.

put on weight to gain weight; to get fat. ☐ *I think I am putting on a little weight. I had better go on a diet.* ☐ *He has put on a lot of weight since last year.*

put one **at (**one's**) ease** *Fig.* to cause someone to relax or feel welcome. ☐ *She usually tells a little joke to put you at your ease.* ☐ *Please do something to put me at ease.*

put one foot in front of the other 1. *Lit.* to walk deliberately. ☐ *I was so tired that I could hardly even put one foot in front of the other.* ☐ *She was putting one foot in front of the other so carefully that I thought she must be ill.* **2.** *Fig.* to do things carefully and in their proper order. ☐ *Let's do it right now. Just put one foot in front of the other. One thing at a time.* ☐ *All I need to do is put one foot in front of the other. Everything else will take care of itself.*

put one **in** one's **place** to rebuke someone; to remind one of one's (lower) rank or station. ☐ *The boss put me in my place for criticizing her.* ☐ *Then her boss put her in her place for being rude.*

put one **in over** one's **head** Go to **in over** one's **head**.

put one **off** one's **game** Go to **off** one's **game**.

put one **off** one's **stride 1.** *Lit.* to cause one to deviate from a rhythmic stride while walking, running, or marching. ☐ *A rabbit ran across the path and put me off my stride.* **2.** *Fig.* to interfere with one's normal and natural progress or rate of progress. ☐ *Your startling comments put Larry off his stride for a moment.* ☐ *He was put off his stride by an interruption from the audience.*

put one **on** one's **feet** Go to **get** one **on** one's **feet**.

put one **on** one's **guard** to make one wary or cautious. ☐ *The menacing growl by the watchdog put me on my guard.* ☐ *Every time the boss comes around, it puts me on my guard.*

put one **on** one's **honor** *Fig.* to inform one that one is trusted to act honorably, legally, and fairly without supervision. ☐ *I'll put you on your honor when I have to leave the room during the test.* ☐ *They put us on our honor to take no more than we had paid for.*

put one **out of (**one's**) misery 1.** *Euph. Fig.* to kill someone as an act of mercy. (See also **put** some creature **out of its misery**.) ☐ *Why doesn't the doctor simply put her out of her misery?* ☐ *He took pills to put himself out of his misery.* **2.** *Fig.* to end a suspenseful situation for someone. ☐ *Please, put me out of misery; what happened?* ☐ *I put her out of her misery and told her how the movie ended.*

put one over on someone Go to **put** something **over on** someone.

put one's **back (in)to** something **1.** *Fig.* to apply great physical effort to lift or move something. ☐ *All right, you guys. Put your backs into moving this piano.* ☐ *You can lift it if you put your back to it.* **2.** *Fig.* to apply a lot of mental or creative effort to doing something. (From ①.) ☐ *If we put our backs to it, we can bake twelve dozen cookies today.* ☐ *The artist put his back into finishing the picture on time.*

put one's **best foot forward** *Fig.* to act or appear at one's best; to try to make a good impression. ☐ *When you apply for a job, you should always put your best foot forward.* ☐ *I try to put my best foot forward whenever I meet someone for the first time.*

put one's **cards on the table** Go to **lay** one's **cards on the table**.

put one's **dibs on** something to lay a claim to something; to announce one's claim to something. ☐ *She put her dibs on the last piece of cake.* ☐ *I put my dibs on the seat by the window.*

put one's **face on** *Fig.* [for a woman] to apply cosmetics. ☐ *Martha's gone to put her face on.* ☐ *We'll be on our way once my wife has put her face on.*

put one's **feet up**† to sit down, lean back, and rest; to lie down. ☐ *He was really exhausted and had to go put his feet up.* ☐ *Time to put up my feet and get some rest.*

put one's **finger on** something **1.** *Lit.* to touch something with one's finger. ☐ *I put my finger on the button and pressed.* ☐ *Put your finger on this spot and push hard.* **2.** *Fig.* to identify and state the essence of something. ☐ *That is correct! You have certainly put your finger on the problem.* ☐ *When she mentioned money, she really put her finger on the problem.*

put one's **foot down (about** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to assert something strongly. ☐ *The boss put her foot down and refused to accept any more changes to the plan.*

put one's **foot in it** Go to next.

put one's **foot in** one's **mouth** and **put** one's **foot in it; stick** one's **foot in** one's **mouth** *Fig.* to say something that you regret; to say something stupid, insulting, or hurtful. ☐ *When I told Ann that her hair was more beautiful than I had ever seen it, I really put my foot in my mouth. It was a wig.* ☐ *I put my foot in it by telling John's secret; he found out.*

put one's **hair up**† to arrange one's hair into a ponytail, bun, etc. (with curlers, hairpins, etc.). ☐ *I can't go out because I just put my hair up.* ☐ *I put up my hair every night.*

put one's **hand to the plow** *Fig.* to get busy; to help out; to start working. (Alludes to grasping a plow, ready to work the fields.) ☐ *You should start work now. It's time to put your hand to the plow.* ☐ *Put your hand to the plow and get the job done!*

put one's **hand up**† to raise one's hand to get attention from whomever is in charge. ☐ *The student put his hand up to ask a question of the teacher.* ☐ *She put up her hand to ask a question.*

put one's **hands on** someone, something, or an animal and **lay** one's **hands on** someone, something, or an animal **1.** *Lit.* to place one's hands on someone or an animal. ☐ *He put his hands on the sick woman and proclaimed her cured. This act of faith healing failed, alas.* ☐ *He laid his*

hands on the dog and gently felt for broken bones. **2.** *Fig.* to locate and get hold of someone or something. ☐ *As soon as I can lay my hands on him, I'll get him right over here.* ☐ *I am trying to put my hands on the book you suggested.* **3.** *Fig.* to get hold of someone or an animal with punishment or harm as a goal. ☐ *Just wait till I put my hands on you!* ☐ *When I lay my hands on Ken, he will be sorry he ever lied to me.*

put one's **head on the block (for** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to take great risks for someone or something; to go to a lot of trouble or difficulty for someone or something; to attempt to gain favor for someone or something. ☐ *I don't know why I should put my head on the block for Joan. What has she ever done for me?* ☐ *Sally tried to get me to put in a good word about her with the boss. But the last time I put my head on the block for anyone, it all backfired, and when the person goofed up, I looked like an idiot!*

put one's **heart (and soul) into** something *Fig.* to put all of one's sincere efforts into something. ☐ *She put her heart and soul into the singing of the national anthem.* ☐ *Come on, choir. You can sing better than that. Put your heart into it!*

put one's **house in order** *Fig.* to put one's business or personal affairs into good order. (As if one were cleaning one's house. See also put one's own house in order.) ☐ *There was some trouble in the department office and the manager was told to put his house in order.* ☐ *Every now and then, I have to put my house in order. Then life becomes more manageable.*

put one's **mind to** something and **set** one's **mind to** something *Fig.* to concentrate on doing something; to give the doing of something one's full attention. ☐ *I know I can do it if I put my mind to it.* ☐ *I will set my mind to it and finish by noon.*

put one's **money on** someone or something **(to** do something**)** **1.** *Fig.* to bet money that someone or something will accomplish something. ☐ *I put my money on the favorite to win the race.* ☐ *Donna put her money on the winning horse.* **2.** *Fig.* to predict the outcome of an event involving someone or something. (This is not a wager.) ☐ *I put my money on Bob to get elected this time.* ☐ *Alice put her money on the most popular candidate.*

put one's **neck on the line** *Fig.* to put oneself at great risk. ☐ *I put my neck on the line and recommended you for the job, and now look what you've done! I'm ruined!*

put one's **nose in (where it's not wanted)** and **stick** one's **nose in (where it's not wanted)** *Fig.* to interfere in someone else's business. ☐ *Why do you always have to stick your nose in?* ☐ *Please don't put your nose in where it's not wanted!*

put one's **nose out of joint** Go to get one's nose out of joint.

put one's **nose to the grindstone** *Fig.* to keep busy doing one's work. (Also with *have* and *get,* as in the examples.) ☐ *The boss told me to put my nose to the grindstone.* ☐ *I've had my nose to the grindstone ever since I started working here.* ☐ *If the other people in this office would get their noses to the grindstone, more work would get done.*

put one's **oar in**† and **stick** one's **oar in**†; **put** one's **two cents(' worth) in**† *Fig.* to add one's comments or opinion, even if unwanted or unasked for. ☐ *You don't need to put your oar in. I don't need your advice.* ☐ *I'm sorry. I shouldn't have stuck my oar in when you were arguing with your wife.* ☐ *Do you mind if I put in my oar? I have a suggestion.* ☐ *There is no need for you to put in your two cents' worth.*

put one's **own house in order** to make one's own affairs right, before or instead of criticizing someone else. (See also put one's house in order.) ☐ *You should put your own house in order before criticizing someone else.* ☐ *I have to put my own house in order before I criticize others.*

put one's **thinking cap on**† *Fig.* to start thinking in a serious manner. (Usually used with children.) ☐ *It's time to put our thinking caps on, children.* ☐ *All right now, let's put on our thinking caps and do some arithmetic.*

put one's **trust in** someone or something to trust someone or something. ☐ *Will I never be able to put my trust in you?* ☐ *You can put your trust in the bank. Its deposits are insured.*

put one's **two cents(' worth) in**† Go to put one's oar in†.

put one **through** one's **paces** and **put** something **through its paces** *Fig.* to give someone or something a thorough test; to show what someone or something can do. ☐ *I brought the young gymnast out and put her through her paces.*

put oneself **in** someone else's **place** and **put** oneself **in** someone else's **shoes** to allow oneself to see or experience something from someone else's point of view. ☐ *Put yourself in someone else's place, and see how it feels.* ☐ *I put myself in Tom's shoes and realized that I would have made exactly the same choice.*

put oneself **out** to inconvenience oneself. ☐ *I just don't know why I put myself out for you!* ☐ *No, I did not put myself out at all. It was no trouble, in fact.*

put out to generate [lots of something]. ☐ *What a great machine. It really puts out!* ☐ *The new laser printer really puts out!*

put out a warrant (on someone**)** and **send out a warrant (on** someone**)** to issue a warrant for the arrest of someone. ☐ *The police put out a warrant on Max.* ☐ *We sent out a warrant on Lefty "Fingers" Moran at the same time.*

put out (about someone or something**)** irritated; bothered. ☐ *John behaved rudely at the party, and the hostess was quite put out.* ☐ *Liz was quite put out about the question.*

put out (some) feelers (on someone or something**)** to arrange to find out about something in an indirect manner. ☐ *I put out some feelers on Betty to try and find out what is going on.* ☐ *I will put out feelers on what's going on with June.*

put paid to something to consider something closed or completed; to mark or indicate that something is no longer important or pending. (As if one were stamping a bill "paid".) ☐ *At last, we were able to put paid to the matter of who is to manage the accounts.*

put people or things **together** to join or combine people or things. ☐ *We will put Sam and Trudy together at the dinner table.* ☐ *Let's put all the crystal goblets together.*

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put people's **heads together** to join together with someone to confer. ☐ *Let's put our heads together and come up with a solution to this problem.* ☐ *Mary and Ted put their heads together, but failed to provide anything new.*

put pressure on something to apply weight or pressure to something. (See also **put (the) pressure on** someone **(to** do something**)**.) ☐ *Put pressure on the wound to stop the bleeding.* ☐ *Put some pressure on the papers to flatten them out.*

put roots down† **(**some place**)** to settle down somewhere; to make a place one's permanent home. ☐ *I'm not ready to put roots down anywhere yet.* ☐ *I'm ready to put down roots some place.* ☐ *I want to settle down. I want to put roots down and buy a house.*

put some creature **out of its misery** to kill an animal in a humane manner. (See also **put** one **out of** one's **misery**.) ☐ *The vet put that dog with cancer out of its misery.* ☐ *Please, put my sick goldfish out of its misery.*

put some distance between someone **and** oneself or something to move or travel away from someone or something. ☐ *Jill and I aren't getting along. I need to put some distance between her and me.* ☐ *I drove fast to put some distance between Max and me.*

put some sweet lines on someone Go to **lay some sweet lines on** someone.

put some teeth into something *Fig.* to increase the power or efficacy of something. ☐ *The mayor tried to put some teeth into the new law.* ☐ *The delivery clause in the contract is too weak. Put some teeth into it.*

put (some**) years on** someone or something *Fig.* to cause someone or something to age prematurely; to cause deterioration in the state of someone or something. (The *some* may be replaced with a specific number or period of time.) ☐ *The events of the last week have really put a lot of years on Gerald.* ☐ *The severe weather put many years on the roof of the house.*

put someone **across (in a good way)** and **get** someone **across (in a good way)** to present someone in a good way or a good light. ☐ *I don't want Tom to make the speech. He doesn't put himself across well.* ☐ *I get myself across in situations like this. I'll do it.*

put someone **away**† **1.** *Sl.* to kill someone. (Underworld.) ☐ *The gangster threatened to put me away if I told the police.* ☐ *They've put away witnesses in the past.* **2.** *Euph.* to bury someone. ☐ *My uncle died last week. They put him away on Saturday.* ☐ *They put away my uncle in the cold ground.* **3.** and **send** someone **away** *Euph.* to have someone put into a mental institution. ☐ *My uncle became irrational, and they put him away.* ☐ *They put away my aunt the year before.* **4.** and **send** someone **away** *Euph.* to sentence someone to prison for a length of time. (Underworld.) ☐ *They put Richard away for fifteen years.* ☐ *The judge put away the whole gang.*

put someone **behind bars** Go to **behind bars**.

put someone **behind the eight ball** Go to **behind the eight ball**.

put someone **by** someone or something Go to **by** someone or something.

put someone **down as** something **bad** to judge that someone is bad or undesirable in some way. (See also **put** someone or something **down as something**.) ☐ *He was so rude that I put him down as someone to be avoided.* ☐ *If you act silly all the time, people will put you down as a fool.*

put someone **down (for** something**)** to put someone's name on a list of people who volunteer to do something or give an amount of money. ☐ *Can I put you down for ten dollars?* ☐ *We're having a picnic, and you're invited. Everyone is bringing something. Can I put you down for potato salad?*

put someone **in**† Go to **put** someone **into power**.

put someone **in a bad mood** Go to **in a bad mood**.

put someone **in an awkward position** to make a situation difficult for someone; to make it difficult for someone to evade or avoid acting. ☐ *Your demands have put me in an awkward position. I don't know what to do.* ☐ *I'm afraid I've put myself in sort of an awkward position.*

put someone **in harm's way** Go to **in harm's way**.

put someone **in mind of** someone or something to remind someone of someone or something. ☐ *Mary puts me in mind of her mother when she was that age.* ☐ *This place puts me in mind of the village where I was brought up.*

put someone **in the hole** Go to **in the hole**.

put someone **in the picture** Go to **in the picture**.

put someone **in touch with** someone or something to cause or help someone to communicate with someone or something. ☐ *Can you put me in touch with Liz?* ☐ *Would you please put me in touch with the main office?*

put someone **in(side) (**something**)** to place or insert someone inside something. ☐ *The sheriff put Roger inside the cell and locked the door.* ☐ *He opened the cell door and put Roger in.*

put someone **into power** and **put** someone **in**† to elect or appoint someone to office or a position of power. ☐ *The board decided to put an unknown from another company into the presidency.* ☐ *They put in a complete unknown.*

put someone **into the doghouse** Go to **in the doghouse**.

put someone **into the doldrums** Go to **in the doldrums**.

put someone **into the gutter** Go to **in the gutter**.

put someone **off**† **1.** to delay dealing with someone until a later time. ☐ *I hate to keep putting you off, but we are not ready to deal with you yet.* ☐ *I had to put off the plumber again. He really wants his money.* **2.** to repel someone; to distress someone. ☐ *You really put people off with your scowling face.* ☐ *You put off people with your arrogance.* **3.** to avoid or evade someone. ☐ *I don't wish to see Mr. Brown now. Please put him off.* ☐ *I won't talk to reporters. Tell them something that will put them off.* ☐ *Put off those annoying people!*

put someone **off (of)** something and **put** someone **off**† to remove someone from a form of transportation, such as a train, ship, or airplane, owing to illness or misbehavior. (See also **put** someone **off**. *Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *The captain ordered that the unruly passengers be put off the ship at the next port.* ☐ *We put the thief off at the dock.*

put someone **off the scent** *Fig.* to distract someone or a group from following a scent or trail. (From **put a dog off the scent**; the scent or trail can be purely figurative.

(See also **put** someone **off the track**.) ☐ *The clever maneuvers of the bandits put the sheriff's posse off the scent.* ☐ *The mob laundered the drug money to try to put investigators off the trail.*

put someone **off the track** and **put** someone **off the trail** to cause someone to lose a trail that is being followed. (See also **put** someone **off the scent**; **throw** someone **off the track**.) ☐ *A distraction put me off the track and I almost got lost in the jungle.* ☐ *I was following an escaped convict and something put me off the trail.*

put someone **off the trail** Go to previous.

put someone **on** to tease or deceive someone innocently and in fun. ☐ *Come on! You're just putting me on!* ☐ *He got real mad even though they were only putting him on.*

put someone **on a diet** Go to **on a diet**.

put someone **on a pedestal** Go to **on a pedestal**.

put someone **on hold** *Fig.* to stop all activity or communication with someone. (See also **put** someone or something **on hold**.) ☐ *John put Ann on hold and started dating Mary.* ☐ *"You can't just put me on hold!" cried Ann.*

put someone **on the spot** *Fig.* to ask someone forthright questions; to demand that someone produce as expected. ☐ *Don't put me on the spot. I can't give you an instant answer.* ☐ *The boss put Bob on the spot and demanded that he do everything he had promised.*

put someone **onto** someone or something to alert someone to the existence of someone or something; to lead someone to someone or something. ☐ *Nancy put Elaine onto George, who knew of a job that Elaine might be interested in.* ☐ *Nancy put Elaine onto a good job lead.*

put someone or an animal **out of** something and **put** someone or an animal **out**† to get rid of someone or an animal; to eliminate someone or an animal from something or some place. ☐ *The usher put the noisy boys out of the theater.* ☐ *He put out the boys.* ☐ *Please put out the cat after dinner.*

put someone or an animal **to sleep 1.** to cause someone or an animal to sleep, perhaps through drugs or anesthesia. ☐ *The doctor put the patient to sleep before the operation.* ☐ *I put the cat to sleep by stroking its tummy.* **2.** *Euph.* to kill someone or an animal. ☐ *We had to put our dog to sleep.* ☐ *The robber said he'd put us to sleep forever if we didn't cooperate.*

put someone or some creature **to death** to kill someone or some creature. ☐ *The killer was put to death right at midnight.*

put someone or some creature **out in the cold** Go to **out in the cold**.

put someone or something **above** someone or something to place someone or something at a higher level than someone or something. ☐ *The captain put one soldier above the wall so he could see trouble coming.* ☐ *In the painting, the artist put an angel above the small shed.*

put someone or something **ahead (of** someone or something**) 1.** to move or place someone or something in front of someone or something. ☐ *The teacher put Freddie ahead of Mike, because Mike had been disrespectful.* ☐ *Don't put him ahead! I didn't do anything.* **2.** to think of someone or something as more important than someone or something. ☐ *I put Gerry ahead of Betty as far as strength is concerned.* ☐ *Yes, I would put Gary ahead.* ☐ *She put herself ahead of everyone else and expected special treatment.*

put someone or something **among** someone or something to place someone or something in the midst of people or things. ☐ *The martial arts instructor put Fred among the strongest students to see what he would do.* ☐ *The shopkeeper put the green pears among the ripe ones and tried to sell them.*

put someone or something **at loose ends** Go to **at loose ends**.

put someone or something **at** someone's **disposal** to make someone or something available to someone; to offer someone or something to someone. ☐ *I'd be glad to help you if you need me. I put myself at your disposal.* ☐ *I put my car at my neighbor's disposal.*

put someone or something **before** someone or something Go to **place** someone or something **before** someone or something.

put someone or something **down**† **1.** Go to **set** someone or something **down**. **2.** *Fig.* to belittle or degrade someone or something. ☐ *It's an old car, but that's no reason to put it down.* ☐ *You put down everything you don't understand!*

put someone or something **down**† **as** something to write down the name of someone or a group as something. (See also **put** someone **down as** something.) ☐ *I will put you down as cook for the benefit luncheon.* ☐ *I put down John as a likely prospect.*

put someone or something **forward 1.** *Lit.* to move someone or something forward. ☐ *The director put all the players forward during the last scene, leaving more room for the chorus to come on for the finale.* ☐ *Could you put your left foot forward a little?* **2.** *Fig.* to suggest someone or something; to advance the name of someone or something. ☐ *I put Henry forward as a possible nominee.* ☐ *I would like to put forward a plan.*

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put someone or something **in**† Go to **put** someone or something **into** something.

put someone or something **in(to) jeopardy** to put someone or something into danger. ☐ *What you just said puts Bill into jeopardy.* ☐ *It puts his plans in jeopardy.*

put someone or something **into order** to put people or things into a proper sequence. ☐ *Would you please put these people into order by height so we can march into the auditorium?* ☐ *Could you put these magazines into order?*

put someone or something **into** something and **put** someone or something **in**† to insert or install someone or something into something. ☐ *The magician put the woman into the cabinet and locked the door.* ☐ *She put in the woman and locked the cabinet.*

put someone or something **into the middle of nowhere** Go to **in the middle of nowhere**.

put someone or something **on hold** to put someone or someone's telephone call on an electronic hold. (See also **put** someone **on hold**.) ☐ *Please don't put me on hold! I'm in a hurry!* ☐ *I am going to have to put your call on hold.*

put someone or something **on ice 1.** *Lit.* to put a body part or corpse on ice or under refrigeration to preserve it; to put a foodstuff on ice or under refrigeration to cool it. ☐ *The surgeon transplanted a heart that had been put on ice*

for two hours. ☐ *Please put the soda pop on ice.* **2.** *Fig.* to postpone acting on someone or something. ☐ *I know he keeps pestering you for an answer, but we'll just have to put him on ice until we have more facts to go on.* ☐ *Let's put this project on ice till we find out how well it's financed.*

put someone or something **on** something to place someone or something on top of something. ☐ *The man put the child on the pony and led it about.* ☐ *June put the lid on the pickle jar and put it in the fridge.*

put someone or something **on track** Go to **on track**.

put someone or something **out of** one's **mind** to forget someone or something; to make an effort to stop thinking about someone or something. (Almost the same as **get** someone or something **out of** one's **mind**.) ☐ *Try to put it out of your mind.* ☐ *I can't seem to put him out of my mind.*

put someone or something **out of the way** to move someone or something out of a pathway. (See also **put** someone **out of the way**.) ☐ *Please put that chair out of the way before someone trips on it.* ☐ *Put the baby out of the way so the noise doesn't bother her.*

put someone or something **over** to succeed in making someone or something be accepted. ☐ *The public relations expert helped put John over to the public.* ☐ *Do you think we can put this new product over?*

put someone or something **through (to** someone**)** to put someone's telephone call through to someone. ☐ *Will you please put me through to the international operator?* ☐ *Please put my call through.*

put someone or something **to the test** *Fig.* to see what someone or something can achieve. ☐ *I think I can jump that far, but no one has ever put me to the test.* ☐ *I'm going to put my car to the test right now, and see how fast it will go.*

put someone or something **under** something to place someone or something beneath something. ☐ *Dave put Sam under the loft in the barn, hoping no one would find him there.* ☐ *Alice put the birthday present under the couch, where she could get to it in a hurry.*

put someone or something **with** someone to place someone or something with someone; to assign someone or something to someone. ☐ *I will put David with you and let you two work together for a while.* ☐ *I will put this project with you for the time being.*

put someone **out**† to distress or inconvenience someone. ☐ *I'd like to have a ride home, but not if it puts you out.* ☐ *Don't worry. It won't put out anybody.*

put someone **out of the way** *Euph.* to kill someone. ☐ *The police suspected that she had put her uncle out of the way in order to inherit his property.*

put someone **out on a limb** Go to **out on a limb**.

put someone **out to pasture** *Fig.* to retire someone. (Based on **put a horse out to pasture**.) ☐ *Please don't put me out to pasture. I have lots of good years left.* ☐ *This vice president has reached retirement age. It's time to put him out to pasture.*

put someone **over a barrel** Go to **over a barrel**.

put someone's **back up** Go to **get** someone's **dander up**.

put someone's **eye out**† to puncture or harm someone's eye and destroy its ability to see. ☐ *Careful with that stick or you'll put your eye out.* ☐ *He fell on a stick and almost put out his eye!*

put someone's **nose out of joint** *Fig.* to make someone resentful. ☐ *What's wrong with Jill? What put her nose out of joint?* ☐ *Don't put your nose out of joint. I didn't mean anything by what I said.*

put someone **through** something to cause someone to have to endure something. ☐ *The doctor said he hated to put me through all these tests, but that it was medically necessary.*

put someone **through the mill** Go to **through the mill**.

put someone **through the wringer** *Fig.* to give someone a difficult time; to interrogate someone thoroughly. (Alludes to putting something through an old-fashioned clothes wringer.) ☐ *The lawyer really put the witness through the wringer!* ☐ *The teacher put the students through the wringer.*

put someone **to bed** and **send** someone **to bed** to make someone go to bed. ☐ *Mother put Jimmy to bed and kissed him.* ☐ *Sally was naughty and was sent to bed.*

put someone **to bed with a shovel** *Sl.* to bury someone; to kill and bury someone. ☐ *Shut up! You want me to put you to bed with a shovel?* ☐ *The leader of the gang was getting sort of tired and old, so one of the younger thugs put him to bed with a shovel.*

put someone **to shame 1.** to embarrass someone; to make someone ashamed. ☐ *I put him to shame by telling everyone about his bad behavior.* **2.** to show someone up. ☐ *Your excellent efforts put us all to shame.*

put someone **to sleep 1.** to bore someone. ☐ *That dull lecture put me to sleep.* ☐ *Her long story just put me to sleep.* **2.** Go to **put** someone or an animal **to sleep**.

put someone **under** *Fig.* to anesthetize someone. ☐ *They put him under with ether.* ☐ *After you put her under, we will begin the operation.*

put someone **under a spell** Go to **under a spell**.

put someone **under arrest** Go to **under arrest**.

put someone **up**† to provide lodging for someone. ☐ *I hope I can find someone to put me up.* ☐ *They were able to put up John for the night.*

put someone **up against** someone to place someone into competition with someone else. ☐ *The coach put his best wrestler up against the champ from the other team.* ☐ *The varsity put themselves up against the alumni team in a game to benefit charity.*

put someone **up**† **(for** something**)** to nominate or offer someone for some office or task. ☐ *I put Henry up for club president.* ☐ *We put up Shannon for treasurer.*

put someone **up to** something to cause someone to do something; to give someone the idea of doing something. ☐ *Who put you up to throwing the party?* ☐ *Nobody put me up to it. I thought it up myself.*

put someone **up with** someone to house someone with someone. ☐ *I will put her up with my cousin, who has an extra bedroom.* ☐ *We will put up the lady with us.*

put someone **wise to** someone or something Go to **wise to** someone or something.

put something **across (to** someone**)** and **get** something **across (to** someone**)** *Fig.* to make something clear to

someone; to convince someone of something; to get a plan accepted. ☐ *I don't know how to put this point across to my class. Can you help?* ☐ *Can you help me get this across?*

put something **aside**† to set or place something to the side. ☐ *I put the magazine aside and began reading a book.* ☐ *Put aside your work for a minute and listen to what I have to tell you.*

put something **aside for a rainy day** Go to save (something) for a rainy day.

put something **aside**† **(for** something**)** to hold something in reserve for some purpose. ☐ *You should put a little of the sugar aside for your coffee in the morning.* ☐ *Please put aside some money for me.* ☐ *I can put a little aside.*

put something **at a premium** to make something available only at an extra cost or through extra effort. ☐ *The scarcity of fresh vegetables at this time of year puts broccoli at a premium.* ☐ *The high demand for apples puts them at a premium.*

put something **at** an amount to price something at a certain amount of money; to estimate something at a certain figure. ☐ *I would put the charges at about two hundred dollars.* ☐ *She put the damages at nearly two hundred thousand dollars.*

put something **at** someone's **door** Go to lay something at someone's door.

put something **away**† **1.** *Lit.* to return something to its proper storage place. ☐ *When you are finished with the hammer, please put it away. Don't leave it out.* ☐ *Put away this mess!* **2.** *Fig.* to eat something. ☐ *Are you going to put this last piece of cake away?* ☐ *Did you put away that whole pizza?*

put something **back**† **1.** to return something to where it was before. ☐ *Please put the book back when you finish it.* ☐ *Put back the book when you finish.* **2.** Go to set something back.

put something **back in play** Go to in play.

put something **back on track** Go to back on track.

put something **behind** one *Fig.* to try to forget about something. ☐ *I look forward to putting all my problems behind me.* ☐ *She will be happier when all this can be put behind her.*

put something **behind** someone or something to place something in back of someone or something. ☐ *I put the box behind Mary, and she didn't even know it was there.* ☐ *Please put the present behind the couch where Janet will not see it.*

put something **by** and **lay** something **by** to reserve a portion of something; to preserve and store something, such as food. ☐ *I put some money by for a rainy day.* ☐ *I laid some eggs by for our use tomorrow.*

put something **down**† **1.** *Fig.* to repress or put a stop to something such as a riot or rebellion. ☐ *The army was called to put down the rebellion.* ☐ *The police used tear gas to put the riot down.* **2.** Go to set something down.

put something **down**† **in black and white** and **set** something **down**† **in black and white** *Fig.* to write down the terms of an agreement; to draw up a written contract; to put the details of something down on paper. (Alludes to black ink and white paper.) ☐ *We agree on all the major points. Now, let's set it down in black and white.* ☐ *I think I understand what you are talking about, but we need to put down the details in black and white.*

put something **down to** something and **set** something **down to** something to explain something as being caused by something else. ☐ *I put his bad humor down to his illness.* ☐ *We set your failure down to your emotional upset.*

put (something**) forth** to exert effort. ☐ *You are going to have to put more effort forth if you want to succeed.* ☐ *You need to put forth. You are not carrying your load.*

put something **forward**† to state an idea; to advance an idea. ☐ *Toward the end of the meeting, Sally put an idea forward.* ☐ *He put several suggestions forward.*

put something **in**† to submit something, such as an order, request, or demand. ☐ *In fact, I put the order in some time ago.* ☐ *I put in a request for a new monitor.*

put something **in a nutshell** *Fig.* to state something very concisely. (Alludes to the small size of a nutshell and the amount that it would hold.) ☐ *The explanation is long and involved, but let me put it in a nutshell for you.* ☐ *To put it in a nutshell: you are fired!*

put something **in apple-pie order** Go to in apple-pie order.

put something **in layaway** and **put** something **in will-call** to purchase something by paying part of the price initially, and not receiving the goods until all the money has been paid. ☐ *I couldn't afford a winter coat right now, so I picked one out and put it in layaway.* ☐ *Please put this in will-call. I'll pay for it next month.*

put something **in limbo** Go to in limbo.

put something **in mothballs 1.** *Lit.* to put something into storage in mothballs. ☐ *He put his winter coat in storage with mothballs each fall and had to air it out for a week each spring.* **2.** *Fig.* to put something into storage or reserve. (Often said of warships.) ☐ *The navy put the old cruiser in mothballs and no one ever expected to see it again.* ☐ *Let's just put this small bicycle in mothballs until we hear of a child who can use it.*

put something **in order** Go to in order.

put something **in play** Go to in play.

put something **in quotes** to put quotation marks around writing or printing. ☐ *Please put this word in quotes, since it means something special the way you have used it here.* ☐ *They put it in quotes so people would know it means something different.*

put something **in the back of** someone's **mind** Go to in the back of someone's mind.

put something **in the open** Go to in the open.

put something **in the way of** someone or something to place a barrier in the way of someone or something. ☐ *You know I don't want to put anything in the way of your happiness.* ☐ *I would never put anything in the way of you and Donna.*

put something **in will-call** Go to put something in layaway.

put something **in writing** Go to in writing.

put something **in((side)** someone or something**)** to place or insert something inside someone or something. ☐ *The surgeon put a tube inside Chuck and left it there to drain*

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fluid. ☐ *While you have the closet door open, will you put this in?*

put something **into effect** and **put** something **into force** to make something take effect; to begin using or enforcing a policy or procedure. ☐ *When will the city council put this law into effect?* ☐ *We will put it into force tomorrow.*

put something **into orbit** Go to in orbit.

put something **in(to) order** to make something tidy. ☐ *Please put this room into order.* ☐ *I will put it in order as soon as I have a minute.*

put something **into perspective** Go to in perspective.

put something **into place** Go to in place.

put something **into practice** to make a suggested procedure the actual procedure. ☐ *That is a good policy. I suggest you put it into practice immediately.* ☐ *I plan to put the new technique into practice as soon as I can.*

put something **in(to) print** to publish something; to record something spoken in printed letters. ☐ *The article looks good. We will put it into print as soon as possible.* ☐ *We'll put it in print as soon as we can.*

put something **in(to) service** and **put** something **into use** to start to use a thing; to make a device operate and function. ☐ *I hope that they are able to put the elevator into service again soon. I am tired of climbing stairs.* ☐ *We will put it in service within an hour.* ☐ *When can we put the new copier into use?*

put something **in(to)** someone's **head** *Fig.* to give ideas to someone who might not have thought of them without help. ☐ *Who put that idea into your head?* ☐ *No one put it in my head. I thought of it all by myself.*

put something **into use** Go to put something in(to) service.

put something **into words** *Fig.* to form an idea into sentences that can be spoken or written. ☐ *I find it hard to put my thoughts into words.* ☐ *She put it into words quite nicely.*

put something **off**† to postpone something; to schedule something for a later time. ☐ *I have to put off our meeting until a later time.* ☐ *I put off a visit to the dentist as long as I could.*

put something **on**† to place clothing onto one's body; to get into a piece of clothing. ☐ *I put a heavy coat on to go outside in the cold.* ☐ *Please put on this one and see if it fits.*

put something **on hold** to postpone something; to stop the progress of something. (See also put someone on hold; put someone or something on hold.) ☐ *They put the project on hold until they got enough money to finish it.* ☐ *Sorry, but we must put your plan on hold.*

put something **on its feet** Go to on its feet.

put something **on paper** *Fig.* to write something down. ☐ *You have a great idea for a novel. Now put it on paper.* ☐ *I'm sorry, I can't discuss your offer until I see something in writing. Put it on paper, and then we'll talk.*

put something **on** someone or an animal to clothe someone or an animal in something. ☐ *The mother put a little jacket on her child.* ☐ *Alice puts a silly little coat on her poodle during the winter.*

put something **on** someone or something to place or set something on someone or something. ☐ *She put sand on Tom as he lay napping on the beach.* ☐ *Please put the paper on the coffee table.*

put something **on** someone's **shoulders** Go to on someone's shoulders.

put something **on the back burner** Go to on the back burner.

put something **on the cuff** *Fig.* to buy something on credit; to add to one's credit balance. ☐ *I'll take two of those, and please put them on the cuff.* ☐ *I'm sorry, Tom. We can't put anything more on the cuff.*

put something **on the front burner** Go to on the front burner.

put something **on the map** *Fig.* to make some place famous or popular. ☐ *The good food you serve here will really put this place on the map.* ☐ *Nothing like a little scandal to put an otherwise sleepy town on the map.*

put something **on the market** Go to on the market.

put something **on the street** *Sl.* to tell something openly; to spread news. ☐ *There is no need to put all this gossip on the street. Keep it to yourself.* ☐ *Now, please don't put this on the street, but I am going to get married.*

put something **out**† **1.** to emit something. ☐ *The factory put a lot of fumes out.* ☐ *It put out nasty fumes.* **2.** to extinguish something on fire. ☐ *He used flour to put the grease fire out.* ☐ *He put out the fire with flour.* **3.** to manufacture or produce something. ☐ *That factory puts electrical supplies out.* ☐ *We put out some very fine products.* **4.** to publish something. ☐ *When was this book put out?* ☐ *We put out both books last year.*

put something **over**† to accomplish something; to put something across. (See also put someone or something over.) ☐ *This is a very hard thing to explain to a large audience. I hope I can put over the main points.* ☐ *This is a big request for money. I go before the board of directors this afternoon, and I hope I can put it over.*

put something **over on** someone and **put one over on** someone to play a trick on someone; to deceive someone with something. ☐ *We really put one over on the teacher and boy, was he mad.* ☐ *I'm too observant. You can't put anything over on me.*

put something **plainly** to state something firmly and explicitly. ☐ *To put it plainly, I want you out of this house immediately.* ☐ *Thank you. I think you've put your feelings quite plainly.*

put something **right** Go to set something right.

put something **straight** Go to set something straight.

put something **through its paces** Go to put one through one's paces.

put something **to bed** *Fig.* to complete work on something and send it on to the next step in production, especially in publishing. (From put someone to bed.) ☐ *This week's edition is finished. Let's put it to bed.* ☐ *Finish the editing of this book and put it to bed.*

put something **to (good) use** to apply a skill or ability; to use a skill or ability. ☐ *The lawyer put her training to good use for the charity.* ☐ *The pianist put his talents to use at the party.*

put something **to rest** and **lay** something **to rest** *Fig.* to put an end to a rumor; to finish dealing with something and forget about it. □ *I've heard enough about Ann and her illness. I'd like to put the whole matter to rest.* □ *I'll be happy to lay it to rest, but will Jane?*

put something **together 1.** *Lit.* to assemble something. □ *How long will it take to put dinner together?* □ *This model was put together incorrectly.* **2.** *Fig.* to consider some facts and arrive at a conclusion. □ *I couldn't put everything together to figure out the answer in time.* □ *When I put together all the facts, I found the answer.*

put something **under pressure** Go to under pressure.

put something **up**† **1.** to build a building, a sign, a fence, a wall, etc. □ *We'll put a garage up next month.* □ *The city put up a fence next to our house.* **2.** to store and preserve food by canning or freezing. □ *This year we'll put some strawberries up.* □ *We put up a lot of tomatoes every year.*

put something **up for auction** Go to up for auction.

put something **up for sale** Go to up for sale.

put teeth in(to) something Go to give teeth to something.

Put that in your pipe and smoke it! *Fig. Inf.* See how you like that!; It is final, and you have to live with it. □ *Well, I'm not going to do what you want, so put that in your pipe and smoke it!* □ *I'm sick of you, and I'm leaving. Put that in your pipe and smoke it!*

put the arm on someone *Fig.* to apply pressure to someone. □ *John's been putting the arm on Mary to get her to go out with him.* □ *John has been putting the arm on Bill to get him to cooperate.*

put the bite on someone and **put the touch on** someone *Sl.* to try to get money from someone. □ *Tom put the bite on me for ten dollars.* □ *Bill put the touch on me, but I told him to forget about it.*

put the blame on someone or something and **lay the blame on** someone or something; **place the blame on** someone or something to blame someone or something; to assign a bad outcome to someone or something. □ *Don't put the blame on me. I didn't do it.* □ *We'll have to place the blame for the damage on the storm.*

put the brakes on someone *Fig.* to block someone's activities; to cause someone to stop doing something. (Based on put the brakes on something.) □ *The boss put the brakes on Gerald, who was trying too aggressively to get promoted.* □ *We are going to have to put the brakes on you if you make any more difficulties.*

put the brakes on something to halt or impede some process. □ *The manager had to put the brakes on the Wilson project due to lack of funds.* □ *We will put the brakes on this project because it is costing too much money.*

put the cart before the horse *Fig.* to have things in the wrong order; to have things confused and mixed up. (Also with *have.*) □ *You're eating your dessert first! You've put the cart before the horse.* □ *John has the cart before the horse in most of his projects.*

put the chill on someone and **put the freeze on** someone *Sl.* to ignore someone; to end social contact with someone. □ *Max put the chill on the guys who threatened him.* □ *Max put the freeze on Lefty.*

put the clamps on someone or something and **put the clamps on**† *Sl.* to impede or block someone or something; to restrain or restrict someone. □ *Fred had to put the clamps on Tony, who was rushing his work too much.* □ *Tony is getting a little anxious. Time to put on the clamps.*

put the fear of God in(to) someone *Fig.* to frighten someone severely; [for something] to shock someone into contrite behavior. □ *A near miss like that really puts the fear of God into you.* □ *Yes, it puts the fear of God in you.*

put the feed bag on† and **put the nose-bag on**† *Fig.* to eat a meal. (Both refer to a method of feeding a horse by attaching a bag of food at its nose and mouth.) □ *It's time to put the feed bag on! I'm starved!* □ *When do we put on the nose-bag?*

put the finger on someone and **lay the finger on** someone *Sl.* to accuse someone; to identify someone as the one who did something. □ *Tom put the finger on John, and John is really mad.* □ *He'd better not lay the finger on me. I didn't do it.*

put the freeze on someone Go to put the chill on someone.

put the hard word on someone Go to put the make on someone.

put the heat on† **1.** to turn on central heating; to increase the amount of heat in a room or house. □ *It's going to get cold tonight. I'd better put the heat on.* □ *Let's put on the heat to take off the chill.* **2.** Go to next.

put the heat on (someone**)** and **put the screws on (**someone**); put the squeeze on (**someone**); put the heat on; put the screws on; put the squeeze on** *Sl.* to put pressure on someone (to do something); to coerce someone. □ *John wouldn't talk, so the police were putting the heat on him to confess.* □ *When my boss puts the screws on, he can be very unpleasant.* □ *The police know how to put the squeeze on.*

put the kibosh on someone or something *Fig.* to squelch someone or something; to veto someone or someone's plans. □ *I hate to put the kibosh on Randy, but he isn't doing what he is supposed to.* □ *Your comments put the kibosh on the whole project.*

put the make on someone and **put the moves on** someone**; put the hard word on** someone *Sl.* to attempt to seduce or proposition someone. □ *I think he was beginning to put the make on me. I'm glad I left.* □ *James tried to put the hard word on Martha.* □ *Are you putting the moves on me?*

put the moves on someone Go to previous.

put the nose-bag on† Go to put the feed bag on†.

put the pedal to the metal *Sl.* to press a car's accelerator to the floor; to drive very fast. □ *Let's go, man. Put the pedal to the metal.* □ *Put the pedal to the metal, and we'll make up some lost time.*

put (the) pressure on someone **(to** do something**)** to make demands on someone; to try to get someone to do something. □ *Please don't put pressure on me to go there!* □ *We put the pressure on him to get him to come, but he refused.*

put the screws on (someone**)** Go to put the heat on (someone).

put the skids on (something**)** *Sl.* to cause something to fail. ☐ *They put the skids on the project when they refused to give us any more money.* ☐ *That's the end of our great idea! Somebody put the skids on.*

put the skids under someone or something *Sl.* to cause someone or something to fail. ☐ *Her lateness put the skids under our presentation to the board of directors.* ☐ *He thought he could get promoted if he put the skids under the vice president.*

put the squeeze on someone **1.** *Inf.* to attempt to get money out of someone. ☐ *The mob put the squeeze on all the merchants, threatening to break their windows if they didn't pay.* ☐ *Are you trying to put the squeeze on me for more money?* **2.** Go to put the heat on (someone).

put the touch on someone Go to put the bite on someone.

put to bed with a shovel 1. *Sl.* dead and buried. (Alludes to burying someone.) ☐ *You wanna be put to bed with a shovel? Just keep talking that way.* ☐ *Poor old Jake. He was put to bed with a shovel last March.* **2.** *Sl.* intoxicated. ☐ *He wasn't just tipsy. He was put to bed with a shovel!* ☐ *Dead drunk? Yes, he was put to bed with a shovel.*

put to it strained or exhausted. ☐ *Man, I'm really put to it! What a day!* ☐ *John was put to it to get there on time.*

put too fine a point on something *Fig.* to make too much out of something; to dwell overly long on a small detail of a complaint or argument. (Usually with *not*. Formal or stilted.) ☐ *Not to put too fine a point on it, but did you really mean to say that Paul was the former secretary of the organization? Wasn't he the corresponding secretary?* ☐ *When he said that everyone was angry, he put too fine a point on it.*

put two and two together to figure something out from the information available. ☐ *Well, I put two and two together and came up with an idea of who did it.* ☐ *Don't worry. John won't figure it out. He can't put two and two together.*

put up a (brave) front and **put on a (brave) front** *Fig.* to appear to be brave (even if one is not). ☐ *Mary is frightened, but she's putting up a brave front.* ☐ *If she weren't putting on a front, I'd be more frightened than I am.*

put up a fight and **put up a struggle** to make a struggle, a fight, etc. (Fixed order.) ☐ *Did he put up a fight?* ☐ *No, he only put up a bit of a struggle.*

put up a struggle Go to previous.

put up one's **dukes** *Fig.* to be prepared to fight. ☐ *He's telling you to put up your dukes.* ☐ *Put up your dukes and be a man!*

Put up or shut up! 1. *Inf.* a command to prove something or stop talking about it; Do something or stop promising to do it! ☐ *I'm tired of your telling everyone how fast you can run. Now, do it! Put up or shut up!* ☐ *Now's your chance to show us that you can run as fast as you can talk. Put up or shut up!* **2.** *Inf.* a command to bet money in support of what one advocates. ☐ *If you think that your horse is faster than mine, then make a bet. Put up or shut up!* ☐ *You think you can beat me at cards? Twenty bucks says you're wrong. Put up or shut up!*

put up with someone or something to tolerate or endure someone or something; to be able to stand someone or something. ☐ *I cannot put up with your constant whining any longer!* ☐ *We can put up with John's living here until he finds a place of his own.*

put upon by someone to be made use of to an unreasonable degree. (Typically passive.) ☐ *My mother was always put upon by her neighbors. She was too nice to refuse their requests for help.* ☐ *Jane feels put upon by her live-in mother-in-law.*

put wear (and tear) on something to cause deterioration in the state of something. (There can be various amounts of *wear and tear*. See the examples.) ☐ *This road salt puts a lot of wear on cars.* ☐ *All this wave action puts too much wear and tear on the boat dock.*

put weight on† *Fig.* to gain weight; to grow fat. ☐ *The doctor says I need to put some weight on.* ☐ *I have to go on a diet because I've been putting on a little weight lately.*

put weight on some part of the body to subject an injured body part, as a foot or knee, to the weight of standing, to test its strength. ☐ *My doctor told me I can put weight on my broken leg next week.*

put words in(to) someone's **mouth** *Fig.* to interpret what someone said so that the words mean what you want and not what the speaker wanted. ☐ *I didn't say that! You are putting words into my mouth.* ☐ *Stop putting words in my mouth!*

Put your money where your mouth is! *Inf.* Stop just talking and stake your own money! (From gambling. Can also be said to someone giving investment advice.) ☐ *You want me to bet on that horse? Did you? Why don't you put your money where your mouth is?* ☐ *If this is such a good stock, you buy it. Put your money where your mouth is!*

Put your trust in God, and keep your powder dry. and **Keep your powder dry.** *Prov.* Have faith that God will make sure that you win a conflict, but be prepared to fight well and vigorously. (Supposed to have been said by Oliver Cromwell; *powder* means gunpowder.) ☐ *Bill: Am I going to win my lawsuit? Alan: All you can do is put your trust in God, and keep your powder dry.*

putt along to move along rapidly, usually in a motorized vehicle. ("Putt-putt" is the sound made to mimic engines, especially small engines.) ☐ *The little car was putting along down the highway, when one of the tires went flat.* ☐ *We were putting along very smoothly all the way into town.*

putter about Go to putter around.

putter around and **putter about** to do little things of little consequence; to do small tasks as found around the house. ☐ *I spent all of Saturday just puttering around, not really getting anything done.* ☐ *I stayed home and puttered about during my vacation.*

***putty in** someone's **hands** *Fig.* [of someone] easily influenced by someone else; excessively willing to do what someone else wishes. (Putty is soft and malleable. *Typically: **be ~; seem like ~**.) ☐ *Bob's wife is putty in his hands. She never thinks for herself.* ☐ *Jane is putty in her mother's hands. She always does exactly what her mother says.*

a **put-up job** *Inf.* a deception; a deceptive event. ☐ *That's really phony; a put-up job if I ever saw one.* ☐ *No put-up job is clever enough to fool me.*

P

putz around *Inf.* to fiddle around; to mess around. ☐ *Stop putzing around and get to work.* ☐ *Those guys spend most of their time just putzing around.*

puzzle over someone or something to consider or ponder someone or something. ☐ *Anne is a bit strange. I've spent some time puzzling over her.* ☐ *While I was puzzling over why she had slapped me, she did it again.*

puzzle something **out**† to figure something out. ☐ *It took me a while to puzzle it out.* ☐ *I can't puzzle out the meaning of this argument.*

P

Qq

quail at someone or something to show fear at someone or something; to shrink from someone or something. ☐ *Todd quailed at the thought of what he had to do.* ☐ *The students quailed at the teacher who had been so hard on them in the past.*

quail before someone or something to cower before or at the threat of someone or something. ☐ *The students quailed before the angry principal.* ☐ *They quailed before the thought of punishment.*

quake in one's **boots** Go to shake in one's boots.

quake with something to shake as with fear, terror, etc. ☐ *Alice was quaking with fear as the door slowly opened.* ☐ *Todd quaked with terror when he saw the vicious dog at the door.*

qualify as something to fulfill the requirements to be something. ☐ *Tom qualified as a mechanic.* ☐ *I have been qualified as a mechanic since I was twenty.*

qualify for something to meet the requirements for something. ☐ *I'm sorry, you do not qualify for this job.* ☐ *I don't qualify for it.*

qualify someone **as** something to cause someone to fulfill the requirements for something. ☐ *Does this course qualify me as a stockbroker?* ☐ *She qualified herself as a realtor.*

qualify someone **for** something to enable someone to meet the requirements for something. ☐ *His years with the company qualified him for pension.* ☐ *Does this ticket qualify me for the drawing?*

quality time time spent with someone allowing interaction and closeness. ☐ *He was able to spend a few minutes of quality time with his son, Buxton, at least once every two weeks.*

***qualms (about** someone or something**)** an uneasy feeling of one's conscience about someone or something. (*Typically: **cause ~; have ~; have no ~; give** someone ~.) ☐ *Do you have any qualms about telling a little white lie to Mary about her not getting an invitation to the party?*

quarrel (with someone**) (about** someone or something**)** to have an argument with someone about the subject of someone or something. ☐ *Please don't quarrel with me about money.* ☐ *You are always quarreling with Claire.*

quarrel (with someone**) (over** someone or something**)** to have an argument with someone about someone or something. ☐ *Todd quarreled with Carl over who was going to get the new secretary.* ☐ *They are quarreling over Sally.*

quarrel with something to argue against something; to have a complaint about something. ☐ *I can't quarrel with that.* ☐ *Does anyone want to quarrel with that last remark?*

The **Queen's English** "Official" British English. ☐ *He can't even speak The Queen's English! Despicable!*

queer as a three-dollar bill Go to phony as a three-dollar bill.

queer for something *Inf.* in the mood for something; desiring something. (Old.) ☐ *I'm queer for a beer right now.* ☐ *She's queer for him because of his money.*

quest for someone or something to seek after someone or something. ☐ *Martin is off questing for a book on baroque organ building.* ☐ *She is questing for a better way to do it.*

a **question of** something a matter of something; a problem of something. ☐ *It's not a matter of not wanting to go to the opera. It's a question of money.*

question someone **about** someone or something to ask someone about someone or something. ☐ *The police questioned Roger about the crime.* ☐ *Then they questioned Claire about Roger.*

question someone **at great length** Go to at great length.

queue up (for something**)** to line up for something. (Typically British.) ☐ *We had to queue up for tickets to the play.* ☐ *You must queue up here to get in.*

quibble (about someone or something**) (with** someone**)** and **quibble (over** someone or something**) (with** someone**)** to be argumentative or contentious with someone about someone or something. ☐ *Let's not quibble about it.* ☐ *Please don't quibble with your sister.* ☐ *No need to quibble over it.*

quick and dirty *Fig.* [done] fast and carelessly; [done] fast and cheaply. ☐ *I am not interested in a quick and dirty job. I want it done right.* ☐ *The contractor made a lot of money on quick and dirty projects that would never last very long.*

quick as a flash Go to next.

***quick as a wink** and ***quick as a flash; *quick as (greased) lightning; *swift as lightning** very quickly. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *As quick as a wink, the thief took the lady's purse.* ☐ *I'll finish this work quick as a flash.* ☐ *Quick as greased lightning, the thief stole my wallet.*

quick as (greased) lightning Go to previous.

quick like a bunny really quick. ☐ *Now's your chance. Do it! Quick like a bunny!*

quick off the mark quick starting or reacting. (Compare this with slow off the mark.) ☐ *Boy, you were quick off the mark there!* ☐ *If you can be really quick off the mark, you can soon find the answer.*

quick on the draw Go to next.

quick on the trigger and **quick on the draw 1.** *Lit.* quick to draw a gun and shoot. ☐ *Some of the old cowboys were known to be quick on the trigger.* ☐ *Wyatt Earp was particularly quick on the draw.* **2.** *Fig.* quick to respond to anything. ☐ *John gets the right answer before anyone else. He's really quick on the trigger.* ☐ *Sally will probably win the quiz game. She's really quick on the draw.*

quick on the uptake quick to understand or learn something. ☐ *Just because I'm not quick on the uptake, it doesn't mean I'm stupid.* ☐ *Mary understands jokes before anyone else because she's so quick on the uptake.*

a **quick study** a person who is quick to learn things. (Compare this to a slow study.) ☐ *Jane, who is a quick study, caught the joke immediately and laughed before everyone else.*

a **quick temper** and a **short temper;** a **short fuse** a bad temper that can be easily aroused. ☐ *Tyler has a quick temper and doesn't mind letting everyone see it.*

quicker than hell *Inf.* very fast. ☐ *You got over here quicker than hell.* ☐ *Be careful in the stock market. You can lose all your money quicker than hell.*

quicker than you can say Jack Robinson Go to before you can say Jack Robinson.

***quiet as a (church) mouse** and ***quiet as the grave** very quiet. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *You'd better be as quiet as a mouse while Grandma takes her nap so you won't wake her up.* ☐ *This town is quiet as the grave now that the factories have closed.*

quiet as the grave Go to previous.

quiet down to become quiet; to become less noisy. ☐ *Please quiet down.* ☐ *Ask them to quiet down.*

quiet someone or an animal **down**† to make someone or an animal more quiet. ☐ *Please go and quiet the children down.* ☐ *Try to quiet down the children.* ☐ *Please quiet that dog down.*

quip about someone or something to joke about someone or something. ☐ *The kids were quipping about the principal's hairpiece.* ☐ *It is rude to quip about an elderly person.*

quit a place to leave a place. ☐ *In the autumn, Melinda quit Paris and traveled south to warmer climes.*

quit on someone **1.** [for something] to quit while someone is using it. ☐ *This stupid car quit on me.* ☐ *I hope this thing doesn't quit on me.* **2.** [for one] to leave one's job, usually suddenly or unannounced. ☐ *Wally, the park supervisor, quit on us at the last minute.* ☐ *My assistant quit on me.*

quit over someone or something to stop working or doing something because of someone or something; to quit because of a dispute over someone or something. ☐ *Please don't quit over a silly thing like that.* ☐ *She quit over one of her fellow workers.*

quit while one **is ahead** to stop doing something while one is still successful. ☐ *When will I learn to quit while I'm ahead?* ☐ *Get into the market. Make some money and get out. Quit while you're ahead.*

quite a bit Go to next.

quite a few and **quite a lot; quite a bit; quite a number** much or many. ☐ *Do you need one? I have quite a few.* ☐ *I have quite a bit—enough to spare some.* ☐ *How many? Oh, quite a number.*

quite a lot Go to previous.

quite a number Go to quite a few.

quite a something definitely something; a good example of something. ☐ *The captain of the swim team is quite a swimmer.* ☐ *That's quite a bruise you have there.*

quite something something very good or remarkable. ☐ *You should see their new house. It's quite something.* ☐ *Meg's mother has bought a new hat for the wedding and it's quite something.*

quiver with something **1.** *Lit.* to shake or shiver from something, such as cold, fear, anticipation, etc. ☐ *On seeing the bear, the dogs quivered with fear.* ☐ *Todd quivered with the cold.* **2.** *Fig.* to experience eagerness or joy. ☐ *I quivered with delight when I saw the dessert.* ☐ *Tom quivered with eagerness as the door opened.*

quiz out (of something**)** to earn permission to waive a college course by successful completion of a quiz or exam. ☐ *Andrew was able to quiz out of calculus.* ☐ *After studying very hard, he quizzed out.*

quiz someone **about** someone or something to ask someone many questions about someone or something. ☐ *The general quizzed the soldier about the incident.* ☐ *The officer quizzed her about Randy.*

quiz someone **on** someone or something to give someone a quiz or test over the subject of someone or something. ☐ *The teacher quizzed the students on the chapter she had assigned for homework.* ☐ *I hope they quiz me on George Washington. I am prepared.*

quote a price to name or state in advance the charge for doing or supplying something. ☐ *The mechanic quoted a price of $100 to repair my car.* ☐ *The carpenter quoted a price for fixing the stairs.*

quote someone or something **out of context** Go to out of context.

quote (something**) from** someone or something to recite something verbatim that someone else has said; to recite something verbatim from a printed source. ☐ *May I quote from your letter of the tenth?* ☐ *Do you mind if I quote a line from Keats?*

quote, unquote a parenthetical expression said before a word or short phrase indicating that the word or phrase would be in quotation marks if used in writing. ☐ *So I said to her, quote, unquote, it's time we had a little talk.*

Rr

race against someone or something to attempt to win a trial of speed against someone or something. ☐ *I don't want to race against Kelly. She is too fast.* ☐ *I had to race against time to get there before the baby got worse.*

race against time 1. a rush; a rush to beat a deadline. ☐ *We were in a race against time to beat the deadline.* ☐ *It was a race against time, but we made it.* **2.** to hurry to beat a deadline. ☐ *We had to race against time to finish before the deadline.* ☐ *You don't need to race against time. Take all the time you want.*

race around to run or move around in a great hurry. ☐ *Stop racing around and calm down!* ☐ *I have been racing around all morning, trying to get some things done.*

race around (after someone or something**)** to rush here and there to find or fetch someone or something. ☐ *I had to race around after Tom. I couldn't seem to catch up to him.* ☐ *I wish I could find the dog without having to race around all over the neighborhood.*

race for something to run or drive fast to get to something in a hurry. ☐ *I raced for the door to see who was there.* ☐ *The children raced for the best seats in front of the television set.*

race into someone or something to bump or crash into someone or something. ☐ *The boys raced into the side of the car, and one of them was hurt.* ☐ *We raced into Mary and knocked her over.*

R

race into something to run into a place. ☐ *The children raced into the room and headed straight for their presents.* ☐ *Please don't race into the garden. You will trample the flowers.*

race someone **for** something to compete against someone for a prize; to try to outrun someone to get to something first. ☐ *I will race you for the grand prize.* ☐ *Ned raced his sister for the breakfast table every morning.*

race someone **to** some place to compete against someone to see who gets to a place first. ☐ *I will race you to the door.* ☐ *Tim wanted to race me to the corner.*

race through someone or something to run or chase through a group of people or a place. ☐ *The children raced through the group of ladies standing by the door.* ☐ *The dogs raced through the room, upsetting a lamp.*

race through something to perform some task very rapidly. ☐ *They raced through their prayers and jumped into bed.* ☐ *The children raced through dinner, in a hurry to get outside to play.*

race to someone or something to run to someone or something. ☐ *The girls raced to the front room.* ☐ *We all raced to Mary, who had the candy.*

race up to someone or something to run to someone or something. ☐ *Molly raced up to Paul and kissed him on the cheek.* ☐ *We raced up to the door and opened it cautiously.*

race with someone or something to enter a speed contest with someone or something. ☐ *I refuse to race with Carla. She is much too fast for me.* ☐ *I can't race with a horse!*

rack one's **brain(s)** *Fig.* to try very hard to think of something. ☐ *I racked my brains all afternoon, but couldn't remember where I put the book.* ☐ *Don't waste any more time racking your brain. Go borrow the book from the library.*

rack out *Sl.* to go to bed and to sleep. ☐ *I'm really tired. I've got to go rack out for a while.* ☐ *I racked out until nearly noon.*

rack something **up† 1.** *Lit.* to place something onto or into its rack. ☐ *You had better rack the billiard balls up when you finish this game.* ☐ *Please rack up the balls.* **2.** *Fig.* to accumulate something; to collect or acquire something. ☐ *They all racked a lot of profits up.* ☐ *We racked up twenty points in the game last Saturday.* **3.** *Sl.* to wreck or damage something. ☐ *Fred racked his new car up.* ☐ *He racked up his arm in the football game.*

racked with pain suffering from severe pain. ☐ *My body was racked with pain, and I nearly passed out.* ☐ *My head was racked with pain.*

radiate from someone or something to spread out from someone or something, as with rays. ☐ *Happiness radiated from Mary. She was so proud!* ☐ *The heat radiated from the wall next to the furnace room.*

raffle something **off†** to give something away by a drawing or raffle. ☐ *They will raffle a television set off.* ☐ *They are going to raffle off a television set this weekend at the school.*

rag on someone and **rake on** someone *Sl.* to bother someone; to irritate someone; to criticize and humiliate someone. ☐ *I wish you would stop ragging on me. I don't know why you are so annoyed at me.* ☐ *Stop raking on me!*

rag out *Sl.* to dress up. ☐ *I like to rag out and go to parties.* ☐ *I hate to rag out. I like comfortable clothes.*

rag someone **about** someone or something **1.** to complain to someone about someone or something. ☐ *Why are you always ragging me about Mary?* ☐ *Stop ragging me about being late.* **2.** to tease someone about someone or something. ☐ *I wish you would stop ragging me about my hat.* ☐ *Why do you always rag me about my funny walk? I can't help it.*

rage against someone or something to vent one's anger about someone or something; to criticize someone or something severely. ☐ *She exhausted herself raging against Judy.* ☐ *Mary is raging about the office politics again.*

rage at someone or something to direct one's anger at someone or something. ☐ *Why are you raging at me? What on earth did I do?* ☐ *Nothing can be solved by raging at the police department.*

rage out of control to become uncontrollable. ☐ *The fire raged out of control and threatened the residential area.* ☐ *If we didn't do something quickly, the fire would be raging out of control.*

rage over someone or something to fight furiously over someone or something. ☐ *The two managers both wanted to hire the same prospective employee. They raged over her for nearly an hour.* ☐ *The bears raged over that one fish for a long time.*

rage through something **1.** *Lit.* [for a fire] to burn rapidly through an area or a building. ☐ *The fire raged through the unoccupied building.* ☐ *When the fire began to rage through the forest, we knew we had better head for the river.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to move rapidly through some sequence or process, as if in a rage. ☐ *Harry raged through the contract, looking for more errors.* ☐ *She raged through the book, angry with everything she read.*

rail against someone or something to complain vehemently about someone or something. ☐ *Why are you railing against me? What did I do?* ☐ *Leonard is railing against the tax increase again.*

rail at someone **(about** something**)** to complain loudly or violently to someone about something. ☐ *Jane railed at the payroll clerk about not having received her check.* ☐ *I am not responsible for your problems. Don't rail at me!*

railroad someone **into** something to force someone into doing something in great haste. ☐ *The salesman tried to railroad me into signing the contract.* ☐ *You can't railroad me into doing anything!*

railroad something **through (**something**)** to force something through some legislative body without due consideration. ☐ *The committee railroaded the new constitution through the ratification process.* ☐ *Mary felt she could railroad the legislation through.*

rain cats and dogs *Fig.* to rain very hard. ☐ *It's raining cats and dogs. Look at it pour!* ☐ *I'm not going out in that storm. It's raining cats and dogs.*

a **rain check (on** something**)** **1.** a piece of paper allowing one to see an event—which has been canceled—at a later time. (Originally said of sporting events that had to be canceled because of rain. *Typically: **get ~; have ~; take ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *The game was canceled because of the storm, but we all got rain checks on it.* ☐ *I can't use a rain check because I'm leaving town for a month.* **2.** a reissuance of an invitation at a later date. (Said to someone who has invited you to something that you cannot attend now, but would like to attend at a later time. *Typically: **get ~; have ~; take ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *We would love to come to your house, but we are busy next Saturday. Could we take a rain check on your kind invitation?* ☐ *Oh, yes. You have a rain check that's good anytime you can come by and visit.* **3.** a piece of paper that allows one to purchase an item on sale at a later date. (Stores issue these pieces of paper when they run out of specially priced sale merchandise. *Typically: **get ~; have ~; take ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *The store was all out of the shampoo they advertised, but I got a rain check.* ☐ *Yes, you should always take a rain check so you can get it at the sale price later when they have more.*

rain down on someone or something to fall or drop down on someone or something like rain. ☐ *The ashes from the incinerator rained down on us, getting our clothes dirty.* ☐ *The hail rained down on us—some of it quite large.*

rain in on someone or something [for rain] to enter a window or other opening and get someone or something wet. ☐ *Carol left the window open, and it rained in on her in the night.* ☐ *The storm rained in on my carpet!*

rain on someone's **parade** and **rain on** someone or something *Fig.* to spoil something for someone. ☐ *I hate to rain on your parade, but your plans are all wrong.* ☐ *She really rained on our plans.*

rain or shine no matter whether it rains or the sun shines. (See also **come rain or shine**.) ☐ *Don't worry. I'll be there rain or shine.* ☐ *We'll hold the picnic—rain or shine.*

rain something **down† (on** someone or something**)** to pour something, such as criticism or praise, onto someone or something. (Based on **rain down on** someone or something.) ☐ *The employees rained criticism down on the personnel manager for the new policy on sick leave.* ☐ *The audience rained down compliments on the performers.*

rain something **out†** [for the weather] to spoil something by raining. ☐ *Oh, the weather looks awful. I hope it doesn't rain the picnic out.* ☐ *It's starting to sprinkle now. Do you think it will rain out the ball game?*

rain (up)on someone or something [for rain, or something similar] to fall on someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *The ashes from the erupting volcano rained on all the people fleeing the village.* ☐ *It rained on the fields until they were flooded.*

raise a (big) stink (about someone or something**)** Go to **make a (big) stink (about** someone or something**)**.

raise a few eyebrows Go to **raise** some **eyebrows**.

raise a hand (against someone or something**)** Go to **lift a hand (against** someone or something**)**.

raise a hue and cry (about something**)** *Fig.* to make an issue about something; to alert people to a problem or difficulty. (See also **hue and cry**.) ☐ *The city council raised a hue and cry about the mayor's proposed budget.*

raise a stink (about something**)** Go to **create a stink (about** something**)**.

raise (an) objection (to someone or something**)** to mention an objection about someone or something. ☐ *I hope your family won't raise an objection to my staying for dinner.* ☐ *I'm certain no one will raise an objection. We are delighted to have you.*

raise Cain to make a lot of trouble; to **raise hell**. (A Biblical reference, from Genesis 4.) ☐ *Fred was really raising Cain about the whole matter.* ☐ *Let's stop raising Cain.*

raise havoc with someone or something and **play havoc with** someone or something to create confusion or disruption for or among someone or something. ☐ *Your announcement raised havoc with the students.* ☐ *I didn't mean to play havoc with them.*

raise hell (with something**)** Go to **raise the devil (with** something**)**.

raise hob with someone or something and **play hob with** someone or something to do something devilish to someone or something; to cause trouble for someone or something. (A *hob* is a hobgoblin, a wicked little elf.) ☐ *Your sudden*

R

arrival is going to play hob with my dinner plans. ☐ *Sorry, I didn't mean to raise hob with you.*

raise money for someone or something and **raise money to** do something to work to earn money or encourage donations for the benefit of someone, something, or doing something. ☐ *I worked hard to raise money for college, and then decided not to go.*

raise one's **glass to** someone or something to propose a drinking toast in salute to someone or something. ☐ *Let us all raise our glasses to George Wilson!* ☐ *They raised their glasses to the successful campaign.*

raise one's **sights** *Fig.* to set higher goals for oneself. (Alludes to someone lifting the sights of a gun in order to fire farther.) ☐ *When you're young, you tend to raise your sights too high.* ☐ *On the other hand, some people need to raise their sights.*

raise one's **voice against** someone or something *Fig.* to speak out loudly or angrily against someone or something; to complain about someone or something. ☐ *Tony was very polite and did not raise his voice against Roger.* ☐ *I was too timid to raise my voice against the injustices of the day.*

raise one's **voice (to** someone**)** *Fig.* to speak loudly or shout at someone in anger. ☐ *Don't you dare raise your voice to me!* ☐ *I'm sorry. I didn't mean to raise my voice.*

raise some **eyebrows** and **raise a few eyebrows** *Fig.* to shock or surprise people mildly (by doing or saying something). (*Some* can be replaced with *a few, someone's, a lot of,* etc.) ☐ *What you just said may raise some eyebrows, but it shouldn't make anyone really angry.* ☐ *John's sudden marriage to Ann raised a few eyebrows.*

raise someone **from** something to help someone up from a lowly state. ☐ *They hoped for some windfall to raise them from their poverty.* ☐ *They raised me from the depressed state I was in.*

raise someone **from the dead** *Fig.* to bring a dead person back to life. (When used figuratively, usually refers to something very bad or offensive.) ☐ *How great are your magic powers? Can you raise people from the dead?* ☐ *They say her singing could raise people from the dead.*

raise someone or an animal **from** something *Fig.* to bring up someone or an animal from a young state. ☐ *My grandmother raised me from a baby.* ☐ *We raised all these rabbits from babies.*

raise someone or something **to** something to elevate someone or something to something at a higher level. ☐ *Dan raised Alice up to the window.* ☐ *I helped raise the ladder to the top of the roof.*

raise someone or something **to the surface (of** something**)** to bring someone or something up to the surface of a body of water. ☐ *The pull of the inflatable life vest raised Tom to the surface of the water.* ☐ *The divers were able to raise the sunken ship to the surface.*

raise someone or something **up**† to lift someone or something up. ☐ *The aides raised the patient up while the nurse spread clean linen beneath him.* ☐ *Jane raised up the lid.*

raise someone's **spirits** Go to someone's **spirits.**

raise someone **to** something to promote or advance someone to a higher rank. ☐ *The boss raised her to vice president after one year.* ☐ *I hope she raises me to head clerk.*

raise something **with** someone to bring up a matter with someone. ☐ *I will raise that question with Mary when she comes in.* ☐ *Please raise the question with the boss.*

raise the ante Go to **up the ante.**

raise the bar *Fig.* to make a task a little more difficult. (As with raising the bar in high jumping or pole vaulting.) ☐ *Just as I was getting accustomed to my job, the manager raised the bar and I had to perform even better.*

raise the devil (with someone**)** to severely chastise someone or a group. ☐ *The coach came in and raised the devil with Sally for her error in the first quarter of the game.* ☐ *I'm going to raise the devil with him!*

raise the devil (with something**)** and **raise hell (with** something**)** to cause trouble with something. ☐ *That idea raises hell with my plan.* ☐ *The onions raised the devil with my stomach.*

raise the dickens (with someone or something**)** to act in some extreme manner; to make trouble; to behave wildly; to be very angry. ☐ *John was out all night raising the dickens.* ☐ *That cheap gas I bought really raised the dickens with my car's engine.*

raise up to lift oneself up; to get up or begin to get up. ☐ *She raised up and then fell back onto her bed. She was too weak to get up.* ☐ *I could not raise up enough to see out the window.*

raised in a barn brought up to behave like a barnyard animal; having crude behavior. ☐ *Close the door behind you! Were you raised in a barn?* ☐ *Don't wipe your nose on your sleeve. Were you raised in a barn?*

rake on someone Go to **rag on** someone.

rake someone **over the coals** and **haul** someone **over the coals** *Fig.* to give someone a severe scolding. ☐ *My mother hauled me over the coals for coming in late last night.* ☐ *The manager raked me over the coals for being late again.*

rake something **around**† to spread something around with a rake. ☐ *She raked the leaves around, spreading them over the flower beds as natural fertilizer.* ☐ *I need to rake around the soil and stir it up.*

rake something **in**† **1.** *Lit.* to draw or pull something inward with a rake. ☐ *Jane is raking in the leaves into a big pile.* **2.** *Fig.* to take in a lot of something, usually money. ☐ *Our candidate will rake votes in by the thousand.* ☐ *They were raking in money by the bushel.*

rake something **off**† **1.** to steal or embezzle a portion of a payment or an account. ☐ *They claimed that no one was raking anything off and that the money was only mislaid.* ☐ *The county treasurer was caught raking off some of the tax money.* **2.** Go to next.

rake something **off (of)** something and **rake** something **off**† to remove something from something by raking. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Please rake the leaves off the lawn.* ☐ *Rake off the leaves.*

rake something **out of** something and **rake** something **out**† to clean something out of something by raking. ☐ *You ought to rake the leaves out of the gutter so the water will flow.* ☐ *Please rake out the leaves.*

rake something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to gather and clean up something with a rake. ☐ *Would you please rake these leaves up before it rains?* ☐ *Please rake up the leaves.* **2.** to clean

something up by raking. ☐ *Would you rake the yard up?* ☐ *I will rake up the yard.* **3.** *Fig.* to find some unpleasant information. ☐ *His opposition raked an old scandal up and made it public.* ☐ *That is ancient history. Why did you have to rake up that old story?*

rake through something *Fig.* [for someone] to rummage through something, as if with a rake. ☐ *She quickly raked through the mass of loose papers, looking for the right one.* ☐ *I will have to rake through everything in this drawer to find a red pencil.*

rally around someone or something *Fig.* to unite or assemble in support of someone or something. ☐ *All the other workers rallied around Fred in his fight with management.* ☐ *They rallied around the principle that Fred stood for.*

rally to someone or something to unite in support of someone or something. ☐ *The students rallied to Betty, their elected president.* ☐ *We all rallied to the cause.*

ralph something **up†** *Sl.* to vomit something. (Teens and collegiate.) ☐ *The doctor gave him some stuff that made him ralph it up.* ☐ *He ralphed up his dinner.*

ram into someone or something to crash into someone or something. ☐ *Mary accidentally rammed into a fence as she rode along.* ☐ *The car rammed into the tree and was totally wrecked.*

ram someone or something **down** someone's **throat** Go to **shove** someone or something **down** someone's **throat**.

ram something **down†** to pack something down by pounding, as with a ram. ☐ *The worker used a pole to ram the earth down and pack it tight.* ☐ *The worker rammed down the earth.*

ram something **into** someone or something and **ram** something **in†** to pound something into someone or something. ☐ *He rammed his fist into Bill's side and shouted something angry at him.* ☐ *He rammed in his fist.*

ram something **through (**something**) 1.** to force something through something. ☐ *He rammed his fist through the window, cutting himself in the process.* ☐ *Harry put the brick up to the window glass and rammed it through. Next time he would remember his key.* **2.** to force something through a deliberative body, usually not allowing due consideration. ☐ *They rammed the bill through the city council.* ☐ *The President was unable to ram the measure through Congress.*

ram through something to crash or pound through something. ☐ *The car rammed through the back of the garage.* ☐ *I was afraid that the truck would ram through the fence.*

ramble on 1. to wander about aimlessly. (As with a traveler or a winding path.) ☐ *The road rambled on through mile after mile of wilderness.* **2.** [for a structure] to spread out over a large area, perhaps in a random way. ☐ *This old house rambles on, way back into the woods.*

ramble on (about someone or something**)** *Fig.* [for someone] to talk endlessly and aimlessly about someone or something. (Based on **ramble on**.) ☐ *I wish you wouldn't ramble on about your first husband all the time.* ☐ *Must you ramble on so?*

range from something **to** something to vary from one thing to another. ☐ *The winter weather ranges from bad to terrible in this part of the north.* ☐ *The appraisals of the property ranged from high to low.*

range over something to cover an area; to travel about in one area. ☐ *The buffalo ranged over vast areas of prairie, grazing and breeding.* ☐ *These animals range over a very large territory.*

rank above someone to outrank someone; to rank higher than someone. ☐ *I think that I rank above you, so I will sit by the window.* ☐ *The boss ranks above everyone and demands that everyone recognize the fact.*

rank among something to be included in a particular group. ☐ *In my opinion, Kelly ranks among the very best.* ☐ *Tom ranks among the most widely known of the contemporary writers.*

rank and file 1. *Lit.* regular soldiers, not the officers. ☐ *I think there is low morale among the rank and file, sir.* ☐ *The rank and file usually do exactly as they are told.* **2.** *Fig.* the ordinary members of a group, not the leaders. ☐ *The rank and file will vote on the proposed contract tomorrow.* ☐ *The last contract was turned down by the rank and file last year.*

rank as something to have a particular rank; to serve in a particular rank. ☐ *She ranks as a fine pianist in my book.* ☐ *Don ranks as the top economist of the day.*

rank on someone *Sl.* to attack someone verbally; to gossip about someone. ☐ *Please stop ranking on my family!* ☐ *Tom keeps ranking on Jennifer, and she is really mad about it.*

rank someone **among** something to judge someone to be essentially equal to a specific group of people. ☐ *I don't rank Kelly among the best drivers in the world.* ☐ *Our committee ranked Fred among the best of the current applicants.*

rank someone or something **as** something to assign a particular rank to someone or something. ☐ *I have to rank Sally as number one. She's the best.* ☐ *Mary ranked the chocolate as the best she had ever eaten.*

rank someone **(out†) 1.** *Sl.* to annoy someone. ☐ *He really ranks me out. What a pest!* **2.** *Sl.* to chastise someone. ☐ *She ranked him out for being a coward.* ☐ *I ranked out the whole gang, but good!*

rank someone **with** someone to judge someone to be equal with someone. ☐ *Would you rank Tom with Donna?* ☐ *Fred ranked himself with Tom when it came to diving.*

rank with someone or something to be equal to someone or something. ☐ *Do you think Sarah ranks with Albert?* ☐ *No one ranks with Albert.* ☐ *The food at that restaurant ranks with that of the best places in New York.*

rant against someone or something to rave and yell against someone or something. ☐ *She spent most of the morning ranting against her mother-in-law.* ☐ *Leonard spent the entire morning ranting against the government.*

rant and rave (about someone or something**)** to shout angrily and wildly about someone or something. ☐ *Barbara rants and raves when her children don't obey her.* ☐ *Bob rants and raves about anything that displeases him.*

rant (at someone**) about** someone or something to talk in a loud, violent way, about someone or something. ☐ *Anne ranted about the bad service she had received at the store.*

R

☐ *On the bus, someone was ranting at me about the end of the world.*

rant at someone or something to rave and yell at someone or something. ☐ *Stop ranting at me!* ☐ *The boss would never rant at the office staff.*

rap at something and **rap on** something to tap on something to attract someone's attention. ☐ *Who is that rapping at my door?* ☐ *Someone is rapping at the window, trying to get my attention.* ☐ *I will rap on her window and try to wake her.*

rap on something Go to previous.

rap someone **across the knuckles** and **rap** someone **on the knuckles; rap** someone's **knuckles** to strike someone on the knuckles. ☐ *As punishment, she rapped him across the knuckles.* ☐ *The teacher rapped the student on the knuckles.*

rap something **out† (on** something**)** to tap out the rhythm of something on something. ☐ *Try to rap the rhythm out on the table.* ☐ *He rapped out the rhythm on the table.*

rap with someone *Sl.* to have a chat with someone or a group of people. (Old.) ☐ *Come in, sit down, and rap with me for a while.* ☐ *Let's get together and rap with one another sometime.*

rarin' to go extremely keen to act or do something. ☐ *Jane can't wait to start her job. She's rarin' to go.* ☐ *Mary is rarin' to go and can't wait for her university term to start.*

rasp something **out†** to carve or smooth something out with a rasp. ☐ *You should use this tool to rasp the inside of the bowl out. Use sandpaper to make the inside smoother.* ☐ *Rasp out the inside carefully.*

rat around *Sl.* to waste time loafing around; to **kick around**. (Collegiate.) ☐ *I didn't do anything but rat around all summer.* ☐ *If kids don't have jobs, they just rat around.*

rat on someone *Inf.* to report someone's bad behavior to someone in authority; to tattle on someone. ☐ *John ratted on me, and I got in trouble.* ☐ *If he rats on me, I'll hit him!*

rat out *Sl.* to quit; to **fink out (on** someone or something**)**. ☐ *It's too late to rat out.* ☐ *He tried to rat out at the last minute.*

rat race *Fig.* a fierce struggle for success, especially in one's career or business. ☐ *Bob got tired of the rat race. He's retired and gone to the country.* ☐ *The money market is a rat race, and many people who work in it get out quickly because of the stress.*

rate someone or something **above** someone or something else to judge someone to rank higher than someone else; to judge something to rank higher than something else. ☐ *Do you rate Alice above Valerie?* ☐ *I rate chocolate ice cream above vanilla.*

rate someone or something **among** something to judge someone or something to be essentially equal to something. ☐ *I rate Polly among the best of this year's class.* ☐ *We rate these contestants among the best ever.*

rate someone or something **as** something to assign a particular rating to someone or something. ☐ *I rate her as a number four.* ☐ *The judge rated my cake as second place.*

rate someone or something **below** someone or something else to judge someone to rank lower than someone else; to judge something to rank lower than something else. ☐ *I have to rate Carol below Donna in this regard.* ☐ *We all rate plain chocolate ice cream below rocky road ice cream.*

rate someone or something **with** someone or something else to judge someone or something to be equal to someone or something else. ☐ *I rate Fred with Don. They are equally good.* ☐ *Vanilla is very nice, but I don't rate it with chocolate ice cream.*

rate something **at** something to assign a particular level of rating to something. ☐ *I rate this brand at about a B-.* ☐ *The broker rated this stock at a buy.*

rate something **below** something else Go to **rate** someone or something **below** someone or something else.

rate with someone to be in someone's favor; to be thought of highly by someone. ☐ *Ann is great. She really rates with me.* ☐ *She doesn't rate with me at all.*

ration something **out† (among** someone**)** to give people limited shares of something, attempting to make it last as long as possible. ☐ *The captain rationed the water out among all the crew, trying to make it last as long as possible.* ☐ *Jane rationed out the cookies among the kids.*

Rats abandon a sinking ship. and **like rats abandoning a sinking ship** *Prov.* You can tell when something is about to fail because large numbers of people begin to leave it. (Can imply that the people who leave are "rats," that is, selfish and disloyal.) ☐ *Jill: The company next door must be going bankrupt. Jane: How do you know? Jill: All its employees are resigning. Rats abandon a sinking ship.*

rattle around in something **1.** *Lit.* to make a rattling noise inside something. ☐ *What is rattling around in this package?* ☐ *There is something rattling around in my glove compartment.* **2.** *Fig.* to ride about in a vehicle with a rattle. ☐ *I am perfectly happy to rattle around in my ten-year-old car.* ☐ *Todd rattles around in his grandfather's old car.* **3.** *Fig.* to live in a place that is much too big. ☐ *We have been rattling around in this big old house for long enough. Let's move to a smaller place.* ☐ *I can't afford to rattle around in a three-story house any longer.*

rattle away to chatter endlessly and aimlessly. ☐ *The two old men sat there and rattled away at one another.* ☐ *Tom rattled away at Jane for a few minutes and then left the house.*

rattle its saber Go to **rattle** one's **saber**.

rattle on (about someone or something**)** *Fig.* to talk endlessly about someone or something. ☐ *Martin talked incessantly. He would rattle on about any topic whenever he could trap an unfortunate listener.*

rattle one's **saber** and **rattle its saber** *Fig.* to make threatening statements or actions. ☐ *The president is just rattling his saber. He would never attack such a small country!*

rattle something **off†** and **reel** something **off†** to recite something quickly and accurately. ☐ *She can really reel song lyrics off.* ☐ *Listen to Mary rattle off those numbers.*

raunch someone **out**† *Sl.* to disgust someone. ☐ *These dirty socks absolutely raunch me out!* ☐ *Sam and Beavis enjoy raunching out everyone in the room.*

rave about someone or something **1.** to rage in anger about someone or something. ☐ *Gale was raving about Sarah and what she did.* ☐ *Sarah raved and raved about Gale's insufferable rudeness.* **2.** to sing the praises of someone or something. ☐ *Even the harshest critic raved about Larry's stage success.* ☐ *Everyone was raving about your excellent performance.*

rave over someone or something to recite praises for someone or something. ☐ *The students were just raving over the new professor.* ☐ *Donald raved over the cake I baked. But he'll eat anything.*

ravished with delight *Fig.* happy or delighted; overcome with happiness or delight. ☐ *Mary was ravished with delight by the dozen roses.* ☐ *My parents were ravished with delight when I graduated from college.*

*a **raw deal** an instance of unfair or bad treatment. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Mary got a raw deal on her traffic ticket. She was innocent, but she had to pay a big fine.* ☐ *I bought a used TV that worked for two days and then quit. I sure got a raw deal.* ☐ *You sure had a raw deal.*

raw recruit a new, inexperienced, or fresh recruit, such as someone just entering the army, navy, police, etc. ☐ *These boys are nothing but raw recruits. They've never seen a gun up close!*

raze something **to the ground** to tear down something, usually a building, to ground level. ☐ *The council decided to raze the old city hall to the ground.* ☐ *This building is to be razed to the ground.*

reach a compromise to achieve a compromise; to negotiate an agreement. ☐ *After many hours of discussion, we finally reached a compromise.* ☐ *We were unable to reach a compromise and quit trying.*

reach a conclusion to complete discussion and decide an issue. ☐ *It took three days of talks to reach a conclusion.* ☐ *When we reach a conclusion, we will notify you of the results.*

reach a dead end Go to come to a dead end.

reach a decision Go to arrive at a decision.

reach a turning point Go to a turning point.

reach an accord (with someone**)** and **reach an agreement (with** someone**)** to come to an agreement with someone. ☐ *I hope that we can reach an accord with the union so work can start again.* ☐ *We will try one more time to reach an agreement with you.* ☐ *We reached an agreement and signed a contract.*

reach an agreement (with someone**)** Go to previous.

reach an impasse to progress to the point that a barrier stops further progress. ☐ *When negotiations with management reached an impasse, the union went on strike.* ☐ *The discussion reached an impasse and no one was able to propose a compromise.*

reach an understanding with someone and **come to an understanding (with** someone**)** to achieve a settlement or an agreement with someone. ☐ *I hope we are able to reach an understanding with the commissioners.* ☐ *We were able to reach an understanding with Tony.*

reach back (in)to something to extend back into a particular period in time. ☐ *This policy reaches back into the last century.* ☐ *Our way of making fine candies reaches back to the recipes used by the founder of the company.*

reach down to extend downward. ☐ *The stems of the plant reached down almost to the floor.* ☐ *The drapes don't quite reach down to the floor.*

reach first base (with someone or something**)** Go to get to first base (with someone or something).

reach for someone or something to extend one's grasp to someone or something. ☐ *I reached for my father, but he wasn't there.* ☐ *I reached for a pen, but I only had a pencil.*

reach for the sky 1. and **aim for the sky; shoot for the sky** *Fig.* to set one's sights high. ☐ *Reach for the sky! Go for it!* ☐ *You should always reach for the sky, but be prepared for not attaining your goals every time.* **2.** *Fig. Inf.* to put one's hands up, as in a burglary. ☐ *The gunman told the bank teller to reach for the sky.* ☐ *Reach for the sky and give me all your money!*

Reach for the stars! Go to Aim for the stars!

reach in(to something**)** to stick one's hand into something to grasp something. ☐ *Bob reached into the cookie jar and found it empty.* ☐ *Bob went to the cookie jar and reached in.*

reach one's **stride** and **hit** one's **stride** to do something at one's best level of ability. ☐ *When I reach my stride, things will go faster, and I'll be more efficient.* ☐ *Now that I've hit my stride, I can work more efficiently.*

reach out 1. *Lit.* to extend one's grasp outward. ☐ *He reached out, but there was no one to take hold of.* ☐ *I reached out and grabbed onto the first thing I could get hold of.* **2.** *Fig.* to enlarge one's circle of friends and experiences. ☐ *If you are that lonely, you ought to reach out. Get to know some new friends.* ☐ *I need to reach out more and meet people.*

reach out (after someone or something**)** and **reach out (for** something**)** to extend one's grasp to someone or something. ☐ *Don reached out after Doris, but she slipped away before he could get a good hold on her.* ☐ *Doris reached out for the door, but it slammed closed.*

reach out into something to extend one's grasp out into something, such as the darkness. ☐ *Laura reached out into the darkness, looking for the light switch.* ☐ *Jane reached out into the unlit room, hoping to find a lamp or even a candle.*

reach out to someone **1.** *Fig.* to offer someone a helping hand. ☐ *You reached out to me just when I needed help the most.* ☐ *I reach out to other people in trouble because I would want someone to do that for me.* **2.** *Fig.* to seek someone's help and support. ☐ *When I reached out to Don for help, he turned me down.* ☐ *Jane reached out to her friends for the help and support that she needed.*

reach (rock) bottom Go to (rock) bottom.

reach someone **1.** *Lit.* to travel up to or as far as someone. ☐ *I ran until I reached her just in time to save her from going over the cliff.* **2.** *Fig.* to manage to be understood by someone; to have one's message appreciated by someone. ☐ *If*

we could only reach them with our message, we might be able to convince them to stay in school.

reach some place **in a body** Go to in a body.

reach something **down**† *Inf.* to hand something down. ☐ *Please reach the hammer down to me.* ☐ *Would you reach down the hammer to Jane?*

reach something **in the (very) nick of time** Go to in the (very) nick of time.

reach something **up to** someone *Inf.* to hand something up to someone. ☐ *I reached the hammer up to Jack, who was fixing a loose shingle on the roof.* ☐ *Please reach this cold drink up to your brother.*

reach speeds of some amount Go to speeds of some amount.

reach to something to extend all the way to something. ☐ *Our property reaches to the bank of the river.* ☐ *The grounds reach all the way to the banks of the river.*

reach toward someone or something to aim one's reach to someone or something. ☐ *Sam reached toward Walter and took hold of his shoulder.* ☐ *He reached toward the apple but withdrew his hand when he saw it was rotten.*

react against someone or something to respond negatively to someone or something. ☐ *Why did she react against me so strongly?* ☐ *There is no need to react against the plan with such force.*

react to someone or something to act in response to someone or something. ☐ *You made some very good points. I would like to take some time to react to you.* ☐ *How did Mary react to the news?*

read about someone or something to read information concerning someone or something. ☐ *Did you read about John in the newspaper?* ☐ *I read about bonds, and learned a lot about finance.*

read between the lines *Fig.* to infer something (from something else); to try to understand what is meant by something that is not written explicitly or openly. ☐ *After listening to what she said, if you read between the lines, you can begin to see what she really means.* ☐ *Don't believe everything you read literally. Learn to read between the lines.*

R

read for something to read, looking especially for something, such as errors, clarity, etc. ☐ *Please read this manuscript for spelling and grammar errors.* ☐ *Read this book for entertainment and nothing more.*

read from something to read [aloud] from something in particular. ☐ *I will now read from a book of poetry that I like very much.* ☐ *I like that poem very much. What are you reading from?*

read from the same page and **sing from the same hymnbook** *Cliché* share the same understanding of something. ☐ *Okay, I think we are reading from the same page now. We can discuss the future of this project more productively.*

read it and weep *Fig.* read the bad news; hear the bad news. ☐ *I'm sorry to bring you the bad news. Read it and weep.*

Read my lips! Go to Watch my lips!

read of someone or something **(**somewhere**)** to read news about someone or something in something. ☐ *I think I have read of you in the papers.* ☐ *Mary read of the job opening in the newspaper.*

read on to continue to read. ☐ *Please read on. Don't stop.* ☐ *She read on until she had come to the end of the story.*

read one one's **rights** to make the required statement of legal rights to a person who has been arrested. ☐ *All right, read this guy his rights and book him on a charge of theft.* ☐ *You have to read them their rights before questioning them.*

read oneself **to sleep** to read something in preparation for falling asleep. ☐ *I need a really dull book so I can read myself to sleep.* ☐ *That's the kind of book I use to read myself to sleep.*

read someone **like a book** *Fig.* to understand someone very well. ☐ *I've got John figured out. I can read him like a book.* ☐ *Of course I understand you. I read you like a book.*

read someone or something **as** something to interpret someone or something as something. ☐ *I read you as a quiet guy who wants to settle down and have kids.* ☐ *Mary read the problem as one that did not require a lot of understanding.*

read someone **out**† **(for** something**)** to chastise someone verbally for doing something wrong. ☐ *The coach read the player out for making a silly error.* ☐ *She really read out the lazy players.*

read someone **out of** something to expel someone from an organization, such as a political party. ☐ *Because of her statement, they read her out of the party.* ☐ *The officers tried to read me out of the society, but they didn't succeed.*

read someone's **lips** to manage to understand speech by watching and interpreting the movements of the speaker's lips. ☐ *I couldn't hear her but I could read her lips.*

read someone's **mind** *Fig.* to guess what someone is thinking. ☐ *You'll have to tell me what you want. I can't read your mind, you know.* ☐ *If I could read your mind, I'd know what you expect of me.*

read (someone**)** something **out of** something to read something [aloud] from something. ☐ *He read us a story out of the book.* ☐ *Mary read the story out of the magazine.*

read someone **the riot act** *Fig.* to give someone a severe scolding. ☐ *The manager read me the riot act for coming in late.* ☐ *The teacher read the students the riot act for their failure to do their assignments.*

read something **back**† **(to** someone**)** to read back some information to the person who has just given it. ☐ *Yes, I have written the telephone number down. Let me read it back to you to make sure I have it right.* ☐ *Please read back the letter to me.*

read something **in** something to read something in particular in a some publication or document. ☐ *I read an interesting article about moose in today's newspaper.* ☐ *Did you read that in today's newspaper?*

read something **into** something *Fig.* to attach or attribute a new or different meaning to something; to presume inferences as one reads something. ☐ *This statement means exactly what it says. Don't try to read anything else into it.* ☐ *Am I reading too much into your comments?*

read something **off**† to read aloud from a list. □ *Nick read the list of the names off, and I wasn't on the list.* □ *Jane read off the names.*

read something **out**† to read something aloud. □ *Please read it out so everyone can hear you.* □ *Read out the names loudly.*

read something **over**† to read something. □ *When you have a chance, read this over.* □ *Also, read over this report.*

read something **through**† to read all of something. □ *Take this home and read it through.* □ *Read through this report and see if you can find any errors.*

read (something**) to** someone to read something aloud to someone. □ *Please read a story to me.* □ *Grandpa read to Timmy all afternoon.*

read the handwriting on the wall *Fig.* to anticipate what is going to happen by observing small hints and clues. (See also **see the (hand)writing on the wall**.) □ *I know I am going to be fired. I can read the handwriting on the wall.* □ *Can't you read the handwriting on the wall? Can't you see what they are planning?*

read up (on someone or something**)** to find and read some information about someone or something. □ *Please go to the library and read up on George Washington.* □ *I don't know anything about that. I guess I need to read up.*

readjust to someone or something to make a new adjustment to someone or something. □ *Please make an attempt to readjust your work schedule for the next two weeks.* □ *I don't think I can readjust to this climate.*

ready, set, go Go to **on your mark, get set, go.**

***ready (to** do something**)** prepared to do something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) □ *Get ready to jump!* □ *It's time to get ready to go to work.*

ready, willing, and able *Cliché* eager or at least willing [to do something]. □ *If you need someone to help you move furniture, I'm ready, willing, and able.* □ *Fred is ready, willing, and able to do anything you ask him.*

a **(real) go-getter** an active, energetic, and aggressive person. □ *Mary is very aggressive in business. A real go-getter.*

the **real McCoy** an authentic thing or person. □ *Of course it's authentic. It's the real McCoy.*

the **real thing** something that is genuine and not an imitation. □ *I don't want frozen yogurt, I want the real thing! Yes, ice cream!* □ *She hates plastic that looks like wood. She wants the real thing.*

the **reality of the situation** the truth or actuality of the situation; the way the situation really is. □ *The reality of the situation is that we must act right now.* □ *Let's face the reality of the situation and go out and get jobs so we can pay our bills.*

realize one's **potential** to fulfill one's potential; to do as well as one possibly can. □ *I hope I can get a good education so I can realize my potential.*

realize something **from** something **1.** to perceive something from some kind of evidence. □ *I just now realized something from what you've been saying.* □ *Tom realized how wrong he had been from what Mary told him.* **2.** to reap a profit by selling an asset that has increased in value. □ *He realized a large profit from the sale of the house.* □ *We hoped to realize a lot of money from the sale of stock.*

ream someone **out**† *Sl.* to scold someone severely. □ *The teacher really reamed him out.* □ *The coach reamed out the whole team.*

ream something **out**† to widen or clean an interior cavity or channel by scraping, grinding, or drilling. □ *Ream the opening out so the flow will be faster.* □ *We had to ream out the pipes so the fuel would flow to the engine.*

reap something **from** something **1.** *Lit.* to harvest something from something. □ *We reaped a fine harvest from our cornfields this year.* □ *They will reap nothing from their flooded fields.* **2.** *Fig.* to gain something from something. □ *The students reaped a lot of information from their interview with the police chief.* □ *I hope to reap some good advice from the discussion.*

reappoint someone **as** something to select or appoint someone to serve again in the same office. □ *Are they going to reappoint Alan as the chairman again?* □ *Alan was reappointed as the head of the committee.*

rear back 1. *Lit.* [for a horse] to pull back and up onto its hind legs in an effort to move backwards rapidly or throw a rider. (See also **rear up**.) □ *The animal reared back in terror.* □ *The horse reared back and almost threw its rider.* **2.** *Fig.* [for a person] to pull back and stand up or sit up straighter. □ *He reared back in his chair and looked perturbed.* □ *Tom reared back in his chair, waiting for something else to happen.*

rear its ugly head *Fig.* [for something unpleasant] to appear or become obvious after lying hidden. □ *Jealousy reared its ugly head and destroyed their marriage.* □ *The question of money always rears its ugly head in matters of business.*

rear up 1. *Lit.* [for a horse] to lean back on its hind legs and raise its front legs, assuming a threatening posture or avoiding something on the ground such as a snake. (See also **rear back**.) □ *The horse reared up suddenly, throwing the rider onto the ground.* □ *When the horse reared up, I almost fell off.* **2.** *Fig.* [for something, especially a problem] to raise up suddenly. □ *A new problem reared up and cost us a lot of time.* □ *A lot of new costs reared up toward the end of the month.*

R

reason against something to argue against something, using reason. □ *I can hardly be expected to reason against a silly argument like that!* □ *I reasoned against it, but they paid no attention to me.*

reason something **out**† to figure something out; to plan a reasonable course of action. □ *Now let's be calm and try to reason this out.* □ *Let us reason out our difficulties.*

reason with someone to discuss something with someone, seeking a reasonable solution to a problem. □ *Try to reason with Jill. If she won't listen, forget her.* □ *You cannot reason with someone who is so narrow-minded.*

reassign someone **to** something to change someone's assignment to something else. □ *I will reassign Jill to a different department.* □ *I was reassigned to the accounting department.*

reassure someone **about** something to give someone confidence about something. □ *Nancy reassured Betty about her promotion.* □ *Betty was reassured about her promotion.*

reassure someone **of** something to promise or guarantee someone something. ☐ *Kelly reassured her friend of her support in the election.* ☐ *Please reassure Tom of our continued support.*

rebel against someone or something to resist and revolt against someone or something. ☐ *Barbara rebelled against the teachers at the school.* ☐ *Most young people have to rebel against authority for a while.*

rebel at someone or something to resist and defy someone or something. ☐ *It is natural for teenagers to rebel at their parents.* ☐ *I feel as if I have to rebel at all these rules.*

rebound from something **1.** *Lit.* to bounce back from something. ☐ *The ball rebounded from the wall and hit Randy hard on the elbow.* ☐ *When the ball rebounded from the backboard, it bounced onto the court and Tom tripped on it.* **2.** *Fig.* to recover quickly from something. ☐ *Barbara rebounded from her illness in less than a week.* ☐ *I hope I can rebound from this cold quickly.*

rebuke someone **for** something to reprimand someone for something. ☐ *There is no need to rebuke me for a simple mistake like that.* ☐ *Sally was rebuked for overspending her budget.*

recall someone **from** something to call someone back from something or some place. ☐ *The president recalled our ambassador from the war-torn country.* ☐ *I was recalled from retirement to help out at the office.*

recall someone or something **from** something to remember someone or something from some event or some place. ☐ *I recall someone by that name from my days at the university.* ☐ *Mary recalled the appropriate fact from her history studies.*

recall something **to mind** to cause [someone] to remember something. ☐ *The events of the day recall similar days in the past to mind.* ☐ *This book recalls a similar book published some years ago to mind.*

recall something **to** someone to bring something to the mind of someone. ☐ *Your comments recall another event to me—something that happened years ago.* ☐ *What you just said recalled an old saying to me.*

R

recast something **in** something to rebuild or redevelop something in a different form. ☐ *She recast the sentence in the negative, hoping to make it less blunt.* ☐ *I will recast my request in different language.*

recede from something to pull back from something. ☐ *The river receded from its banks during the dry season.* ☐ *I think that my hair is receding from my forehead.*

receive someone **as** someone or something to welcome and accept someone as someone or something. ☐ *The king received the ambassador as an honored guest.* ☐ *They said they would receive their former guest as a welcome visitor.*

receive someone **into** something to welcome someone into something, some place, or some organization. ☐ *Everyone received the new member into the club with eager congratulations.* ☐ *We received them into our homes and fed them well.*

receive someone or something **back** to get someone or something back. ☐ *Martha received her husband back after his escapade.* ☐ *I sent a letter off with the wrong postage and received it back two weeks later.*

receive someone **with open arms** and **welcome** someone **with open arms 1.** *Lit.* to greet someone with arms spread wide to hug someone. ☐ *His mother greeted him with open arms at the door.* **2.** *Fig.* to greet someone eagerly. ☐ *I'm sure they wanted us to stay for dinner. They received us with open arms.* ☐ *When I came home from college, the whole family welcomed me with open arms.*

receive something **from** some place to get and accept something from some place. ☐ *I just received a letter from Budapest!* ☐ *Mary received a package from Japan.*

receive something **from** someone to get and accept something from someone. ☐ *Tony received a sweater from his grandfather for his birthday.* ☐ *Who did you receive this from?*

receive word (from someone or something**)** Go to **word (from** someone or something**)**.

reckon someone **as** someone or something to perceive someone as someone or something. ☐ *I reckoned her as a more thoughtful individual than she turned out to be.* ☐ *Mary reckoned Scott as a constant irritation, and she was right on the button.*

reckon someone or something **among** something to judge someone or something to belong among a select group. ☐ *I reckon Donna among the best tennis pros in the country.* ☐ *We reckon this automobile among the most advanced in the world.*

reckon someone or something **into** something and **reckon** someone or something **in**† to figure someone or something in; to include someone or something in one's calculations. ☐ *I will reckon Jane into the total number of guests.* ☐ *I reckoned in a few too many people.*

reckon with someone or something to deal with someone or something; to cope with someone or something. ☐ *I have to reckon with the troublesome Mr. Johnson this afternoon.* ☐ *Mary knew just exactly how she had to reckon with the bill collector.*

reckon without someone to fail to think about someone. ☐ *He thought he'd get away with his crime, but he reckoned without the FBI agents.* ☐ *He had thought he was gone for sure, but he had reckoned without the paramedics.*

reclaim someone or something **from** someone or something to bring someone or something back from someone or something. ☐ *The mother reclaimed Sally from her father, who had abducted her contrary to the divorce decree.* ☐ *Mary reclaimed the book from her brother's desk.*

recognize one **for what** one **is** Go to **recognize** something **for what it is.**

recognize someone **as** someone or something to accept and acknowledge someone to be someone; to accept and acknowledge something to be something. ☐ *Mary didn't recognize the lawyer as her legal representative.* ☐ *Lizzy didn't recognize the car as her car.*

recognize someone or something **by** something to know someone or something by some distinguishing sign. ☐ *You will be able to recognize me by my long mustache.* ☐ *Mary recognized her car by the ribbon tied to the antenna.*

recognize someone or something **for** something **1.** to identify someone or something as something. ☐ *I recognized the deal for a scam as soon as I heard about it.* ☐ *Anyone*

could recognize Max for a common thief. **2.** to show appreciation to someone or something for something. ☐ *The organization recognized Laura for her excellent contributions to the philanthropy committee.* ☐ *The officers recognized the committee for its outstanding efforts.*

recognize something **for what it is** and **recognize** one **for what** one **is** to see and understand exactly what someone or something is or represents. ☐ *The disease represented a serious threat to all peoples, and Dr. Smith recognized it for what it was.* ☐ *I recognize you for what you are, you scoundrel!*

recoil at the sight (of someone or something**)** and **recoil at the thought (of** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to flinch or cringe at the sight or thought of someone or something. ☐ *Sally recoiled at the sight of Gerry, who had said something unspeakable.* ☐ *Mary recoiled at the very thought.*

recoil at the thought (of someone or something**)** Go to previous.

recoil from someone or something to draw back from someone or something. ☐ *I recoiled from Sally when she told me what she had done.* ☐ *I recoiled from the horror and slammed the door.*

recommend someone **as** something to suggest someone as something. ☐ *Could you recommend Frank as a good carpenter?* ☐ *I can recommend Jane Smith as a good artist.*

recommend someone **for** something to suggest someone for something. ☐ *I would be very glad to recommend you for promotion.* ☐ *She recommended herself as the best choice.*

recommend someone or something **to** someone to suggest that someone choose someone or something. ☐ *I would like to recommend Sally to you as a good prospect for membership on the committee.* ☐ *Could you recommend a good mechanic to me?*

recompense someone **for** something to (re)pay someone for something. ☐ *I am required to recompense Mrs. Wilson for her broken window.* ☐ *Can I recompense you for your expenses?*

reconcile oneself **to** something to grow to feel comfortable with an undesirable or challenging situation. ☐ *John reconciled himself to living alone.* ☐ *Anne reconciled herself to having to wear glasses.*

reconcile something **with** something to bring something into harmony, accord, or balance with something. ☐ *The accountants were not able to reconcile the expense claims with the receipts that had been turned in.* ☐ *I can't reconcile your story with those of the other witnesses.*

reconstruct something **from** something **1.** to rebuild something from something. ☐ *I was not able to reconstruct the puzzle from the pieces that were left on the floor.* ☐ *Can you reconstruct the damaged part of the house from these materials?* **2.** to recall and restate a story or the details of an event from something. ☐ *Can you reconstruct the story from the fragments you have just heard?* ☐ *I cannot reconstruct the chain of events from memory.*

record something **from** something to make an audio or video recording of something from some source. ☐ *Listen to this. I recorded it from a radio broadcast.* ☐ *From what TV show did you record this?*

record something **in** something to enter a record of something into something. ☐ *I will record your appointment in my notebook.* ☐ *Jane recorded the memo in her computer.*

record something **on** something to make a record of something on the surface of something. ☐ *Nancy recorded the appointment on the calendar that served as a blotter on the top of her desk.* ☐ *Please record this on your calendar.*

recount something **to** someone to tell something to someone; to narrate a series of events, in order. ☐ *Carl recounted the events of the day to his wife.* ☐ *The strange events were recounted by a number of people.*

recoup something **from** someone or something to salvage something from someone or something. ☐ *I hope I can recoup my expenses from the company this week.* ☐ *Mary intended to recoup her money from the investment.*

recover from someone or something to get over an experience with someone or something. ☐ *My great-uncle just left, and it will take a day or two to recover from him.* ☐ *I hope I recover from his visit soon.*

recover from something to recuperate from a disease. ☐ *I hope I recover from this cough soon.* ☐ *She recovered from her cold soon enough to go on the trip.*

recover something **from** someone or something to retrieve or salvage something from someone, something, or some place. ☐ *The police recovered my purse from the thief who had taken it.* ☐ *Mary recovered her deposit from the failed bank.*

recruit someone **for** something to seek and engage someone for something. ☐ *Harry had to recruit a few people for the new jobs that opened up.* ☐ *We recruited three more people for the project.*

recruit someone **from** something to convince someone to leave something and join one's own group. ☐ *Phyllis recruited a new work team from the company she used to work for.* ☐ *We recruited a number of people from private industry.*

recruit someone **into** something to seek out and induct someone into something. ☐ *The recruitment office tried to recruit ten people a week into the army.* ☐ *The army recruited almost no one during the month of December.*

R

recuperate from something to recover from something; to be cured or to heal after something. ☐ *I hope that you recuperate from your illness soon.* ☐ *Has she recuperated from her surgery yet?*

***red as a cherry** and ***red as a poppy; *red as a rose; *red as a ruby; *red as blood** bright red. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *When she came in from ice-skating, Clara's nose was as red as a cherry.* ☐ *When her boss praised her in front of the whole office, Emily turned red as a poppy.* ☐ *I would like to make a dress out of that beautiful velvet that is red as a rose.* ☐ *Jane painted her fingernails with polish as red as a ruby.* ☐ *I want to have my car painted red as blood.*

red as a poppy Go to previous.

red as a rose Go to red as a cherry.

red as a ruby Go to red as a cherry.

red as blood Go to red as a cherry.

a **red herring** a piece of information or suggestion introduced to draw attention away from the real facts of a situation. (A red herring is a type of strong-smelling smoked fish that was once drawn across the trail of a scent to mislead hunting dogs and put them off the scent.) ☐ *The detectives were following a red herring, but they're on the right track now.* ☐ *The mystery novel has a couple of red herrings that keep readers off guard.*

red in the face *Fig.* embarrassed. ☐ *After we found Ann hiding in the closet, she became red in the face.* ☐ *The speaker kept making errors and became red in the face.*

red ink *Fig.* debt; indebtedness as shown in red ink on a financial statement. ☐ *There is too much red ink in my financial statement.* ☐ *Too much red ink and the company will collapse.*

red tape *Fig.* over-strict attention to the wording and details of rules and regulations, especially by government workers. (From the color of the tape used by government departments in England to tie up bundles of documents.) ☐ *Because of red tape, Frank took weeks to get a visa.* ☐ *Red tape prevented Jack's wife from joining him abroad.*

*the **red-carpet treatment** *Fig.* very special treatment; royal treatment. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I love to go to fancy stores where I get the red-carpet treatment.* ☐ *The queen expects to get the red-carpet treatment wherever she goes.*

rededicate oneself or something **to** someone or something to reaffirm the dedication of oneself or something to someone or something. ☐ *I must ask you to rededicate yourself to our high purposes.* ☐ *They rededicated their church to God.*

a **red-letter day** *Fig.* an important or significant day. (From the practice of printing holidays in red on the calendar.) ☐ *Today was a red-letter day in our history.* ☐ *It was a red-letter day for our club.*

redound on someone to have an effect on someone. ☐ *The hot weather has redounded on all of us in a bad way.* ☐ *The problems created by your mistake have redounded on the entire company.*

R

reduce someone **to silence** to cause someone to be silent. ☐ *The rebuke reduced him to silence—at last.* ☐ *Mary was reduced to silence by Jane's comments.*

reduce someone **to tears** to cause a person to cry through insults, frustration, and belittling. ☐ *He scolded her so much that she was reduced to tears by the end of the meeting.*

reduce something **by** something to diminish something by a certain amount. ☐ *I have to reduce your allowance by two dollars per week until you pay me back for the broken window.* ☐ *I will reduce the bill by a few dollars.*

reduce something **from** something **to** something to diminish something from one degree to a lower degree. ☐ *I will reduce the fine from two hundred dollars to one hundred dollars.* ☐ *Mary reduced her demands from a large sum to a smaller one.*

reduced to doing something brought into a certain humble condition or state. ☐ *The poor man was reduced to begging for food.*

A **reed before the wind lives on, while mighty oaks do fall.** *Prov.* An insignificant, flexible person is more likely not to get hurt in a crisis than a prominent or rigid person. ☐ *Our office has new managers now; I plan to be as inconspicuous as possible while they reorganize everyone. A reed before the wind lives on, while mighty oaks do fall.*

reef a sail **in**† to reduce the area of a ship's sail, by folding the sail. ☐ *The first mate ordered the sailors to reef the sails in.* ☐ *They had to reef in the sails.*

reek of something **1.** *Lit.* to have the stench or smell of something. ☐ *This whole house reeks of onions! What did you cook?* ☐ *She reeks of a very strong perfume. She must have spilled it on herself.* **2.** *Fig.* to give a strong impression of something. ☐ *The neighborhood reeks of poverty.* ☐ *The deal reeked of dishonesty.*

reek with something to stink with some smell. ☐ *This place reeks with some horrible odor.* ☐ *Jane reeks with too much perfume.*

reel back (from something**)** to fall or stagger backwards, as from a blow. ☐ *The boxer reeled back from the blow, stunned.* ☐ *Another blow to the midsection and he reeled back and fell.*

reel something **in**† to bring in something, such as a fish, by winding up the line on a reel. ☐ *With great effort, she reeled the huge fish in.* ☐ *Hurry and reel in the fish!*

reel something **off**† Go to **rattle** something **off**†.

reel under something **1.** *Lit.* to stagger under the weight of something. ☐ *Tony reeled under the weight of the books.* ☐ *She knew she would reel under the heavy load.* **2.** *Fig.* to stagger because of a blow. ☐ *The boxer reeled under the blow to his chin.* ☐ *Fred reeled under the beating that Mike gave him.* **3.** *Fig.* to suffer because of a burden. ☐ *Gary reeled under the responsibilities he had been given.* ☐ *I was just reeling under the burdens of my new job.*

refer someone **back to** someone or something to suggest that someone go back to someone or something, such as the source. ☐ *I referred the client back to the lawyer she had originally consulted.* ☐ *Tom referred the customer back to the manufacturer who had made the shoddy product.*

refer someone **to** someone or something to direct someone to someone or something; to send someone to someone or something. ☐ *The front office referred me to you, and you are now referring me to someone else!* ☐ *They should have referred you to the personnel department.*

refer something **back to** someone or something and **refer** something **back**† to send something back to someone or a group for action. ☐ *Dr. Smith knows more about this kind of case, so I referred it back to him.* ☐ *They referred back all the bills.*

refer to someone or something to mention someone or something. ☐ *Are you referring to me when you speak about a kind and helpful person?* ☐ *I was referring to the personnel department.*

refill a prescription sell a second or subsequent set of doses of a medicine upon a doctor's orders. ☐ *The pharmacy refused to refill my prescription because it has expired.* ☐ *If you want the drugstore to refill your prescription, just give them the prescription number over the telephone.*

reflect (back) (up)on someone or something to remember or think about someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *When I reflect back on the years I spent with my parents, I think I had a good childhood.* ☐ *I like to reflect on my great-grandmother.*

reflect credit (up)on someone or something [for some act] to bring credit to someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Your efforts really reflect credit upon you.* ☐ *Mary's success really reflected credit on the quality of her education.*

reflected in something **1.** *Lit.* [of something] mirrored in something, such as a mirror, water, ice, etc. ☐ *His image was reflected in the mirror, giving him a good view of his sunburn.* ☐ *When the hermit's image was reflected in the pool, he was amazed.* **2.** *Fig.* [of something] shown in a result. ☐ *The extra charges will be reflected in next month's bill.* ☐ *I do not understand all the charges that are reflected in my statement.*

refrain from something to hold back from doing something; to choose not to do something as planned. ☐ *I wish you would refrain from shouting.* ☐ *Please refrain from hollering.*

refresh someone **with** something to renew or revive someone with something. ☐ *Here, let me refresh you with a cool glass of lemonade.* ☐ *After the game, Wally will probably refresh himself with a bottle of iced tea.*

refresh something **with** something to restore or brighten up something. ☐ *I think we can refresh this drab old room with a coat of fresh paint.* ☐ *The old house was refreshed with new siding and some landscaping.*

refund something **to** someone to return payment for something to someone. ☐ *I insist that you refund the money to me at once.* ☐ *Her money was refunded to her by the store as soon as she asked for it.*

refuse something **to** someone to deny someone permission to receive or use something. ☐ *You wouldn't refuse water to me, would you?* ☐ *Nothing at all was refused to the new employee.*

refuse to do something to reject doing something; to reject a request to do something. ☐ *I absolutely refuse to go there!* ☐ *We all refused to break the law.*

regain one's **composure** *Cliché* to become calm and composed after being angry or agitated. ☐ *I found it difficult to regain my composure after the argument.* ☐ *Here, sit down and relax so that you can regain your composure.*

regain one's **feet 1.** *Lit.* to stand up again after falling or stumbling. ☐ *I fell on the ice and almost couldn't regain my feet.* ☐ *I helped my uncle regain his feet as he tried to get up from the floor.* **2.** *Fig.* to become independent after financial difficulties. ☐ *I lent Bill $400 to help him regain his feet.* ☐ *I'll be able to pay my bills when I regain my feet.*

regain something **from** someone or something to take back possession of one's property or right from someone or something. ☐ *I intend to regain my money from Herb.* ☐ *The finance company regained the car from the delinquent buyer.*

regale someone **with** something to present a great deal of something, such as lavish entertainment or fine food, to someone. ☐ *They regaled their guests with food and music well into the night.* ☐ *The committee was regaled with tales of wrongdoing by the government.*

regard someone or something **as** someone or something to look upon someone or something as someone or something; to consider someone or something to be someone or something. ☐ *I have always regarded you as my friend.* ☐ *The cult members regarded the stone idol as their dead leader.*

regard someone or something **with** something to look upon someone or something with a certain attitude or with certain expectations. ☐ *The child regarded the teacher with a questioning expression.* ☐ *The kitten regarded the fishbowl with great curiosity.*

regardless of something without considering something; at any rate; whatever is done; whatever option is chosen. ☐ *Regardless of what you say, I'm still going to the club tonight.* ☐ *I still have to pay the bill, regardless of the facts.*

register for something to sign up to participate in something. ☐ *Have you registered for the class yet?* ☐ *She is registered for the same classes as I am.*

register in something to enter one's name on a list for something; to sign oneself up to belong to something. ☐ *Are you going to register in the pie-eating contest?* ☐ *We registered in the drawing for a new car.*

register on something [for an effect] to show on something, such as someone's face. ☐ *Recognition registered on her face when she saw the photograph of Walter.* ☐ *The total of the votes registered on the large scoreboard at the front of the hall.*

register someone **as** something to record someone's name on a list of a category of people. ☐ *I will register you as an independent voter.* ☐ *I am registered as a qualified financial advisor.*

register someone **for** something to sign someone up to participate in something. ☐ *Would you please register me for the workshop when you sign up?* ☐ *Excuse me. I have to go register myself for the contest.*

register someone **in** something **1.** to enter someone's name on a list in something. ☐ *I will register you in the competition.* **2.** to sign someone up to belong to something. ☐ *I registered my cousin in the club.*

register something **with** someone or something to record the existence of something with someone or something. ☐ *Did you register your new stereo with the manufacturer?* ☐ *If you bring any packages into this store, please register them with the manager.*

register with someone **1.** *Lit.* to sign up with someone. ☐ *You will have to register with the lady at the front desk.* ☐ *I registered with the attendant when I came in.* **2.** *Fig.* [for something] to be realized or understood by someone. ☐ *Suddenly, the import of what she had said registered with me.* ☐ *My name did not register with her, and I had to explain who I was.*

regress to something to go back to an earlier, probably simpler, state; to go back to a more primitive state. ☐ *Bob claimed that Gerald's behavior was regressing to that of a three-year-old.* ☐ *I tend to regress to my college ways when I am out with the guys.*

***regular as clockwork** *Cliché* very regular; completely predictable. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *George goes down to the bus stop at 7:45 every morning, as regular as clockwork.* ☐ *You can always depend on Nancy to complain about the office for fifteen minutes every afternoon, regular as clockwork.*

a **regular fixture** someone who is found so frequently in a place as to be considered a fixture of, or part of the place. ☐ *The manager attached himself to the luncheon club and became a regular fixture there.*

a **regular guy** a normal and dependable guy. ☐ *Don't worry about Tom. He's a regular guy. He won't give you any trouble.*

rehearse for something to practice for something. ☐ *We will rehearse for the graduation exercises on Saturday morning.* ☐ *We rehearsed for the play all weekend.*

reign over someone or something to rule over someone or something. ☐ *The king reigned over his subjects for over thirty years.* ☐ *The queen reigned over the country for a long time.*

reimburse someone **for** something to repay someone for making a purchase, such as a business expense. ☐ *I will reimburse you for whatever it cost you.* ☐ *The treasurer reimbursed himself for his expenses.*

reimburse something **to** someone to repay money to someone, such as a business expense. ☐ *I will reimburse the money to you. Don't worry.* ☐ *The full cost was reimbursed to me.*

rein back on someone or something to control or diminish the intensity of someone or something. ☐ *The manager was urged to rein back on her assigning overtime.* ☐ *She reined back on expenses and demanded that others do likewise.*

rein someone or something **in**† to bring someone or something under control; to slow down someone or something. ☐ *Fred is getting out of hand. The boss undertook to rein him in a bit.* ☐ *The boss is trying to rein in Jane's enthusiasm.*

rein something **up**† to bring something, usually a horse, to a stop. ☐ *She reined her horse up and stopped for a chat.* ☐ *Rein up your horse and stop for a while.*

rein up [for a horse rider] to stop. ☐ *The equestrian reined up and dismounted.* ☐ *We all reined up and waited for the cars to pass by.*

reinforce someone or something **with** something to strengthen someone or something with something. ☐ *The general reinforced his troops with volunteers fresh from basic training.* ☐ *I had to reinforce the garage roof with new boards.*

reinstate someone **as** something to put someone back as a certain officeholder. ☐ *The city council agreed to reinstate Mr. Wilson as alderman.* ☐ *Fred was reinstated as the court clerk.*

reinstate someone **in** something to put someone back into a certain office or position. ☐ *If you will pay your dues, we will reinstate you in the organization.* ☐ *Fred was reinstated in office.*

reinvent the wheel *Fig.* to make unnecessary or redundant preparations. ☐ *You don't need to reinvent the wheel. Read up on what others have done.* ☐ *I don't have to reinvent the wheel, but I will be cautious before I act.*

reissue something **to** someone to release or distribute to someone something that has been distributed before. ☐ *I plan to reissue the check to you next week.* ☐ *The check was reissued to Mary the very next day.*

reject someone or something **out of hand** to reject someone or something without any thought or study. ☐ *Fred is so contrary that they rejected him out of hand when his name came up for a committee position.*

rejoice at something to celebrate or revel about something. ☐ *Everyone rejoiced at the lucky events that had saved them.* ☐ *We all rejoiced at the outcome of the election.*

rejoice in someone or something to take great joy at someone or something. ☐ *I am in love and I rejoice in my beloved!* ☐ *Roger rejoices in a good night's sleep.*

rejoice over something to celebrate because of something. ☐ *Everyone rejoiced over their good fortune.* ☐ *What happened to us next was nothing to rejoice over.*

relapse into something to experience a return to a worse condition. ☐ *Valerie relapsed into a coma in the afternoon.* ☐ *Mary relapsed into her depression after a brief period of normalcy.*

relate something **to** someone to tell something to someone; to narrate something to someone. ☐ *Very slowly, she related the events of the past week to her parents.* ☐ *I have an interesting story to relate to you.*

relate something **to** something to associate something to something. ☐ *I relate this particular problem to the failure of the company to provide proper training.* ☐ *This point is related to what I just told you.*

relate to someone or something to understand, accept, or feel kinship with someone or something. ☐ *He relates to people well.* ☐ *I really don't relate to your thinking at all.*

***related to** someone connected through blood kinship or through marriage to someone. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *I wonder if he is related to you, because he looks a little like you.* ☐ *I am not related to anyone here.*

relative to someone or something **1.** concerning someone or something. ☐ *I have something to say relative to Bill.* ☐ *Do you have any information relative to the situation in South America?* **2.** in proportion to someone or something. ☐ *My happiness is relative to yours.* ☐ *I can spend an amount of money relative to the amount of money I earn.*

relax into something **1.** to sit or lie down in something, relaxing. ☐ *I want to go home and relax into my easy chair.* ☐ *I relaxed into the reclining chair and was asleep in a few moments.* **2.** [for something that is tense] to assume a more relaxed shape or condition. ☐ *His cramped muscle finally relaxed into a soft mass of tissue.* ☐ *As her tight neck relaxed into softness, her face brightened.*

relax one's **hold on** someone or something to lessen one's grasp on someone or something. ☐ *When she relaxed her hold on me, I got away.* ☐ *Never relax your hold on an alligator.*

relay something **to** someone to pass something on to someone. ☐ *Can you relay this to Frank, who is way down the line?* ☐ *The message was relayed to Frank, who was at the end of the line.*

R

release someone or something **from** something to liberate or let someone or something go from something. ☐ *The police officer released George from the handcuffs.* ☐ *I released all the dogs from the city dog pound.*

release someone **to** someone to discharge or distribute someone to someone. ☐ *The judge released the defendant to his mother.* ☐ *Don was released by the police to his father, who was more than a little bit angry.*

relegate someone **to** someone or something to assign someone to someone or something. (Often refers to something unimportant or demeaning.) ☐ *They relegated the old man to a bed in the corner.* ☐ *The former vice president was relegated to the position of manager of special projects.*

reliance on someone or something trust and dependence on someone or something. ☐ *John's reliance on his family is holding him back.* ☐ *Reliance on sleeping pills is dangerous.*

relieve one **of** one's **duties** *Euph.* to fire someone; to dismiss someone from employment. ☐ *I am afraid I must relieve you of your duties.* ☐ *After the scandal, she was relieved of her duties at the embassy.*

relieve oneself *Euph.* to urinate or defecate. ☐ *He stopped by the side of the road to relieve himself.* ☐ *She needed badly to relieve herself, but there was no bathroom in sight.*

relieve someone **of** something **1.** *Lit.* to unburden someone of something. ☐ *Here, let me relieve you of that heavy box.* ☐ *At last, he could relieve himself of the problem.* **2.** *Fig.* to lessen someone's responsibilities. ☐ *I will relieve you of some of the responsibility you have carried for so long.* ☐ *Let me relieve you of that job. You have enough to do.*

religious about doing something *Fig.* strict about something; conscientious about something. ☐ *Bob is religious about paying his bills on time.* ☐ *Max tries to be religious about being polite to everyone.*

relinquish something **over** someone to release the hold on or control of someone. ☐ *She refused to relinquish control over the operations of the front office.* ☐ *Mary was ordered to relinquish her hold over the children for a month each year.*

relinquish something **to** someone or something to surrender something to someone or something. ☐ *Todd refused to relinquish his authority to anyone.* ☐ *I finally relinquished the car to the bank.*

relocate someone or something **in** something to reposition or move someone or something in or at something. ☐ *I will have to relocate you in a different office.* ☐ *Can I relocate the copy machine in the other room?*

reluctant to do something unwilling to do something; not wanting to do something. ☐ *David was reluctant to admit his mistakes.* ☐ *Although reluctant to appear in court, the witness was ordered to by subpoena.*

rely (up)on someone or something to depend on someone or something; to trust in someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *I know I can rely upon you to do a good job.* ☐ *Can we rely on this old car to get us there?*

remain ahead (of someone or something**)** Go to **ahead (of** someone or something**)**.

remain ahead of something Go to **ahead of** something.

remain ahead of the game Go to **ahead of the game**.

remain aloof from someone or something Go to **aloof from** someone or something.

remain at bay Go to **at bay**.

remain at some place to stay at some place; to stay behind at some place. ☐ *I will remain at the office until supper time.* ☐ *Please remain at home until I call you.*

remain away (from someone or something**)** to stay away from someone or something. ☐ *I must ask you to remain away from my daughter.* ☐ *I cannot remain away any longer. I must be with her.*

remain behind to stay at a place even when others have left. ☐ *Can't I go too? Do I have to remain behind?* ☐ *I will remain behind for a day or two.*

remain behind someone or something Go to **behind** someone or something.

remain clear of something Go to **clear of** something.

remain down to stay down; to keep down. ☐ *I asked them to remain down until the shooting stopped.* ☐ *Please remain down with me so no one will see us.*

remain in limbo Go to **in limbo**.

remain in (something**) 1.** to stay within something. ☐ *Please remain in the house today. It is too cold to go out.* ☐ *You should remain in because the weather is bad.* **2.** to stay in an organization as a member. ☐ *He remained in the Boy Scouts until he was sixteen.* ☐ *I will remain in the teacher's union for many years.*

remain in the back of someone's **mind** Go to **in the back of** someone's **mind**.

remain in touch (with someone or something**)** Go to **keep in touch (with** someone or something**)**.

remain on 1. to continue to stay in one place. (The *on* is an adverb, not a preposition.) ☐ *Everyone else left, but I decided to remain on there.* ☐ *I remained on for a while during the time they were training my replacement.* **2.** and **remain on** something to continue to be on something; to continue to serve on a body. ☐ *Will you remain on the board of directors for another year?* ☐ *I will remain on this committee as long as I am needed.* **3.** to continue to take a particular medicine. ☐ *How long should I stay on these pills?* ☐ *I want you to remain on this medication until you run out.*

remain on (one's**) guard (against** someone or something**)** Go to **on (**one's**) guard (against** someone or something**)**.

remain on something Go to **remain on**.

remain together to stay close together; to stay in association. ☐ *We will have to remain together while we are on this tour. It is very easy to get lost in this town.* ☐ *The two boys remained together throughout college.*

remain under something to continue to stay beneath the surface of something. ☐ *Please remain under the umbrella so you don't get wet.* ☐ *A lot of people decided to leave the shelter, but I remained under it.*

remain up to stay awake and out of bed. ☐ *I remained up throughout most of the night.* ☐ *I cannot remain up much longer.*

R

remain within (something**)** to stay inside something or some place. ☐ *Please try to remain within the boundaries of the campus.* ☐ *Everyone else went out, but I decided to remain within.*

remand someone **(in)to the custody of** someone and **remand** someone **over to** someone to order someone placed into the custody of someone. ☐ *The court remanded the prisoner into the custody of the sheriff.* ☐ *The judge remanded Mary to the custody of the sheriff.* ☐ *The judge remanded Gerald over to his father.*

remand someone **over to** someone Go to previous.

remark (up)on someone or something to comment on someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *She remarked upon his tardiness and then continued the lesson.* ☐ *There is no need to remark on me or anything I do or don't do.*

Remember me to someone. Please carry my good wishes to someone. (The *someone* can be a person's name or a pronoun.) ☐ *Tom: My brother says hello. Bill: Oh, good. Please remember me to him. Tom: I will.* ☐ *Fred: Bye. John: Good-bye, Fred. Remember me to your Uncle Tom.*

remember someone **as** something to recall someone as being a particular type of person. ☐ *I remember Terri as a rather cheerful girl, always willing to help out.* ☐ *William will be remembered as a grouchy person.*

remember someone **in** one's **will** to bequeath something to someone in one's will. ☐ *My uncle always said he would remember me in his will.* ☐ *He failed to remember me in his will.*

remember someone **to** someone to carry the greetings of someone to someone else. ☐ *Please remember all of us to your uncle.* ☐ *I will remember you to my brother, who asks of you often.*

Remember to write. and **Don't forget to write.** **1.** *Lit.* a final parting comment made to remind someone going on a journey to write to those remaining at home. ☐ *Alice: Bye. Mary: Good-bye, Alice. Remember to write. Alice: I will. Bye.* ☐ *Sally: Remember to write! Fred: I will!* **2.** *Fig.* a parting comment made to someone in place of a regular good-bye. (Jocular.) ☐ *John: See you tomorrow. Bye. Jane: See you. Remember to write.* ☐ *John: Okay. See you after lunch. Jane: Yeah. Bye. Remember to write.*

remind someone **about** someone or something to cause someone to remember someone or something. ☐ *Will you please remind me about Fred? He's coming to visit next week.* ☐ *I will remind you about your appointments for today.*

remind someone **of** someone or something to bring a memory of someone or something into someone's mind. ☐ *You remind me of my brother.* ☐ *The happy song reminded us of our cabin on the lake.*

reminisce about someone or something to think about one's memories of someone or something; to discuss or share memories of someone or something. ☐ *They were reminiscing about their old friends.* ☐ *The old men sat and reminisced about the good old days.*

reminisce with someone to share memories with someone. ☐ *I love to reminisce with my sister about old times.* ☐ *Todd was reminiscing with Alice about the good old days.*

reminiscent of someone or something reminding someone about someone or something; seeming like or suggesting someone or something. ☐ *This fragrance is reminiscent of fresh flowers.* ☐ *Jane's dress seems reminiscent of the style worn in the 1920s.*

remit something **to** someone or something to send something, especially money, to someone or a group. ☐ *Please remit your rent to your landlady immediately.* ☐ *You are requested to remit your loan payment to the bank on time this month.*

remonstrate (with someone**) (about** someone or something**)** to protest to someone about someone or something. ☐ *After remonstrating with the manager about the price for a while, Vernon left quietly.* ☐ *I spent an hour remonstrating about Ted with Alice.*

remove someone **from** something to take someone out of an office or position. ☐ *The county board removed the sheriff from office.* ☐ *She removed herself from office voluntarily.*

remove someone or something **from** someone or something to take someone or something away from someone or something. ☐ *The authorities removed the child from his mother.* ☐ *They removed the dog from the kennel.*

remunerate someone **for** something **1.** to pay someone for something. ☐ *Of course, I will remunerate you for your time.* ☐ *She was promptly remunerated for the hours she spent working on the project.* **2.** to repay someone for money spent. ☐ *I will remunerate you for the cost of the book if you will give me the receipt.* ☐ *Please remunerate me for the charges as soon as possible.*

rend something **from** someone or something to tear something from someone or something. (The past tense and past participle are *rent*.) ☐ *Harry rent the burning clothing from the man who had just fled from the burning building.* ☐ *I will rend these dirty old clothes from my body and shower.*

rend something **into** something to rip or tear something into something. (The past tense and past participle are *rent*.) ☐ *The tailor rent the garment into shreds in his anger.* ☐ *The garment was rent into bits and pieces by the machine.*

render something **down**† **1.** *Lit.* to cook the fat out of something. ☐ *Polly rendered the chicken fat down to a bit of golden grease that she would use in cooking a special dish.* ☐ *Jane rendered down the fat for use later.* ☐ *The cook rendered it down.* **2.** *Fig.* to reduce or simplify something to its essentials. ☐ *Let's render this problem down to the considerations that are important to us.* ☐ *Can't we render down this matter into its essentials?* ☐ *Not all of this is important. Let's render it down.*

render something **in(to)** something to translate something into something. ☐ *Now, see if you can render this passage in French.* ☐ *Are you able to render this into German?*

render something **to** someone or something and **render** something **up (to** someone or something**)** to give something to someone or a group. ☐ *You must render your taxes to the government.* ☐ *I will render my money to the tax collector.* ☐ *I had to render up all my earnings.*

renege on something to go back on one's promise or commitment. ☐ *I am mad at you because you reneged on your promise!* ☐ *I did not renege on what I promised.*

R

renounce someone **for** something to repudiate someone for doing something. ☐ *She renounced her brother for his political orientation.* ☐ *Jane was renounced for her illegal activities.*

rent something **from** someone to pay someone for the use of something. ☐ *We rented a small car from one of the rental agencies.* ☐ *They rented a house from a local realtor.*

rent something **(out†) (to** someone**)** to sell temporary rights for the use of something to someone. ☐ *I rented the back room out to a nice young student.* ☐ *We rented the back room to someone.* ☐ *For how long did you rent it out?* ☐ *Let's rent out the garage.*

repair to some place to move oneself to some place. ☐ *I will repair to my room until the crisis is over.* ☐ *She repaired to a safe place for the duration of the storm.*

repatriate someone **to** some place to restore one to one's country of origin. ☐ *He asked that they repatriate him to the land of his birth.* ☐ *She was repatriated to her homeland.*

repay someone **by** something to recompense someone by doing something; to settle a debt with someone by doing something. ☐ *I will repay you by cutting your lawn free for a year. How's that?* ☐ *Can I repay you by taking you to dinner?*

repay someone **for** something to remunerate someone for doing something. ☐ *I refused to repay him for his excessive expenses.* ☐ *She was repaid for her kindness many times over.*

repay someone **with** something to remunerate someone with something. ☐ *The farmer's wife repaid the plumbers with fresh eggs and cream.* ☐ *We were repaid with fresh eggs from the farm.*

repel someone **from** something to push someone back from something; to fight someone off from something. ☐ *The army repelled the attackers from the entrance to the city.* ☐ *The attacking army was repelled from the city.*

replace someone or something **by** someone or something and **replace** someone or something **with** someone or something to remove someone or something and add someone or something in place of the first. ☐ *The manager replaced two workers by a machine.* ☐ *Walter replaced his old lawn mower with a newer one.*

replenish something **with** something to rebuild the supply of something with more of it. ☐ *I will replenish the checking account with more money at the end of the month.* ☐ *Can I replenish your glass with more iced tea?*

reply to someone or something to give a response to someone or something. ☐ *I replied to her already. There is no reason to do it again.* ☐ *I will reply to her letter as soon as I can.*

report about someone or something to deliver information about someone or something. ☐ *Isn't it time to report about Frank and how well he is doing?* ☐ *I want to report about the accident.*

report back (on someone or something**)** to return with information or an explanation from someone or something. ☐ *I need you to report back on Walter by noon.* ☐ *I'll report back as soon as I can.*

report back (to someone or something**) 1.** to go back to someone or something and present oneself. ☐ *Report back to me at once!* ☐ *I'll report back immediately.* **2.** to present information or an explanation to someone or some group. ☐ *Please report back to me when you have the proper information.* ☐ *I'll report back as soon as I have all the information.*

report for something to present oneself for something. ☐ *Please report for duty on Monday morning at eight o'clock sharp.* ☐ *I can't report for my examination at the time we agreed upon.*

report in to present oneself; to make one's presence known. ☐ *Please report in when you get back in town.* ☐ *He reported in and his name was taken off the absentee list.*

report in sick to call one's office to say that one will not come to work because one is sick; to show up for work ill. (See also call in sick. Normally, one must be present to report in.) ☐ *I don't feel well today. I will report in sick.* ☐ *The phone was busy, so I reported in sick by e-mail.*

report something **to** someone to present a body of information to someone. ☐ *Please report the results to the supervisor.* ☐ *The event was reported to the proper person.*

report to someone or something **1.** to present oneself to someone or an office. ☐ *You must report to me for duty at noon.* ☐ *They told me to report to this office at this time.* **2.** to be supervised by someone or an office. ☐ *When you start work here, you will report to Mrs. Franklin.* ☐ *I report directly to the home office.* **3.** to return to someone or an office and make a report. ☐ *Please report to me when you have the results.* ☐ *If you have any more to say, please report to headquarters and tell the whole story.*

report (up)on someone or something to present an explanation on someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *The detective visited Mrs. Jones to report upon Mr. Jones.* ☐ *I want to report on the events of the day. Do you have time to listen?*

repose in something **1.** to lie stretched out in something, such as a bed. ☐ *I think I would like to repose in my own bed for an hour or two before I begin my journey.* ☐ *Tom reposed in a comfortable chair for the rest of the evening.* **2.** to lie stretched out in a particular state, such as death or slumber. ☐ *She lay on the cot, reposed in slumber, waiting for Prince Charming to arrive.* ☐ *The ruler reposed in death on public view for two days.* **3.** [for something] to exist in something or be part of the essence of something. ☐ *Much of our cultural heritage reposes in our literature.* ☐ *Considerable important thinking reposes in folktales and myths.*

repose (up)on something to lie on something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *I will repose upon these cushions until my bathwater has been drawn.* ☐ *Dawn reposed on the sofa for over an hour.*

represent someone **in** something to act as one's advocate or agent in business or legal proceedings. ☐ *My lawyer represented me in court.* ☐ *His attorney will represent him in all his dealings with the publishing company.*

represent someone or something **as** something to depict or portray someone or something as something; to think of someone or something as something. ☐ *I don't think you*

should represent me as so perfect. After all, I'm human. □ *The artist represented my puppy as a playful animal.*

represent something **to** someone **1.** to exemplify something to someone. □ *What does this behavior represent to you?* □ *This represents a lapse in manners to me.* **2.** to explain a matter to someone. □ *He represented the matter to me in a much more charitable light.* □ *I did not represent it properly to you.*

reprimand someone **for** something to scold someone for something; to admonish someone for something. □ *There is no need to reprimand me for a simple accident!* □ *Mary was reprimanded for being late.*

reproach someone **for** something to rebuke or censure someone for something. □ *She reproached Jerry for gambling away all their money.* □ *She reproached herself mercilessly for her failure.*

reproach someone **with** something to rebuke someone with reference to something. □ *I wish you wouldn't continue to reproach me with things that happened long ago.* □ *She was reproached with something out of the past.*

reproduce something **from** something to make a copy of something from something else. □ *I think we can reproduce the picture from the copy that you have there. We don't need the negative.* □ *Can you reproduce a good copy from this old print?*

reprove someone **for** something to criticize or censure someone for something. □ *The boss reproved all the employees for their use of the telephones for personal calls.* □ *We were all reproved for being late too often.*

repulse someone or something **from** something to resist or repel someone or something from something. □ *The royal guard repulsed the rebels from the palace grounds.* □ *Only the use of guns could repulse the starving wolves from the area around the cabin.*

*a **reputation (as a** something**)** a state of having a particular kind of reputation for being something. (Can be a good or a bad reputation. *Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) □ *She once had a reputation as a singer.* □ *Unfortunately, Tom's got a reputation as a cheat.*

R

*a **reputation (for** doing something**)** a state of having a particular kind of reputation for doing something. (Often a bad reputation, as in the examples. *Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) □ *You'll get a reputation for cheating.* □ *I don't want to get a reputation for being late.*

reputed to thought to do, be, or have someone or something. □ *My boss is reputed to have cancer.* □ *My neighbor was reputed to have been a spy during the war.*

request someone **to** do something to ask someone to do something. □ *I am going to request you to turn your radio down.* □ *Mary was requested to arrive a few minutes early.*

request something **from** someone to call for something from someone. □ *I will request an explanation from the employee in question.* □ *A full report was requested from each person present.*

request something **of** someone to call for someone to give or do something. □ *I have to request a favor of you.* □ *Can I request anything more of him?*

require a leap of faith Go to a leap of faith.

require something **from** someone to demand something from someone. □ *The telephone company required a deposit from John and Martha before they would install a telephone.* □ *They required some help from us.*

require something **of** someone to expect or demand someone to give or do something. □ *I require absolute loyalty of my employees.* □ *What is required of me in this job?*

requisition something **for** someone or something to present an order or formal request for something for someone or some purpose. □ *I will have to requisition a desk for you. You can't work an eight-hour day at a table.* □ *We will requisition catering for the office party.*

requisition something **from** someone or something to send an order or formal request to someone or something for something. □ *The general requisitioned food and bedding from the supply depot.* □ *We requisitioned a new bookcase from central supply.*

rescue someone or something **from** someone or something to save or liberate someone or something from someone or something. □ *I hoped that someone would come and rescue me from this boring person.* □ *Nothing can rescue us from the ravages of time.*

research into someone or something to study about someone or something thoroughly. □ *I decided that I would research into Queen Elizabeth.* □ *We researched into the period in which she lived.*

resemble someone or something **in** something to look or seem like someone or something. □ *You resemble my Uncle Herman in the way you walk.* □ *This resembles vanilla ice cream in flavor, but not in consistency.*

reserve something **for** someone or something to save or set aside something for someone or something. □ *I am reserving this seat for Claire.* □ *We are reserving some of the cake for tomorrow.*

reside in some place to dwell in some place. □ *I reside in a small apartment in the center of town.* □ *The Wilsons resided in a large house on a hill.*

reside in someone or something to be a property or characteristic of someone or something. □ *I never knew such anger could reside in such a calm person.* □ *The finest acoustics that can be found in the world reside in this hall.*

resign from something to make a written statement that removes one from an office or position of employment. □ *Andy resigned from the fraternity.* □ *I will not resign from my job. You will have to fire me.*

resign oneself **to** something to accept something reluctantly. □ *I finally resigned myself to going to Mexico even though I didn't want to.* □ *Mary resigned herself to her fate.*

resign under fire Go to under fire.

resonate with someone *Fig.* [for an idea, issue, or concept] to appeal to someone or cause someone to relate to it. □ *The concept of wearing worn-looking clothing seems to resonate with young people.* □ *Your notion just doesn't resonate with the public in general.*

resort to something to turn to something that is not the first choice. □ *I hope they don't resort to a lawsuit to accomplish their goals.* □ *She will resort to anything to get her way.*

resound through(out) something to roar, noisily, through a space or an enclosed area. □ *An explosion*

resounded through the busy train station. ☐ *An explosion resounded throughout the busy train station.*

resound with something [for something, such as the air or a place] to be filled with sound or sounds. ☐ *The hall resounded with the sounds of the orchestra.* ☐ *The house resounded with the laughter of children.*

respect someone **as** something to admire someone as something. ☐ *I respect you as a friend and supervisor.* ☐ *We respected them all as colleagues and coworkers.*

respect someone **for** something to admire someone for something. ☐ *I really respect George for his courage.* ☐ *Mary respected the company for its fine products.*

respond to someone or something **1.** to answer someone or something. ☐ *Would you please respond to me?* ☐ *When are you going to respond to my letter?* **2.** to react to someone or something. ☐ *You have heard his presentation. How would you respond to him?* ☐ *I need you to respond to the points in the report by the end of the day.* ☐ *The police responded right away to the riot call.*

the **responsible party** the person or organization responsible or liable for something. ☐ *I intend to find the responsible party and get some answers to my questions.* ☐ *Mary sued the responsible party in the car crash.*

rest against someone or something to lean against someone or something; to take a rest period positioned against someone or something. ☐ *The child rested against his father until it was time to board the train.* ☐ *A fishing pole rested against the side of the garage, ready to go to work.*

rest assured to be assured; to be certain. ☐ *Rest assured that you'll receive the best of care.* ☐ *Please rest assured that we will do everything possible to help.*

rest from something to take it easy and recover from something. ☐ *I need to take a few minutes and rest from all that exertion.* ☐ *When you have rested from your running, please come in here and help me.*

rest in peace to lie dead peacefully for eternity. (A solemn entreaty used in funeral prayers, eulogies, etc.) ☐ *We prayed that the deceased would rest in peace.* ☐ *The bodies of the soldiers will rest in peace.*

rest in something **1.** to be comfortable in something, such as a chair or a bed. ☐ *I rested in the chair for a while and then got up and made supper.* ☐ *I will rest in bed until I feel better.* **2.** to be at ease in a particular condition or status, such as comfort or comfortable surroundings. ☐ *I hope that you can rest in comfort for the rest of the night.* ☐ *We rested in the plush surroundings and then went back out into the hot sun to work.* **3.** [for something] to have its source in something. ☐ *The source of her magnetism rests in the way she uses her eyes.* ☐ *His skill rests in his thorough training.*

The **rest is gravy.** *Fig.* Any additional money received is just an easily acquired bonus. ☐ *There is some cost involved in buying the raw materials, and the cost of manufacturing is negligible. When we pay off the costs, the rest is gravy.*

The **rest is history.** *Fig.* Everyone knows the rest of the story that I am referring to. ☐ *Bill: Then they arrested all the officers of the corporation, and the rest is history.* ☐ *Bob: Hey, what happened between you and Sue? Bill: Finally we realized that we could never get along, and the rest is history.*

rest on one's **laurels** *Fig.* to stop trying because one is satisfied with one's past achievements. ☐ *Despite our success, this is no time to rest on our laurels.* ☐ *We rested on our laurels too long. Our competitors took away a lot of our business.*

rest something **against** something to lean or position something against something, allowing it to bear part of the weight of the thing being rested. ☐ *Rest the heavy end of the box against the wall and we'll slide it down the stairs.* ☐ *Please rest the board against something solid while you paint it.*

rest something **in** someone or something to place or vest something in someone or something. ☐ *The board of directors saw fit to rest the power to hire and fire in the office of the vice president.* ☐ *The president rested the power to hire and fire in the hands of his son, who promptly fired all the top managers.*

rest up (for something**)** to take it easy in advance of something tiring. ☐ *Excuse me, but I have to go rest up for the concert tonight.* ☐ *I really need to rest up a while.*

rest up (from something**)** to recover or recuperate from something tiring. ☐ *I need about a week to rest up from my long travels.* ☐ *I'll need a few days to rest up.*

rest (up)on something to lie on something; to take it easy on something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Here, rest upon this mat.* ☐ *I'll just rest on this chair, thanks.*

rest with someone or something to remain with someone or something; to be vested with someone or something. ☐ *The final decision rests with you.* ☐ *The power rests with the board of directors.*

restore someone's **trust in** something and **restore** someone's **belief in** something; **restore** someone's **faith in** something to reinstate someone's belief, faith, trust, etc., in something. ☐ *I knew that a good performance on the test would restore my parents' belief in me.* ☐ *Her faith was restored in the government.*

restore something **to** someone to give something back to someone; to cause something to be returned to someone. ☐ *I will restore the man's wallet to him after we lock the thief up.* ☐ *His wallet was restored to him by a police officer.*

R

restore something **to** something to bring something to its original state. ☐ *The state restored the park to its original condition.* ☐ *The government forced the mining company to restore the area to its original state.*

restrain someone **from** something to prevent someone from doing something. ☐ *I had to restrain her from hurting herself.* ☐ *I was unable to restrain myself from giggling at the wisecrack.*

restrict someone or something **to** someone or something to limit someone or something to someone or something; to confine someone or something to someone or something. (The first *something* may typically refer to a choice or selection.) ☐ *When choosing team members, we are restricting them to people they already know.* ☐ *We restricted the choices to Bill, Bob, or Ted.*

result from something to emerge from something; to be the outcome of something. ☐ *It will be interesting to see*

what results from your efforts. □ *Nothing resulted from all that work.*

result in something to achieve something; to bring about something; to cause something to happen. □ *I hope that this will result in the police finding your car.* □ *All my effort resulted in nothing at all.*

resurrect someone or something **from** something to restore someone or something from some state to its formal state. □ *We decided to resurrect Toby from the ranks of the retired.* □ *I resurrected my old uniform from its tattered and wrinkled state.*

retail at something to sell at a retail price of something. □ *This model normally retails at a much higher price.* □ *What does a product like this usually retail at?*

retail for something to sell for a retail price of an amount of money. □ *This item retails for less than ten dollars.* □ *How much does this retail for?*

retail something **to** someone to sell something to someone at a retail price. □ *I can retail this merchandise at ninety percent of the price of my competitor.* □ *We are not allowed to retail this to anyone in the state of Maine.*

retain something **over** someone or something to keep or maintain something, such as power or control, over someone or something. □ *Tony found a way to retain control over Fred.* □ *I wish to retain veto power over the committee.*

retaliate against someone or something to take revenge against someone or something. □ *The striking workers will retaliate against the company with a protest march.* □ *The students retaliated against the administration.*

retire from something to withdraw from something. (Usually to terminate a working career permanently.) □ *I retired from the company early.* □ *When do you intend to retire from your job?*

retire (in)to something to quit working and move into something or some place. □ *Sam and Ella retired into a Florida condo.* □ *Joe did not want to retire to Florida.*

retire on something to quit working and live on something or a particular amount of money. □ *I already have enough money to retire on.* □ *I cannot retire on a sum like that!*

retire someone or something **from** something to take someone or something out of service permanently. □ *The company retired the vice president from the job and gave it to someone else.* □ *It is time to retire my automobile from service.*

retire to some place to quit working permanently and move to a particular location. □ *When I quit working, I want to retire to Florida.* □ *We will retire to our place in the country.*

retool for something **1.** *Lit.* to set up with new or altered tools for a different kind of production. □ *The factory was closed down so they could retool for next year's model.* □ *How soon can we retool for this new line of products?* **2.** *Fig.* to prepare oneself for a different kind of work. □ *He decided to retool for a new job in the computer industry.* □ *I am too old to retool for a job like this.*

retool something **for** something to set up a factory with new or altered tools for a different kind of production. □ *The manager decided to retool the factory for greater efficiency.* □ *We will retool the plant for next year's models.*

retreat (from something**) (to** some place**)** to withdraw from something to some place. □ *The army retreated from the battlefield to the safety of the forest.* □ *They retreated to the other side of the river.*

retrieve someone or something **from** some place to recover and bring back someone or something from some place. □ *The mother hurried to the school and retrieved her child from the classroom.* □ *I retrieved my cat from the well into which she had fallen.*

retrieve something **from** someone to get something back from someone. □ *I hope I can retrieve my book from the person who borrowed it.* □ *We were not able to retrieve the lawn mower from Fred before he moved away and took it with him.*

return from some place to come back from some place. □ *I just returned from a research trip in the Amazon basin.* □ *When will they return from their vacation?*

return someone or something **to** someone to give someone or something back to someone. □ *Please return my tools to me.* □ *Would you return my book to me soon?*

return someone's **compliment** Go to return the compliment.

return something **for** something to give or pay back something for something. □ *The clerk returned the correct change for a twenty-dollar bill.* □ *I hope that the product returns good value for my money.*

return the compliment and **return** someone's **compliment** to pay a compliment to someone who has paid you a compliment. □ *Mary told me that my hair looked nice, so I returned her compliment and told her that her hair was lovely.* □ *When someone says something nice, it is polite to return the compliment.*

return the favor to do a good deed for someone who has done a good deed for you. □ *You helped me last week, so I'll return the favor and help you this week.* □ *There is no point in helping Bill. He'll never return the favor.*

return to haunt one Go to come back to haunt one.

return to some place to go or come back to some place. □ *When do you plan to return to your home?* □ *I will return there when I have finished here.*

return with something to come back with something. □ *He went to town and returned with the doctor just in time.* □ *She returned with the material they had requested.*

reunite someone or something **with** someone or something to bring someone or something together with someone or something. □ *Mary was pleased to reunite Sally with her sister.* □ *I reunited the lost cat with its owner.*

rev something **up**† to make an idling engine run very fast, in short bursts of power. □ *Hey! Stop revving it up!* □ *I wish that Tom wouldn't sit out in front of our house in his car and rev up his engine.*

rev up to increase in amount or activity. □ *Production revved up after the strike.* □ *We're hoping business will rev up soon.*

reveal someone or something **to** someone to show or disclose someone or something to someone. □ *The magician*

opened the door of the cabinet and revealed his assistant to the audience. □ *I revealed my secret to no one.* □ *She stepped out from behind the tree and revealed herself to the hostess.*

revel in something to rejoice or celebrate about something. □ *All the children reveled in the fresh, warm, spring air.* □ *Tony reveled in his success.*

Revenge is a dish best served cold. *Prov.* It is very satisfying to get revenge a long time after the event for which you want revenge. □ *I don't mind waiting to get revenge on Greg; I'll wait ten years if I have to. Revenge is a dish best served cold.*

Revenge is sweet. *Prov.* It is very pleasurable to revenge yourself on someone. □ *Jill: Remember when Tom left me for another woman? Well, she just left him, and he asked me out on a date. I told him I had better things to do. Jane: Revenge is sweet, huh?*

revenge oneself **(up)on** someone or something to retaliate against someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) □ *There is no need for you to revenge yourself upon Walter. It was an accident.* □ *She did not know how she would revenge herself on Joe, but she knew she would.*

reverberate through something [for sound] to roll through or pass through a space. □ *The thunder reverberated through the valley.* □ *The sound of the organ reverberated through the church.*

reverberate throughout something [for sound] to roll about and fill a space. □ *The thunder reverberated throughout the valley.* □ *The noise of chairs scraping the floor reverberated throughout the room.*

reverberate with something to echo or resound with something. □ *The hall reverberated with the rich basso voice of Walter Rogers.* □ *The church reverberated with the roar of the pipe organ.*

revere someone or something **for** something to admire or venerate someone or something for something. □ *I will always revere my dear aunt for her devotion to all of us.* □ *We have always revered his lovely gift for our little kindness.*

revert to someone or something **1.** to return to some type of person or a former state. □ *After he was out of prison, he reverted to a life of crime.* □ *She quickly reverted to her childhood dialect after a few weeks at home.* **2.** to become the property of someone, a group, or an institution. □ *At the end of ten years, this house and the land it sits on reverts to the youngest living child.* □ *Then the property reverts to the state.*

review for something to study material again for something, such as an examination. □ *I need some time to review for the examination.* □ *Have you had enough time to review for your speech?*

revolt against someone or something to rebel or rise against someone or something. □ *The citizens were gathering arms, preparing to revolt against the government.*

revolted at someone or something sickened by someone or something. □ *I was revolted at Frank and his behavior.* □ *We were all revolted at the scene of the bloody highway accident.*

revolve around someone or something and **revolve about** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to spin or move around someone or something. □ *Do you think that the whole world revolves around you?* □ *The moon revolves about the earth.* **2.** *Fig.* [for people or things] to center upon someone or something or to be primarily concerned with someone or something. □ *The way all of this is going to turn out revolves around Bob.* □ *The success of the picnic revolves around the weather.*

reward someone **for** something to give someone a prize or a bonus for doing something. □ *I would like to reward you for your honesty.* □ *She wanted to reward herself for her hard work, so she treated herself to a massage.*

reward someone **with** something to honor someone with a gift of something. □ *She rewarded the helpful child with a chocolate chip cookie.* □ *He rewarded himself with a night on the town.*

rhapsodize over someone or something to go on and on about the virtues of someone or something. □ *Young Thomas likes to rhapsodize over Francine, his girlfriend.* □ *Please do not rhapsodize over this poem anymore.*

rhyme something **with** something [for someone] to make one word rhyme with another word. □ *I need to rhyme* tree *with some other word. Any suggestions?* □ *Can I rhyme* good *with* food?

rhyme with something [for a word] to rhyme with another word. □ *You can't use* house *in that line of the poem, because it doesn't rhyme with* mice. □ *The last word in your poem doesn't rhyme with any other word in the poem!*

rich in something having valuable resources, characteristics, traditions, or history. □ *The entire region is rich in historical churches.* □ *Our soil is rich in important nutrients.*

A **rich man's joke is always funny.** *Prov.* Everyone wants to curry favor with rich people and so will always laugh at their jokes. (From a poem by Thomas Edward Brown.) □ *We all thought that Mr. Lisle was a narrow-minded, unpleasant old man, but we were careful to act otherwise, because he was wealthy. A rich man's joke is always funny.*

rich with something having a lot of something; abundant in something. □ *The beautiful book was rich with color illustrations.* □ *The old town was rich with elegant Victorian houses.*

ricochet off something [for some rapidly moving object, such as a bullet] to bounce off something at an angle. □ *The bullet ricocheted off the wall and struck the gunman.* □ *Bullets were ricocheting off the walls from all angles.*

***rid of** someone or something free of someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) □ *I'm trying to get rid of Mr. Smith. He's bothering me.* □ *I'll be happy when I get rid of my old car.*

rid oneself or something **of** someone or something to free oneself or something of someone or something; to deliver oneself or something from someone or something. □ *The boys were not clever enough to rid themselves of Tom's little sister.* □ *Will we ever be able to rid this house of spiders?*

riddle someone or something **with** something to fill someone or something with small holes, such as bullet holes. □ *Max pulled the trigger of the machine gun and riddled*

R

Lefty with holes. ☐ *The police riddled the wall with holes trying to shoot the escaped convict in the house.*

ride away to depart, riding a bike or a horse or similar animal. ☐ *She got on her horse and rode away.* ☐ *They rode away without even saying good-bye.*

ride by someone or something to pass by someone or something, riding. (As on a horse or bicycle, or as a passenger in a car.) ☐ *She rode by me without saying anything.* ☐ *I rode by the store and forget to stop and go in.*

ride herd on someone or something *Fig.* to supervise someone or something. (Alludes to a cowboy supervising cattle.) ☐ *I'm tired of having to ride herd on my kids all the time.* ☐ *My job is to ride herd on this project and make sure everything is done right.*

ride off to depart, riding something such as a horse or a bicycle. ☐ *Betty said good-bye and rode off.* ☐ *We rode off, each one in a different direction.*

ride off in all directions 1. *Fig.* [for people] to scatter, riding something, such as a horse or a bicycle. (See also run off in all directions.) ☐ *The boys hopped on their bikes and rode off in all directions.* ☐ *The sheriff got the posse together and they rode off in all directions, looking for the bank robber.* **2.** *Fig.* to behave in a totally confused manner; to try to do everything at once. ☐ *Bill has a tendency to ride off in all directions. He's not organized enough.* ☐ *Now, calm down. There is no sense in riding off in all directions.*

ride on to continue to ride, traveling onward. ☐ *We rode on for at least an hour before finding a rest stop.* ☐ *They rode on for a while.*

ride on someone's **coattails** and **hang on** someone's **coattails** *Fig.* to make one's good fortune or success on the strength of someone else's. (Also with *else,* as in the examples.) ☐ *Bill isn't very creative, so he rides on John's coattails.* ☐ *Some people just have to hang on somebody else's coattails.*

ride on something **1.** *Lit.* to travel on something. ☐ *Do you like to ride on the train?* ☐ *I have never ridden on a horse.* **2.** *Fig.* to be borne on something and carried along. (On something other than a means of transportation.) ☐ *She rode on a wave of popularity to reelection.* ☐ *He rode on his past laurels as long as he could.*

R

ride out (of some place**)** to travel out of a place on something such as a horse or bicycle. ☐ *All the racers rode out of the starting area and began the bicycle marathon.* ☐ *At the sound of the starting gun, all the contestants rode out.*

ride over someone or something to pass over someone or something, riding something such as a horse or a bicycle. ☐ *Bobby fell down and Susan rode over him with her bicycle, but he wasn't hurt at all.* ☐ *Tom almost rode over my toe!*

ride roughshod over someone or something and **run roughshod over** someone or something *Fig.* to treat someone or something with disdain or scorn. ☐ *Tom seems to ride roughshod over his friends.* ☐ *You shouldn't have come into our town to ride roughshod over our laws and our traditions.*

ride someone **about** something to continue to bother someone about something. ☐ *Stop riding me about my weight! This is how I'm supposed to be!* ☐ *It's not fair to ride someone about being bald.*

ride someone or an animal **down†** to chase down someone or an animal while riding on horseback. ☐ *The mounted policeman rode the mugger down and captured him.* ☐ *The rider rode down the thief.* ☐ *We had to ride down the runaway horse.*

ride something **down** to ride on something that is going down, such as an elevator. ☐ *You take the stairs, and I will ride the elevator down.* ☐ *I don't want to ride the cable car down. I will walk.*

ride something **out†** to endure something unpleasant. (Originally referred to ships lasting out a storm.) ☐ *It was a nasty situation, but the mayor tried to ride it out.* ☐ *The mayor decided to ride out the scandal.*

ride the gravy train *Fig.* to live in ease or luxury. ☐ *If I had a million dollars, I sure could ride the gravy train.* ☐ *I wouldn't like loafing if I were rich. I don't want to ride the gravy train.*

ride to some place to travel to a place, riding something such as a horse or a bicycle, or a vehicle one does not drive. ☐ *I will ride to town and get the doctor.* ☐ *Tom will ride to the store on his bike to get a loaf of bread.*

ride up (on someone**) 1.** *Lit.* [for someone on a horse] to approach someone, riding. ☐ *I rode up on him and frightened him.* ☐ *I guess I was in the house when you rode up.* **2.** *Fig.* [for clothing, especially underpants] to keep moving higher on one's body. ☐ *I don't like it when my pants ride up on me.* ☐ *I hate it when my underpants ride up.*

ride (up)on someone or something to use someone or something as a beast of burden. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on.*) ☐ *As a game, the children used to ride on their father.* ☐ *We rode upon burros along the narrow mountain trails.*

ride with someone to travel with someone on or in a vehicle or a beast of burden. ☐ *I'm going to the store for some milk. Do you want to ride with me?* ☐ *Can I ride with you to the store?*

riding for a fall *Fig.* risking failure or an accident, usually due to overconfidence. ☐ *Tom drives too fast, and he seems too sure of himself. He's riding for a fall.* ☐ *Bill needs to eat better and get more sleep. He's riding for a fall.*

rifle through something to ransack something; to search quickly or roughly through something looking for something. ☐ *The teenager quickly rifled through the cabinets, looking for something worth eating.* ☐ *The soldiers rifled through every house they could break into.*

rig someone or something **out† (in** something**)** to outfit someone or something in something; to decorate or dress someone or something in something. (Alludes to the rigging of a sailing ship.) ☐ *Joan rigged her daughter out in a witch's costume for the Halloween party.* ☐ *He rigged out his car with lights for the parade.*

rig something **up†** to prepare something, perhaps on short notice or without the proper materials. ☐ *We don't have what's needed to make the kind of circuit you have described, but I think we can rig something up anyway.* ☐ *We will rig up whatever you need.*

right and left and **left and right** to both sides; on all sides; everywhere. ☐ *I dropped the tennis balls, and they rolled right and left.* ☐ *There were children everywhere—running right and left.*

***right as rain** *Cliché* perfectly fine; all right. (Based on the alliteration with *r*. *Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Lily has sprained her ankle, but after a few weeks of rest she should be as right as rain.* ☐ *All we need to do is tidy the house up; then it will be right as rain.*

right at a certain time exactly or precisely at a specific place or time. ☐ *Meet me at this corner right at 3:00 P.M.* ☐ *The restaurant is right at First and Main Streets.*

right away and **right now** immediately. ☐ *John: Take this over to Sue. Bill: Right away.* ☐ *John: How soon can you do this? Sue: Right away.*

right down someone's **alley** and **right up** someone's **alley** *Fig.* ideally suited to one's interests or abilities. ☐ *Skiing is right down my alley. I love it.* ☐ *This kind of thing is right up John's alley.*

right in the kisser *Inf.* right in the mouth or face. ☐ *Wilbur poked the cop right in the kisser.* ☐ *He caught a punch right in the kisser.*

right now Go to right away.

right off the bat and **straight off the bat** *Fig.* immediately; first thing. ☐ *When he was learning to ride a bicycle, he fell on his head right off the bat.* ☐ *The new manager demanded new office furniture right off the bat.*

(right) off the top of one's **head** *Fig.* without giving it too much thought or without precise knowledge. ☐ *Mary: How much do you think this car would be worth on a trade? Fred: Well, right off the top of my head, I'd say about a thousand.* ☐ *Tom: What time does the morning train come in? Bill: Off the top of my head, I don't know.*

Right on! *Sl.* Exactly!; That is exactly right! ☐ *After the speaker finished, many people in the audience shouted, "Right on!"* ☐ *One member of the crowd called out, "Right on!"*

right on someone's **heels** Go to on someone's heels.

right on time at the correct time; no later than the specified time. ☐ *Bill always shows up right on time.* ☐ *If you get there right on time, you'll get one of the free tickets.*

right side up with the correct (top) side upwards, as with a box or some other container. ☐ *Keep this box right side up, or the contents will be crushed.* ☐ *Please set your coffee cup right side up so I can fill it.*

the **right stuff** the right or correct character or set of skills to do something well. ☐ *She's got the right stuff to be a winner.*

*a **right to** do something and *the **right to** do something the freedom to do something; the legal or moral permission or license to do something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *You don't have the right to enter my home without my permission.* ☐ *I have a right to grow anything I want on my farmland.*

*a **right to** something and *the **right to** something a privilege or license to have something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I have the right to have the kind of house I want.* ☐ *You have a right to any house you can afford.*

(right) under someone's **(very) nose 1.** *Fig.* right in front of someone. ☐ *I thought I'd lost my purse, but it was sitting on the table under my very nose.* ☐ *How did Mary fail to see the book? It was right under her nose.* **2.** *Fig.* in someone's presence. ☐ *The thief stole Jim's wallet right under his nose.* ☐ *The jewels were stolen from under the very noses of the security guards.*

right up someone's **alley** Go to right down someone's alley.

*the **right-of-way** the legal right to occupy a particular space on a public roadway. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~; yield ~**.) ☐ *I had a traffic accident yesterday, but it wasn't my fault. I had the right-of-way.* ☐ *Don't pull out onto a highway if you haven't yielded the right-of-way.*

rile someone **up**† to get someone excited and angry. ☐ *He yelled at them and riled them up. They left quite angry.* ☐ *He riles up everyone he talks to.*

ring a bell *Fig.* [for something] to cause someone to remember something or for it to seem familiar. ☐ *I've never met John Franklin, but his name rings a bell.* ☐ *Whenever I see a bee, it rings a bell. I remember when I was stung by one.*

ring around something to circle something. ☐ *The children ringed around the maypole, dancing and singing.* ☐ *The mourners had ringed around the coffin for the final ceremony.*

ring back to call back on the telephone. ☐ *No, there's no message. I'll ring back later.* ☐ *She's not here now. I suggest you ring back after dinner.*

ring in someone's **ears** and **ring in** someone's **mind** *Fig.* [for words or a sound] to linger in one's consciousness. ☐ *Her words rang in my ears for days.* ☐ *The sound of the choir rang in their minds long after they had finished their anthem.*

ring in someone's **mind** Go to previous.

ring in the new year *Fig.* to celebrate the beginning of the new year at midnight on December 31. ☐ *We are planning a big party to ring in the new year.* ☐ *How did you ring in the new year?*

ring off the hook *Fig.* [for a telephone] to ring incessantly and repeatedly. ☐ *What a busy day! The telephone has been ringing off the hook all day long.* ☐ *The telephone has been ringing off the hook ever since the ad appeared in the paper.*

ring out [for a loud sound] to go out. ☐ *The bells rang out at the end of the wedding ceremony.* ☐ *Loud cheers rang out at the end of the game.* ☐ *A shot rang out and started all the dogs barking.*

ring out the old *Fig.* to celebrate the end of a year while celebrating the beginning of a new one. (See also ring in the new year.) ☐ *I don't plan to ring out the old this year. I'm just going to go to bed.* ☐ *We never ring out the old because it's too dismal.*

ring someone **back**† to call someone back on the telephone. ☐ *I will have to ring back the store at a later time.* ☐ *Please ring me back when you have a moment.*

ring someone **up**† to call someone on the telephone. ☐ *I will ring her up when I get a chance.* ☐ *I have to ring up a whole list of people.*

R

ring something **up†** to record the cost of an item on a cash register. ☐ *Please ring this chewing gum up first, and I'll put it in my purse.* ☐ *The cashier rang up each item and told me how much money I owed.*

ring the bell *Inf.* to be just what is needed; to **hit the spot**. ☐ *This cold water really rings the bell.* ☐ *A good hot bowl of soup would ring the bell about now.*

ring the curtain down† (on something**)** and **bring the curtain down† (on** something**) 1.** *Fig.* to lower a theater curtain, usually at the end of an act or a play. (More literal than ②.) ☐ *After one hundred performances, it's time to ring the curtain down on our show for the last time.* ☐ *As we bring down the curtain on another successful performance, let's be thankful nothing serious went wrong.* **2.** *Fig.* to bring something to an end; to declare something to be at an end. ☐ *It's time to ring the curtain down on our relationship. We have nothing in common anymore.* ☐ *We've tried our best to make this company a success, but it's time to ring down the curtain.*

ring the curtain up† 1. *Fig.* to raise the curtain in a theater. (Alludes to sending the signal to raise the curtain.) ☐ *The stagehand rang the curtain up precisely on time.* ☐ *Let's ring up the curtain. It's time to start the show.* **2.** *Fig.* to start a series of activities or events. ☐ *I am set to ring up the curtain on a new lifestyle.* ☐ *It's a little late to ring up the curtain for a new career.*

ring true *Fig.* to sound or seem true or likely. (From testing the quality of metal or glass by striking it and evaluating the sound made.) ☐ *The student's excuse for being late doesn't ring true.* ☐ *Do you think that Mary's explanation for her absence rang true?*

ring with something **1.** *Lit.* to resound with something. ☐ *The morning air rang with the sound of church bells.* ☐ *The canyon rang with the sound of gunfire.* **2.** [for a bell] to ring in some characteristic way. ☐ *The bells seemed to ring with unusual clarity on this fine Sunday morning.* ☐ *The doorbell rang with an urgency that could not be ignored.*

rinse someone or something **down†** to wash or clean someone or something with water or other fluid. ☐ *I rinsed him down for an hour and still didn't get the smell of skunk off him.* ☐ *I had to rinse down the driveway.*

R

rinse someone or something **off†** to wash or clean someone or something by flushing with water or other fluid. ☐ *Mother rinsed the baby off and dried him with a soft towel.* ☐ *She rinsed off the baby.*

rinse someone's **mouth out† (with soap)** and **wash** someone's **mouth out† (with soap)** *Fig.* to punish one by washing one's mouth out with soap, especially for using foul language. (Usually a jocular threat.) ☐ *If you say that again, I'll rinse your mouth out with soap.* ☐ *I will wash out your mouth if you swear.*

rinse something **down† (with** something**)** to wash something down one's throat with a liquid; to follow something that one has eaten with a drink to aid its going down. ☐ *Alice rinsed the cheeseburger down with a milkshake.* ☐ *She rinsed down the sandwich with a drink.*

rinse something **out† 1.** to clean cloth or clothing partially by immersing it in water and squeezing it out. ☐ *Can you please rinse this rag out? It's all dirty.* ☐ *Please rinse out your clothes to make sure there is no soap left in them.* **2.** to launder something delicate, such as feminine underwear, using a mild soap. ☐ *I have to go rinse a few things out.* ☐ *After I rinse out some things, I will be right with you.* **3.** to clean the inside of a container partially by flushing it out with water. ☐ *Rinse the bottle out and throw it away.* ☐ *Rinse out the bottle and throw it away.*

rinse something **out of** something to remove something from something by flushing it with water. ☐ *See if you can rinse the dirt out of this jacket.* ☐ *I can't rinse out the dirt.*

rinse something **with** something to flush something with some fluid. ☐ *You should rinse your clothes in milk or tomato juice to remove the smell of the skunk.* ☐ *Please rinse the stain with cold water.*

a **riot of color** *Cliché* a selection of many bright colors. ☐ *The landscape was a riot of color each autumn.*

rip into someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to attack someone or something by ripping. ☐ *The raccoons ripped into the trash bags, scattering papers and stuff all over the street.* ☐ *The horrid murderer ripped into the helpless victim.* **2.** *Fig.* to criticize or censure someone or something severely. ☐ *The drama critic ripped into Larry.* ☐ *The critics really ripped into Larry's poor performance.*

rip off [for something] to tear or peel off. ☐ *My pocket ripped off, and my money is gone now!* ☐ *A piece of the bumper ripped off my car.*

rip on someone *Sl.* to give someone a hard time; to hassle someone. ☐ *Stop ripping on me! What did I do to you?* ☐ *Tim is ripping on Mary and she is getting really mad.*

ripsnorter *Rur.* a remarkable person or thing; a hilarious joke. ☐ *Old Fred is a real ripsnorter.* ☐ *Her new car is a ripsnorter, I tell you.* ☐ *Let me tell you a ripsnorter about a farmer and his cow.*

rip someone **off†** *Inf.* to steal [something] from someone; to cheat someone. ☐ *That merchant ripped me off!* ☐ *She rips off everyone.*

rip someone or something **apart†** to tear someone or something apart into pieces. ☐ *The automobile accident ripped the car apart.* ☐ *Don't rip apart the newspaper!*

rip someone or something **to** something **1.** *Lit.* to tear someone or something into small pieces, expressed as bits, pieces, shreds, etc. ☐ *If you fall into that lawn mower, it will rip you to pieces.* ☐ *The lawn mower ripped the newspaper to tiny bits.* **2.** *Fig.* to criticize someone or something mercilessly. ☐ *The critics ripped Gerald to pieces even though the audience just loved his show.* ☐ *They ripped the whole production to pieces.*

rip someone or something **up†** to tear someone or something into bits; to mutilate someone or something. ☐ *Careful! That machine will rip you up if you fall in.* ☐ *I ripped up the contract and threw the pieces in the trash.*

rip something **away† (from** someone**)** to grab or snatch something away from someone. ☐ *Betty ripped the box away from Frank and walked away with it.* ☐ *She ripped away the box and opened it.*

rip something **away† (from** something**)** to tear or strip something away. ☐ *Billy ripped the wrapping paper away from the box.* ☐ *He ripped away the paper.*

rip something **down†** to tear something down. (Alludes to something that has been posted or mounted.) ☐ *The cus-*

todian ripped all the posters down at the end of the day. ☐ *He ripped down the posters.*

rip something **in half** and **rip** something **in two** to tear something into two parts. ☐ *Did you know that Ed can rip a telephone book in half?* ☐ *I can rip a newspaper in two.*

rip something **in two** Go to previous.

rip something **off**† *Inf.* to steal something [from someone]. ☐ *The mugger ripped my purse off of me.* ☐ *Jane ripped off a lot of money.* ☐ *Somebody ripped my wallet off.*

rip something **off (of)** someone or something and **rip** something **off**† to tear something away from someone or something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *I ripped the cover off of the book accidentally.* ☐ *I ripped off the book cover.*

rip something **out of** someone or something and **rip** something **out**† to tear something out of someone or something. ☐ *The high priest ripped the beating heart out of the sacrificial victim.* ☐ *The priest ripped out the victim's heart.*

rip something **up**† to take something up by force and remove it. (Usually refers to something on the floor or ground, such as carpeting or pavement.) ☐ *They are going to rip all the broken sidewalk up.* ☐ *The workers ripped up the pavement and loaded the pieces into a truck.*

a **ripe old age** a very old age. ☐ *Mr. Smith died last night, but he lived to a ripe old age—99.* ☐ *All the Smiths seem to reach a ripe old age.*

ripen into something **1.** *Lit.* to ripen and become something recognizable. ☐ *This little green ball will ripen into an apple.* **2.** *Fig.* to mature into something. ☐ *This problem is going to ripen into a real crisis if we don't do something about it right now.* ☐ *The small matter ripened into a large problem in a short time.*

(rip-)off artist *Inf.* a con artist. ☐ *Fred is such an off artist.* ☐ *Beware of the rip-off artist who runs that shop.*

a **ripple of excitement** a series of quiet but excited murmurs. ☐ *A ripple of excitement spread through the crowd.* ☐ *As the president came near, a ripple of excitement indicated that people could really see him.*

a **ripple of protest** quiet remarks protesting something; a small amount of subdued protest. ☐ *There was only a ripple of protest about the new tax law.* ☐ *The rude comedian hardly drew a ripple of protest.*

ripple through something **1.** *Lit.* to move through a liquid so as to cause ripples or tiny waves. ☐ *The canoe rippled through the still water.* ☐ *A tiny snake rippled through the water of the swamp.* **2.** *Fig.* to move through something or a group of people in a ripple or wave motion. ☐ *A murmur of excitement rippled through the crowd.* ☐ *Some giggling rippled through the group of children sitting by the door.*

rise above something **1.** *Lit.* to move up above something. ☐ *The huge sun rose above the horizon and spread its red glow across the sea.* **2.** *Fig.* [for one] to ignore petty matters and do what one is meant to do in spite of them. ☐ *He was able to rise above the squabbling and bring some sense to the proceedings.* ☐ *Jane was never able to rise above her petty dislikes.*

Rise and shine! *Fig.* Get out of bed and be lively and energetic! (Often a command.) ☐ *Come on, children! Rise and shine! We're going to the beach.* ☐ *Father always calls "Rise and shine!" in the morning when we want to go on sleeping.*

rise from someone or something to emanate from someone or something in the manner of a cloud of dust or a cheer. ☐ *After the singer finished, a loud cheer rose from the crowd.* ☐ *A cloud of smoke rose from the burning barn.*

rise from the ashes *Fig.* [for a structure] to be rebuilt after destruction. ☐ *The entire west section of the city was destroyed and a group of new buildings rose from the ashes in only a few months.* ☐ *Will the city rise again from the ashes? No one knows.*

rise from the dead and **rise from the grave** *Fig.* to come back to life after being dead. ☐ *Albert didn't rise from the dead. He wasn't dead in the first place.* ☐ *The movie was about a teenager who rose from the grave and haunted his high school friends.*

rise from the grave Go to previous.

rise from the ranks *Fig.* to achieve position or office, having worked up from the masses. ☐ *He rose from the ranks to become president of the company.* ☐ *Most of the officers of the company have risen from the ranks.*

rise in something to increase in something. ☐ *I hope that this land rises in value over the next few years.* ☐ *Her expensive antique car actually rose in value during the first year.*

rise to one's **feet** to stand up. ☐ *The entire audience rose to its feet, applauding wildly.* ☐ *We rose to our feet when the bride came down the aisle.*

rise to the bait *Fig.* to respond to an allurement; to fall for an enticement or fall into a trap. (Alludes to a fish coming up from deep water to seize bait.) ☐ *You can get him here easily. Tell him that there will be lots of food and he will rise to the bait.* ☐ *He rose to the bait and did just as he was expected to do.*

rise to the challenge *Fig.* to accept a challenge. (Usually in reference to success with the challenge.) ☐ *You can depend on Kelly to rise to the challenge.* ☐ *We were not able to rise to the challenge and we lost the contract.*

rise to the occasion *Fig.* to meet the challenge of an event; to try extra hard to do a task. ☐ *John was able to rise to the occasion and make the conference a success.* ☐ *It was a big challenge, but he rose to the occasion.*

rise to the top to move or float to something, such as the top, surface, etc. ☐ *The cream will rise to the top.* ☐ *The lighter oil rose to the top and we scooped it up and saved it.*

rise up 1. to come up; to ascend. ☐ *The water is rising up fast. You had better get to higher ground.* ☐ *As the water rose up, it covered the fields and streets.* **2.** to get up from lying down. ☐ *The deer rose up and darted off into the woods.* ☐ *I rose up and brushed my clothing.*

rise (up) against someone or something to challenge someone or something; to rebel against someone or something. ☐ *The citizens rose up against their elected officials.* ☐ *They rose up against the abusive power of the government.*

risk of rain and **risk of showers; risk of thunder(storms)** a chance of precipitation. (Used only in

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weather forecasting. There is no "risk" of hazard or injury involved.) ☐ *And for tomorrow, there is a slight risk of showers in the morning.* ☐ *There is a 50 percent risk of rain tonight.*

risk of showers Go to previous.

risk of thunder(storms) Go to risk of rain.

risk one's **neck (to** do something**)** *Fig.* to accept the risk of physical harm in order to accomplish something. ☐ *Look at that traffic! I refuse to risk my neck just to cross the street to buy a paper.* ☐ *I refuse to risk my neck at all.*

risk something **on** someone or something to chance losing something on someone or something. ☐ *I wouldn't risk any money on him. He's a poor credit risk.* ☐ *Don't risk your life on his being there to help you.*

rival someone **in** something to have a quality or status that is comparable to that of someone else. ☐ *I would say that Jane rivals Dave in the ability to find the essential elements of a problem and deal with them swiftly.* ☐ *No one rivals Ted in pitching a baseball.*

rivet one's **gaze on** someone or something and **rivet** one's **glare on** someone or something *Fig.* to fasten one's gaze onto someone or something. (As if it were attached by rivets.) ☐ *He riveted his gaze on the surly young man.* ☐ *Walter riveted his hateful glare on the last page of the contract and sneered.*

rivet one's **glare on** someone or something Go to previous.

rivet someone's **attention** *Fig.* to keep someone's attention fixed [on something]. ☐ *The movie riveted the audience's attention.* ☐ *Professor Jones's lecture riveted the students' attention.*

rivet something **on(to)** something and **rivet** something **on†** to attach something to something with rivets. ☐ *The pockets of these jeans are riveted onto the body of the pants.* ☐ *You should rivet on this part of the frame to the wall.*

riveted to the ground *Fig.* [of someone or someone's feet] unable to move. ☐ *I was riveted to the ground out of fear.* ☐ *My feet were riveted to the ground and I could not move an inch.*

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road hog *Fig.* someone who drives carelessly and selfishly. ☐ *Look at that road hog driving in the middle of the road and stopping other drivers from passing him.* ☐ *That road hog nearly knocked the children over. He was driving too fast.*

The **road to hell is paved with good intentions.** *Prov.* People often mean well but do bad things. (Can be a strong rebuke, implying that the person you are addressing did something bad and his or her good intentions do not matter.) ☐ *Jane: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings; I only wanted to help you. Jane: Oh, yeah? The road to hell is paved with good intentions.*

roam about and **roam around** to wander or range about freely. ☐ *Stay where you are and don't roam about.* ☐ *I'm too tired to roam around very much.*

roar at someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to bellow or bawl at someone or something. ☐ *Don't roar at me! Control your temper.* ☐ *The lion roared at the hyena, who ran off.* **2.** *Fig.* to laugh very hard at someone or something. ☐ *The audience roared at the clown.* ☐ *The children roared at Dad's jokes.*

roar away to speed away, making a loud clamor. ☐ *The car roared away into the night with tires screeching.* ☐ *The train roared away, carrying Andy to Canada.*

roar something **out†** to bellow something out loudly. ☐ *Walter roared his protest out so everyone knew how he felt.* ☐ *Jane roared out her criticism.*

rob Peter to pay Paul *Fig.* to take or borrow from one in order to give or pay something owed to another. ☐ *Why borrow money to pay your bills? That's just robbing Peter to pay Paul.* ☐ *There's no point in robbing Peter to pay Paul. You will still be in debt.*

rob someone **blind 1.** *Fig.* to steal freely from someone. ☐ *Her maid was robbing her blind.* ☐ *I don't want them to rob me blind. Keep an eye on them.* **2.** *Fig.* to overcharge someone. ☐ *You are trying to rob me blind. I won't pay it!* ☐ *Those auto repair shops can rob you blind if you don't watch out.*

rob someone **of** something to deprive someone of something, not necessarily by theft. ☐ *What you have done has robbed me of my dignity!* ☐ *If you do that, you will rob yourself of your future.*

rob the cradle *Fig.* to marry or date someone who is much younger than oneself. ☐ *I hear that Bill is dating Ann. Isn't that sort of robbing the cradle? She's much younger than he is.* ☐ *Uncle Bill—who is nearly eighty—married a thirty-year-old woman. That is really robbing the cradle.*

rock around to tilt or totter about. ☐ *The boat rocked around, tossing the passengers to and fro.* ☐ *The road was bumpy and the huge car rocked around.*

***(rock) bottom** the lowest point or level. (*Typically: **be at ~; hit ~; reach ~**.) ☐ *The value of the goods is at rock bottom right now.* ☐ *Prices have reached rock bottom.* ☐ *When my life hit bottom, I gradually began to feel much better.*

rock someone **to** something to help someone, usually an infant, get to sleep by rocking in a rocking chair, cradle, or carriage. ☐ *It is best to rock the baby to sleep after you feed her.* ☐ *Somehow she learned to rock herself to sleep.*

rock the boat 1. *Lit.* to do something to move a boat from side to side, causing it to rock. (Often in a negative sense.) ☐ *Sit down and stop rocking the boat. You'll turn it over!* **2.** *Fig.* to cause trouble where none is welcome; to disturb a situation that is otherwise stable and satisfactory. (Often negative.) ☐ *Look, Tom, everything is going fine here. Don't rock the boat!* ☐ *You can depend on Tom to mess things up by rocking the boat.*

rocket (in)to something **1.** *Lit.* [for a projectile] to ascend into the sky or into space; [for something] to shoot rapidly into something. ☐ *The space shuttle rocketed into space.* ☐ *The locomotive rocketed into the darkness.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to ascend rapidly into something, such as fame or prominence. ☐ *Jill rocketed into prominence after her spectacular performance on the guitar.* ☐ *She will undoubtedly rocket to success.*

rocket something **into** something to send something somewhere—usually into space—by rocket. ☐ *The government rocketed the satellite into space.* ☐ *Someone suggested rocketing our waste into space.*

a **rocky road** a difficult period of time. ☐ *Bob's been going down quite a rocky road since his divorce.*

Roger (wilco). Yes. (From aircraft radio communication. *Wilco* = "will comply.") ☐ *John: Can you do this right now? Bob: Roger.* ☐ *Mary: I want you to take this over to the mayor's office. Bill: Roger wilco.*

roll about to move about, turning or rotating, as a wheel or a ball. ☐ *The ball rolled about awhile and then came to rest.* ☐ *His eyes rolled about in amazement before he spoke.*

roll along 1. *Lit.* [for wheels or something on wheels] to move along, smoothly and rapidly. ☐ *The wheels of the cart rolled along, making a grinding noise as they went.* ☐ *Our car rolled along rapidly toward our destination.* **2.** *Fig.* [for something] to progress smoothly. ☐ *The project is rolling along nicely.* ☐ *I hope that your career is rolling along quite well.*

roll around to move about, rotating, turning over, turning, or moving on wheels. ☐ *The baby rolled around on the floor, giggling and cooing.* ☐ *The toy truck won't roll around anymore.*

roll away to move away, rotating, turning over, turning, or moving on wheels. ☐ *The ball rolled away and fell down a storm sewer.* ☐ *The cart rolled away, and we had to chase it down the hill.*

roll back [for something] to return, rotating or turning or moving on wheels. ☐ *I rolled the ball away, thinking it would roll back. It didn't.* ☐ *I struck the golf ball out of the sand trap, but it rolled back.*

roll by 1. *Lit.* to pass by, rotating, as a wheel or a ball; to move past, rolling on wheels. ☐ *The wheel of a car rolled by, all by itself. It must have come off a car somewhere down the road.* ☐ *The traffic rolled by relentlessly.* **2.** *Fig.* to move (past), as if rolling. ☐ *The years rolled by, and soon the two people were old and gray.* ☐ *The clouds were rolling by, spreading patterns of light and dark across the land.*

roll down to move downward, rotating, as a wheel or a ball, or to move downward on wheels. ☐ *I pushed the wagon up the driveway, and it rolled down again.* ☐ *Don't place the cart at the top of the hill. It will roll down.*

roll down something to move downward, along something, rotating, as a wheel or a ball, or moving downward on wheels. ☐ *The ball rolled down the hall to the end.* ☐ *The cart went rolling down the hill all by itself.*

roll in *Fig.* to come in large numbers or amounts, easily, as if rolling. (Alludes to the arrival of many wheeled conveyances.) ☐ *We didn't expect many people at the party, but they just kept rolling in.* ☐ *Money is simply rolling in for our charity.*

roll in something **1.** *Lit.* to rotate about in something. ☐ *What is that dog rolling in?* ☐ *We had fun rolling in the leaves.* **2.** *Fig.* to have lots of something, such as money—enough to roll in. ☐ *She is just rolling in cash.* ☐ *Mary is rolling in money because she won the lottery.*

roll in(to some place**)** to arrive at a place; to come into some place. ☐ *The two cars rolled into the parking lot at about the same time.* ☐ *What time did they roll in?*

roll off (someone or something**)** to flow or fall off someone or something. ☐ *The ball rolled off the shelf and bounced across the room.* ☐ *The ball rolled off and struck the lampshade.*

roll on 1. *Lit.* [for something] to continue rolling. ☐ *The ball rolled on and on.* ☐ *The cart came rolling down the hill and rolled on for a few yards at the bottom.* **2.** *Lit.* [for something] to be applied by rolling. ☐ *This kind of deodorant just rolls on.* ☐ *She rolled on too much paint and it dripped from the ceiling.* **3.** *Fig.* [for something, such as time] to move on slowly and evenly, as if rolling. ☐ *The years rolled on, one by one.* ☐ *As the hours rolled on, I learned just how bored I could get without going to sleep.*

roll one's **sleeves up**† **1.** *Lit.* to turn one's sleeves upward, exposing the arms. ☐ *He rolled his sleeves up and began to wash the dishes.* ☐ *Don rolled up his sleeves so he would be cooler.* **2.** *Fig.* to prepare to get to work. ☐ *Let's roll our sleeves up and get this job done!* ☐ *Jane rolled up her sleeves and got to work.*

roll (oneself**) up in** something to spin or swivel oneself so as to be contained in a coil of something. ☐ *Roll yourself up in some cloth and go to the costume party as a mummy.* ☐ *The caterpillar rolled up in a leaf.*

roll out the red carpet (for someone**) 1.** *Lit.* to unwind a roll of red carpet for someone important to walk on. ☐ *The city council decided to roll out the red carpet for the visit of the foreign prince.* **2.** *Fig.* to give someone treatment befitting royalty. ☐ *The citizens of the small community enjoyed rolling out the red carpet for important visitors.*

roll over to turn over; to rotate one half turn. ☐ *The old man rolled over and started snoring again.* ☐ *Please roll over and give me some more space in the bed.*

roll over and play dead *Fig.* to just give up and be unable to cope with life or a problem. ☐ *Why can't I complain about this? Am I supposed to roll over and play dead?*

roll (over) in one's **grave** Go to **turn (over) in** one's **grave.**

roll over something [for something that rolls] to pass over something. (See also **roll** something **over.**) ☐ *The wheelbarrow rolled over the hose, making the water squirt off and on.* ☐ *After all the traffic had rolled over Timmy's ball, there was very little left to it.*

roll prices back† *Fig.* to reduce prices. ☐ *The store rolled all its prices back for the sale.* ☐ *The protesters demanded that the big oil companies roll back their prices.*

roll someone or something **over** to turn someone or something over. ☐ *Bobby rolled Billy over and began tickling him ruthlessly in the tummy.* ☐ *Mary rolled the stone over, hoping to find a snake underneath.*

roll someone or something **(up) in** something to turn or wrap someone or something so as to contain someone or something in something. ☐ *Roll this painting up in a sheet of heavy wrapping paper.* ☐ *They rolled the burning man up in a blanket to put out the flames.*

roll something **away**† to cause something to move away, rotating, turning over, turning, or moving on wheels. ☐ *Jane rolled the ball away and it was lost.* ☐ *Jane rolled away the ball.*

roll something **back**† to return something to someone by rotating it, as with a wheel or a ball, or moving it back on wheels. ☐ *I intercepted the ball and rolled it back.* ☐ *Jane rolled back the ball.*

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roll something **down**† **1.** to move something down, making it rotate like a wheel or a ball, or moving it on wheels. ☐ *Don't carry the ball down; roll it down!* ☐ *I rolled down the ball as you asked.* **2.** to crank down something, such as a car window. ☐ *Please roll the window down and get some air in this car.* ☐ *Please roll down the car window.*

roll something **down** something to cause something to move down along something, rotating it like a wheel or a ball. ☐ *Claire rolled the bowling ball down the alley for a strike.* ☐ *Roll the barrel down the ramp carefully. It is heavy.*

roll something **in**† to bring something in by rotating it like a wheel or a ball or by moving it on wheels. ☐ *She put the round table on its edge and rolled it in. Then she went out and got the chairs before the rain started.* ☐ *The waiters rolled in the table with the wedding cake on it.*

roll something **in** something to turn something over and over in something, as if to coat the thing being rolled. ☐ *Tony rolled each of the meatballs in flour and popped them into the hot oil.* ☐ *Roll each of these cookies in powdered sugar.*

roll something **off (of)** someone or something and **roll** something **off**† to cause something to roll away, off someone or something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *The other workers quickly rolled the wheel off of the injured man.* ☐ *Please roll off the wheel quickly!*

roll something **onto** something and **roll** something **on**† to apply something or a coat of a substance by rolling something saturated with the substance on the thing to be coated. ☐ *You should roll another coat of paint onto this wall over here.* ☐ *Roll on another coat.*

roll something **out**† **1.** to bring or take something out by rolling it; to push something out on wheels. ☐ *Jane rolled her bike out to show it off.* ☐ *Alice rolled out her bicycle for us to see.* **2.** to flatten something by rolling it. ☐ *You should roll the pastry out first.* ☐ *They rolled out the steel in a huge mill.*

roll something **over**† *Fig.* to renew a financial instrument as it expires. (See also **roll over something**.) ☐ *Do you plan to roll this certificate of deposit over?* ☐ *Are you going to roll over your certificates of deposit?*

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roll something **to** someone or something to send something revolving toward someone or something or moving toward someone or something on wheels. ☐ *I rolled the ball to the baby, who just sat and looked at it.* ☐ *The blow with the mallet rolled the croquet ball to the wicket.*

roll something **up**† to coil or rotate something into a coil or roll of something. ☐ *I rolled the poster up and put it back in its mailing tube.* ☐ *I have to roll up this paper.*

roll something **up**† **(into** something**) 1.** to include something into something that is being rotated into a coil. ☐ *I guess I accidentally rolled the letter up into the poster that was lying on my desk.* ☐ *I rolled up the letter into the poster.* **2.** to make something into a round shape by rolling it. ☐ *He rolled the gum up into a ball and tossed it away.* ☐ *Jane rolled up the dough into a ball.*

roll with the punches *Fig.* to absorb the force of a blow, as in boxing. ☐ *You have to learn to roll with the punches. Accept what is dealt to you.* ☐ *Paul could never roll with the punches. He always had to get even.*

rolling in it Go to **rolling in** something.

rolling in money Go to next.

rolling in something and **rolling in money; rolling in it** *Fig.* having large amounts of something, usually money. ☐ *That family is rolling in money.* ☐ *Bob doesn't need to earn money. He's rolling in it.*

***rolling in the aisles** *Fig.* [of an audience] wild with laughter. (*Typically: **get them ~; have them ~; leave them ~**.) ☐ *I have the best jokes you've ever heard. I'll have them rolling in the aisles.* ☐ *What a great performance. We had them rolling in the aisles.*

A **rolling stone gathers no moss.** *Prov.* A person who does not settle down is not attached to anything or anyone. (Can be said in admiration or in censure, depending on whether or not the speaker feels it is good to be attached to something or someone.) ☐ *I worry about Tom. He's never lived in the same place for two years in a row, and he keeps changing jobs. A rolling stone gathers no moss.*

Rome was not built in a day. *Prov.* It takes a lot of time to achieve something important. ☐ *Professor: When will you finish your research project? Student: It'll take me a while. Rome wasn't built in a day, you know.*

romp all over someone Go to **romp on** someone.

romp around to run and bounce around playfully. ☐ *The horses were in the meadow, romping around in the crisp autumn air.* ☐ *The children need to get out and romp around.*

romp on someone and **romp all over** someone **1.** *Fig. Inf.* to beat or win over, as in a sports contest. ☐ *Our team romped on our opponents and beat them 10 to 1.* ☐ *We romped all over them.* **2.** *Fig. Inf.* to scold someone. ☐ *The teacher romped on the students for their behavior.* ☐ *He romped all over all of them.*

romp through something to run through something fast and playfully. ☐ *The conductor romped through the slow movement of the symphony as if it were a march.* ☐ *The cast romped through the last act, knowing that the play would be closed that very night.*

roof something **over**† to build a roof over something; to provide something with a roof. ☐ *After the destructive storm they had to roof the shed over so that the cow would have some shelter.* ☐ *We will roof over the patio and turn the area into a porch.*

room and board food to eat and a place to live; the cost of food and lodging. ☐ *That college charges too much for room and board.* ☐ *How much is your room and board?*

room together [for two or more people] to share a room, as in a college dormitory. ☐ *Sarah and I roomed together in college.* ☐ *We don't want to room together anymore.*

room with someone to share a room with someone, as in college. ☐ *I need someone to room with me next year.* ☐ *No one wants to room with Kelly.*

root around (for something**)** to dig or shuffle in or through something, looking for something. ☐ *Alice rooted around in her desk drawer for a pen.* ☐ *I'll root around here and see if I can find it.*

root for someone or something to cheer and encourage someone or something. ☐ *Are you rooting for anyone in particular, or are you just shouting because you're excited?* ☐ *I'm rooting for the home team.*

the **root of the matter** Go to the crux of the matter.

*the **root of the problem** an understanding of the causes or basis of a problem. (*Typically: **determine ~; figure out ~; find ~; get to ~; get at ~**.) ☐ *It will take a little more study to get to the root of the problem.* ☐ *Let's stop avoiding the issue and get at the root of the problem.*

root someone or something **out of** something and **root** someone or something **out**† to seek and remove someone or something from something or some place; to seek to discover or bring something to light. ☐ *The committee wanted to root all the lazy people out of the club.* ☐ *The manager rooted out all the deadwood.*

root something **in** something to start a plant growing roots in something. ☐ *I tried to root the plants in sand, but they died.* ☐ *You have to root this kind of tree in very rich soil.*

root something **out**† to get rid of something completely; to destroy something to its roots or core. ☐ *No government will ever root out crime completely.* ☐ *The principal wants to root out troublemakers at the local school.*

root something **up**† [for a pig] to find something in the ground by digging with its nose. ☐ *The pigs will root your plants up if they get out of their pen.* ☐ *The pigs will root up your plants if they get out of their pen.*

rooted in something based on something; connected to a source or cause. ☐ *The civil war was rooted in old cultural hatred.* ☐ *This fictional book was rooted in actual events.*

***rooted to** something [of someone] firmly attached to something. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *She is firmly rooted to her homeland and has no intention of emigrating.* ☐ *The farmer is rooted to the land and will not leave.*

***rooted to the spot** *Fig.* unable to move because of fear or surprise. (*Typically: **appear to be ~; be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *Jane stood rooted to the spot when she saw the ghostly figure.* ☐ *Mary stood rooted to the spot when the thief snatched her bag.*

rope someone **in**† Go to rope someone into something.

rope someone **into** doing something *Fig.* to persuade or trick someone into doing something. ☐ *I don't know who roped me into doing this, but I don't want to do it.* ☐ *See if you can rope somebody into taking this to the post office.*

rope someone **into** something and **rope** someone **in**† *Fig.* to cause someone to get involved in some project. ☐ *She's always trying to rope me into her club.* ☐ *Let's rope in someone to help with cleaning up.*

rope someone or an animal **up**† to tie someone or an animal up with a rope. ☐ *Rope this guy up tight so he won't get away.* ☐ *The cowboy roped up the steer.*

rope something **off**† to isolate something with a rope barrier. ☐ *The police roped the scene of the accident off.* ☐ *The police roped off the scene of the accident.*

rope something **together**† to tie or bind up a thing or things with rope. ☐ *Rope this carton together and put it in the trunk of the car.* ☐ *Rope together these two packages and take them to the truck.*

*the **ropes** *Fig.* knowledge of how to do something; how to work something. (*Typically: **know ~; learn ~; show** someone **~; teach** someone **~**.) ☐ *I'll be able to do my job very well when I know the ropes.* ☐ *John is very slow to learn the ropes.*

A **rose by any other name would smell as sweet.** *Prov.* The nature of a thing is more important than what it is called. (From Shakespeare's play, *Romeo and Juliet*.) ☐ *Bob was upset when his job title was changed from "administrative assistant" to "secretary." We tried to convince him that a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.*

rot away to decompose; to decompose and fall away. ☐ *The fallen trees rotted away and surrendered their nutrients to the soil.* ☐ *As the wood rotted away, it became rich humus.*

rot off to decompose. ☐ *If you don't clean and repaint that old windowsill, it will rot off.* ☐ *A few old branches finally rotted off, but the ancient tree looked as if it would survive the wet spell.*

rot out to decompose and fall out. ☐ *If you don't clean your teeth regularly, they'll rot out!* ☐ *Some of the rafters in the shed rotted out, but we replaced them easily.*

rotate on something to spin on something; to pivot on something. ☐ *This wheel rotates on this little red jewel on the main frame of the watch.* ☐ *The record rotates on this device, which is called a turntable.*

a **rotten apple** a single bad person or thing. ☐ *There always is a rotten apple to spoil it for the rest of us.* ☐ *Tom sure has turned out to be the rotten apple.*

The **rotten apple spoils the barrel.** *Prov.* A bad person influences everyone he or she comes into contact with, making them bad too. ☐ *Helen is the rotten apple that spoils the barrel in our office. Everyone sees her come in late to work and take long coffee breaks, and they think, "Why can't I do the same?"*

a **rotten egg** and a **bad egg** a bad or despised person; an evil influence. ☐ *That guy is a real rotten egg.* ☐ *She sure has turned out to be a rotten egg.*

rotten luck *Fig.* bad luck. ☐ *Of all the rotten luck!* ☐ *I've had nothing but rotten luck all day.*

rotten to the core *Fig.* really bad; corrupt. ☐ *That lousy punk is rotten to the core.* ☐ *The entire administration is rotten to the core.*

*a **rough idea (about** something**)** and *a **rough idea (of** something**)** a general idea; an estimate. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I need to get a rough idea of how many people will be there.* ☐ *I'll manage to get a rough idea. That's good enough.*

rough it to live without luxury; to live simply; to camp out. ☐ *During the blackout, we roughed it without electricity.* ☐ *The campers roughed it in the remote cabin for a week.*

rough someone **up**† to beat someone up; to maltreat someone. ☐ *Am I going to have to rough you up, or will you cooperate?* ☐ *The crooks roughed up the old lady before taking her purse.*

rough something **in**† to construct or draw something initially, temporarily, or crudely. ☐ *The carpenter roughed the doorways in without consulting the plans.* ☐ *The carpenter roughed in the doorways without consulting the plans.*

R

rough something **out†** to make a rough sketch of something. ☐ *I will rough it out and have one of the staff artists attend to the details.* ☐ *Jane roughed out a picture of the proposed building.*

rough something **up†** to scrape or rub something in a way that makes it rough. ☐ *All you have to do is rough the ground up, sow the seeds, and then water them.* ☐ *Rough up the surface a little before you paint it.*

rough stuff unnecessary roughness; physical violence or threats of violence. ☐ *Okay, let's cut out the rough stuff!* ☐ *There was too much rough stuff in the football game.*

a **rough time** Go to a hard time.

rough-and-ready 1. strong, active, and ready for anything. ☐ *John is not exactly rough-and-ready, but he is a moderately good athlete.* ☐ *Ralph is very rough-and-ready, but his table manners are very bad.* **2.** Go to rough-and-tumble.

rough-and-tumble and **rough-and-ready** disorderly; aggressive. ☐ *That was a rough-and-tumble football game.* ☐ *George is too rough-and-ready for me. He doesn't know how to act around civilized people.*

round off to something and **round up to** something; **round down to** something to express a number in the nearest whole amount or nearest group of 1, 10, 100, 1,000, 1/10, 1/100, 1/1,000, etc. ☐ *When doing taxes, Anne rounded her figures off to the nearest dollar.* ☐ *These census population figures are rounded up to the nearest million.*

round someone or something **up†** to locate and gather someone or something. ☐ *Please round the suspects up for questioning.* ☐ *The police rounded up the two possible suspects.*

round something **down†** to reduce a fractional part of a number to the next lowest whole number. (See also round off to something.) ☐ *You can round this figure down if you want. It won't affect the total all that much.* ☐ *Please round down all figures having fractions less than one-half.*

round something **off†** to change a number to the next higher or lower whole number. (See also round off to something.) ☐ *You should round 8.122 off.* ☐ *I rounded off 8.789 to 9.*

R

round something **off† (with** something**)** to finish something with something; to complement something with something. (See also round something off.) ☐ *We rounded the meal off with a fine cognac.* ☐ *We rounded off the meal with a sinful dessert.*

round something **out†** to complete or enhance something. ☐ *We will round the evening out with dessert at a nice restaurant.* ☐ *They rounded out the meal with dessert.*

round something **up† 1.** to collect a group of people or things; to organize people or things into a group. ☐ *The cowboys rounded up the cattle for market.* ☐ *See if you can round some helpers up.* **2.** to change a number to the next higher whole number. (See also round off to something.) ☐ *I rounded up 8.789 to 9.* ☐ *You should round $65.99 up to $66.*

round up to something Go to round off to something.

a **rounding error** a large amount of money that is relatively small in comparison to a much larger sum. ☐ *To a large company like Smith & Co., a few thousand dollars is just a rounding error. It's not a lot at all.*

round-trip ticket a ticket (for a plane, train, bus, etc.) that allows one to go to a destination and return. ☐ *A round-trip ticket is usually cheaper than two one-way tickets.* ☐ *How much is a round-trip ticket to San Francisco?*

rouse someone **from** something to awaken someone from something; to cause someone to come out of something. ☐ *I roused Tom from his nap and sent him on his way.* ☐ *We could not rouse her from her deep sleep.*

rouse someone **out of** something to awaken someone out of a state, such as sleep. ☐ *It was almost impossible to rouse George out of his sleep.* ☐ *They could not rouse us out of our drowsy state.*

rouse someone **to** something to stir someone to something. ☐ *I will rouse the workers to action. They will work or have to find other jobs.* ☐ *The speech by the president roused the citizens to action.*

roust someone **out of** something and **roust** someone **out†** to force someone out of something. ☐ *Bob's brother rousted him out of bed just in time for the school bus.* ☐ *He rousted out his brother.*

rout someone or something **out of** some place and **rout** someone or something **out†** to remove someone or something from some place by force. ☐ *The soldiers routed the snipers out of the deserted buildings.* ☐ *They routed out the snipers.*

route someone or something **around** something to send someone or something on a path that avoids something. ☐ *The travel agent routed us around the congestion of the big city.* ☐ *Due to the storm, they routed the trains around the fallen bridge.*

route something **to** someone to send something along a particular path to someone. ☐ *Try to route this to Walter, who is on a ship at sea. I'll get the name of the ship for you.* ☐ *I will route a copy of the invoice to you.*

row (someone or something**) out† to** something to carry someone or something in a rowboat from the shore out to something. ☐ *Will you row me out to the island?* ☐ *I rowed out all the visitors to the little island.*

a **royal pain** a great annoyance. ☐ *This guy's a royal pain, but we have to put up with him because he's the boss.*

the **royal treatment** very good treatment; very good and thoughtful care of a person. ☐ *I was well cared for. They gave me the royal treatment.* ☐ *I got the royal treatment when I stayed at that expensive hotel.*

rub (away) at something to chafe or scrape something, repeatedly. ☐ *The side of his shoe rubbed away at the side of his desk until the paint wore off.* ☐ *Don't rub at your sore. It will get worse.*

rub elbows (with someone**)** and **rub shoulders with** someone *Fig.* to associate with someone; to work closely with someone. (No physical contact is involved.) ☐ *I don't care to rub elbows with someone who acts like that!* ☐ *I rub shoulders with John at work. We are good friends.*

rub off ((of) something**)** [for something] to become detached from something because of incidental rubbing or scraping. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐

The label rubbed off this can. What do you think it is? ☐ *I can't tell what it is. The label rubbed off.*

rub off (on someone**)** [for a characteristic of one person] to seem to transfer to someone else. ☐ *I'll sit by Ann. She has been lucky all evening. Maybe it'll rub off on me.* ☐ *Sorry. I don't think that luck rubs off.*

rub off on(to) someone or something [for something, such as a coating] to become transferred to someone or something through the contact of rubbing. ☐ *Look what rubbed off on me!* ☐ *The wet paint rubbed off onto my pants leg.*

rub salt in a wound *Fig.* to deliberately make someone's unhappiness, shame, or misfortune worse. ☐ *Don't rub salt in the wound by telling me how enjoyable the party was.* ☐ *Bill is feeling miserable about losing his job and Bob is rubbing salt into the wound by saying how good his replacement is.*

rub shoulders with someone Go to **rub elbows (with** someone**)**.

rub someone or an animal **down†** to stroke or massage someone or an animal, for muscular well-being. ☐ *Sam rubbed his horse down after his ride.* ☐ *He rubbed down his horse.*

rub someone or something **with** something to wipe someone or something with something. ☐ *The mother rubbed the baby gently with a soft cloth.* ☐ *Todd rubbed the surface of the car with a rag to polish it.*

rub someone **out†** *Sl.* to kill someone. (Underworld.) ☐ *The gunman was eager to rub somebody out.* ☐ *The crooks tried to rub out the witness.*

rub someone**('s fur) the wrong way** *Fig.* to irritate someone. ☐ *I'm sorry I rubbed your fur the wrong way. I didn't mean to upset you.* ☐ *Don't rub her the wrong way!*

rub someone's **nose in it** *Fig.* to remind one of something one has done wrong; to remind one of something bad or unfortunate that has happened. (Alludes to a method of housebreaking pets.) ☐ *When Bob failed his exam, his brother rubbed his nose in it.* ☐ *Mary knows she shouldn't have broken off her engagement. Don't rub her nose in it.*

rub something **against** someone or something to scrape or chafe something against someone or something repeatedly. ☐ *The cat kept rubbing its tail against me.* ☐ *I wish John would stop rubbing his hand against my leg.*

rub something **away†** to remove something by chafing or rubbing. ☐ *See if you can rub some of the dirt away.* ☐ *Rub away the dirt if you can.*

rub something **in†** *Fig.* to keep reminding one of one's failures; to nag someone about something. ☐ *I like to rub it in. You deserve it!* ☐ *Why do you have to rub in everything I do wrong?*

rub something **into** something and **rub** something **in†** to cause something to penetrate a surface by rubbing it against the surface. ☐ *Rub this lotion into your muscles. It will stop the aching.* ☐ *Try rubbing in this lotion.*

rub something **off (of)** something and **rub** something **off†** to remove something from something by rubbing. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *The butler rubbed the tarnish off the pitcher.* ☐ *The butler rubbed off the dark tarnish.*

rub something **onto** something and **rub** something **on†** to apply something onto the surface of something by rubbing. ☐ *Alice rubbed suntan lotion onto her arms and legs.* ☐ *Rub on some of this lotion.*

rub something **out†** to obliterate something by rubbing. ☐ *See if you can rub those stains out.* ☐ *Rub out the graffiti on the side of the car if you can.*

rub something **over** something to cover something with something, spreading it by rubbing. ☐ *The chef rubbed the herbal butter over the skin of the turkey.* ☐ *Please rub the lotion over my back.*

rub something **together** to press two things together and move them back and forth. ☐ *Sam rubbed his fingers together, indicating that he needed some money before he could continue.* ☐ *Mary rubbed her hands together to get them warmed up.*

rub something **up†** to raise something, such as the nap of a rug, by rubbing. ☐ *When you run the vacuum cleaner across the floor, you rub the nap of the rug up and get the dirt out.* ☐ *Don't rub up the nap.*

rub (up) against someone or something to bump or scrape against someone or something. ☐ *The cat rubbed up against me and seemed friendly.* ☐ *The side of the car rubbed against the fence.*

ruffle its feathers [for a bird] to point its feathers outward. ☐ *The bird ruffled its feathers when it was annoyed.* ☐ *My parrot ruffles its feathers whenever it is ready to preen itself.*

ruffle someone's **feathers** *Fig.* to irritate or annoy someone. ☐ *I didn't mean to ruffle his feathers. I just thought that I would remind him of what he promised us.*

ruffle something **up†** to raise something, such as feathers, up or outward. ☐ *The bird ruffled its feathers up and started to preen.* ☐ *It ruffled up its feathers.*

rug rat *Sl.* a small child, especially an infant or toddler. (Also a term of address.) ☐ *You got any rug rats at your house?* ☐ *Hey, you cute little rug rat, come over here.*

the **ruin of** someone or something the cause of destruction; a failure. ☐ *Your bad judgment will be the ruin of this company!* ☐ *The greedy politicians were the ruin of the old empire.*

R

rule against someone or something to give a judgment against someone or something. ☐ *The judge ruled against the prosecutor.* ☐ *The judge ruled against my motion.*

rule in favor of someone or something and **rule for** someone or something [for a judge or deliberating body] to award a decision to someone or something or to render a decision favoring someone or something. ☐ *The judge ruled for the defendant.* ☐ *The examining board ruled in favor of dismissing George.*

a **rule of thumb** a general principle developed through experiential rather than scientific means. ☐ *As a rule of thumb, I move my houseplants outside in May.* ☐ *Going by a rule of thumb, we stop for gas every 200 miles when we are traveling.*

rule on something to give a decision or judgment about something. ☐ *How long will it be before the court rules on your petition?* ☐ *The boss will rule on your request tomorrow.*

rule over someone or something to serve as the boss or chief over someone or something. ☐ *I guess you could say that the boss rules over me.* ☐ *The president of a democracy doesn't really rule over the country.*

rule someone or something **out†** to prevent, disqualify, overrule, or cancel someone or something. ☐ *John's bad temper rules him out for the job.* ☐ *The rainy weather ruled out a picnic for the weekend.*

rule the roost *Fig.* to be the boss or manager, especially at home. ☐ *Who rules the roost at your house?* ☐ *Our new office manager really rules the roost.*

rule with a velvet glove *Fig.* to rule in a very gentle way. ☐ *She rules with a velvet glove, but she gets things done, nonetheless.* ☐ *He may appear to rule with a velvet glove, but he is really quite cruel.*

rule with an iron fist *Fig.* to rule in a very stern manner. ☐ *The dictator ruled with an iron fist and terrified the citizens.* ☐ *My boss rules with an iron fist. I'm looking for a new job.*

ruminate about something and **ruminate on** something to ponder and think about something. (Alludes to a cow, relaxing and chewing its cud, as if it is thinking.) ☐ *He sat, ruminating about the events of the day, humming and eating peanuts.* ☐ *Let me ruminate on this a little bit.*

ruminate on something Go to previous.

rummage around (somewhere**) (for** something**)** to move things about haphazardly while looking for something somewhere. ☐ *Alice rummaged around in the drawer for a candy bar she had been saving.* ☐ *After she rummaged around for the candy bar, she found it.* ☐ *She rummaged around in the old trunk.*

rummage through something to move things about haphazardly while searching through something. ☐ *I rummaged through my top drawer, looking for any two socks that matched.* ☐ *Mary spent some time rummaging through the toolbox before she found what she was looking for.*

rumor has it that... there is a rumor that.... ☐ *Rumor has it that Fred is seeing Mary and that they are engaged.*

R

rump session a meeting held after a larger meeting. ☐ *A rump session continued after the meeting was adjourned.* ☐ *A lot of business was conducted in the rump session.*

rumple someone or something **up†** to bring disorder to someone['s clothing] or something; to wrinkle someone or something. ☐ *One of the little boys knocked another boy down and rumpled him up.* ☐ *He rumpled up Dan's shirt.*

run a comb through something to comb one's hair quickly. ☐ *Run a comb through your hair after you come back in the house.* ☐ *She ran a comb through Timmy's hair, and tried to make him look presentable.*

run a fever and **run a temperature** to have a body temperature higher than normal; to have a fever. ☐ *I ran a fever when I had the flu.* ☐ *The baby is running a temperature and is grouchy.*

run a make on someone to perform an identity check on someone. ☐ *The cops ran a make on Lefty and learned about his prison record.* ☐ *We tried to run a make on him and came up with nothing.*

run a red light to pass through an intersection having a red traffic light without stopping. ☐ *Sam got a ticket for running a red light.*

run a risk (of something**)** and **run the risk (of** something**)** to take a chance that something (bad) will happen. ☐ *I don't want to run the risk of losing my job.* ☐ *Don't worry. You won't have to run a risk.*

run a tab to accumulate charges on a bill at a bar or tavern. ☐ *They won't let me run a tab here. I have to pay for each drink as I order it.*

run a taut ship Go to run a tight ship.

run a temperature Go to run a fever.

run a tight ship and **run a taut ship** to run a ship or an organization in an orderly and disciplined manner. (*Taut* and *tight* mean the same thing. *Taut* is correct nautical use.) ☐ *The new office manager really runs a tight ship.* ☐ *Captain Jones is known for running a taut ship.*

run across someone or something Go to come across someone or something.

run across something to cross something while running. ☐ *The joggers all ran across the bridge together.* ☐ *The mice ran across the floor, not knowing that a cat was watching them.*

run (a)foul of someone or something Go to fall (a)foul of someone or something.

run after someone to chase someone of the opposite sex hoping for a date or some attention. ☐ *Is John still running after Ann?* ☐ *No, Ann is running after John.*

run after someone or something Go to after someone or something.

run against someone to compete against someone for elective office. ☐ *Eisenhower ran against Adlai Stevenson in 1952.* ☐ *Not many people run against an incumbent.*

run against someone or something Go to against someone or something.

run against the grain Go to against the grain.

run aground (on something**)** [for a ship] to ram its hull into something beneath the water and get stuck. ☐ *The ship ran aground on a reef and had to wait for high tide to get free.* ☐ *I was afraid we would run aground in the storm.*

run along to leave. ☐ *Please run along and leave me alone.* ☐ *I have to run along now. Good-bye.*

run amok and **run amuck** to go awry; to go bad; to turn bad; to go into a frenzy. (From a Malay word meaning to run wild in a violent frenzy.) ☐ *Our plan ran amok.* ☐ *He ran amuck early in the school year and never quite got back on the track.*

run amuck Go to previous.

run an errand and **do an errand; go on an errand** to take a short trip to do a specific thing; to complete an errand. ☐ *I've got to run an errand. I'll be back in a minute.* ☐ *John has gone on an errand. He'll be back shortly.*

run around 1. to run here and there. ☐ *Why are you running around? Sit down and be quiet.* ☐ *Please stop running around. You are making me nervous.* **2.** to go here and there having meetings or doing errands. ☐ *I've been running*

around all day, shopping for the party tonight. ☐ *I am so tired of running around, carting children to various places.*

run around after someone or something to chase after someone or something; to seek after someone or something. ☐ *Where have you been? I've run around after you all over town!* ☐ *I have been running around after the right-sized shoes all morning.*

run around like a chicken with its head cut off and **run (around) in circles** *Fig.* to run around frantically and aimlessly; to be in a state of chaos. (Alludes to a chicken that continues to run around aimlessly after its head has been chopped off.) ☐ *I spent all afternoon running around like a chicken with its head cut off.* ☐ *If you run around in circles, you'll never get anything done.*

run around with someone to be friends with someone; to go places with regular friends. ☐ *John and I were great friends. We used to run around with each other all the time.* ☐ *Mary ran around with Jane for about a year.*

run as something to run for office in a certain party. ☐ *Do you suppose I can run as an independent?* ☐ *Fred ran as a Democrat and won a seat in the legislature.*

run at a fast clip Go to at a fast clip.

run at a good clip Go to at a good clip.

run at full blast Go to at full blast.

run at someone or something to run toward someone or something; to charge someone or something. ☐ *The bull started to run at us, but changed its mind—thank heavens.* ☐ *The huge crocodile ran at the goat, but the goat leapt away.*

run away (from someone or something**)** to flee someone or something. ☐ *Please don't run away from me. I mean you no harm.* ☐ *Our dog ran away from the lawn mower.*

run away with someone **1.** to flee in the company of someone. ☐ *Frank arrived on the scene, saw what had happened, and ran away with the other boys.* ☐ *Tom ran away with Bill to a place where they could hide.* **2.** [for two people] to elope. ☐ *Jill ran away with Jack, much to her father's relief.* ☐ *Jill and Jack ran away with each other.*

run away with something **1.** to flee with something in one's possession. ☐ *The crook ran away with the watch.* ☐ *Someone ran away with that lady's purse.* **2.** to capture or steal a performance by being the best performer. ☐ *Henry ran away with the show, and everyone loved him.* ☐ *The dog ran away with the whole performance.*

run back to come back, running. ☐ *She ran to the barn and then ran back.* ☐ *Tom ran back, very much afraid.*

run back over something to review something. ☐ *Would you please run back over that last part again?* ☐ *Let me run back over the hard part for you.*

run back to someone or something to return to someone or something in a hurry. ☐ *The child ran back to her mother.* ☐ *We all ran back to the house.*

run behind to be late; to run late. ☐ *We are running behind. You had better hurry.* ☐ *Things are running behind, and we will not finish on time.*

run behind someone or something to travel along behind someone or something, running. ☐ *I will run behind you in the race.* ☐ *Mary ran behind the bicycle until she could not run anymore.*

run between something **and** something else **1.** to travel between someone or something, running. ☐ *I spent all afternoon running between my office and the conference room.* ☐ *We ran between the two quarreling people all day long, trying to settle the argument.* **2.** to pass between someone or something, running. ☐ *The child ran between the two ladies, giving them quite a start.* ☐ *Please don't run between the bushes. You will wear a path there.*

run circles around someone and **run rings around** someone *Fig.* to outrun or outdo someone. (Alludes to someone who runs fast enough to run in circles around a competitor and still win the race.) ☐ *John is a much better racer than Mary. He can run circles around her.* ☐ *Mary can run rings around Sally.*

run counter to something to be in opposition to something; to run against something. (This has nothing to do with running.) ☐ *Your proposal runs counter to what is required by the manager.* ☐ *His idea runs counter to good sense.*

run down 1. to come down, running or very quickly; to go down, running or very quickly. ☐ *I need to talk to you down here. Can you run down?* ☐ *I will run down and talk to you.* **2.** [for something] to lose power and stop working. ☐ *The clock ran down because no one was there to wind it.* ☐ *The toy ran down and wouldn't go again until it had been wound.* **3.** to become worn or dilapidated. ☐ *The property was allowed to run down, and it took a lot of money to fix it up.* ☐ *The old neighborhood has certainly run down since we moved away.*

run down some lines 1. *Sl.* to converse (with someone). ☐ *I was running down some lines with Fred when the bell rang.* ☐ *Hey, man, let's run down some lines.* **2.** *Sl.* to try to seduce someone; to go through a talk leading to seduction. ☐ *Go run down some lines with someone else.* ☐ *I was just standing there running down some lines with Mary when those guys broke in.*

run down to some place to travel to a place. (By running or any other means.) ☐ *I have to run down to the store and get some bread.* ☐ *I want to run down to the bank, but my car is out of gas.*

run down to someone or something to come or go down to someone or something, rapidly. ☐ *Sally ran down the slope to Bob, who stood waiting for her with outstretched arms.* ☐ *I ran down to the well to get some water for Ed, who had the hiccups.*

run for it to escape by running. (See also swim for it.) ☐ *The dogs were coming after me fast. There was nothing I could do but run for it.* ☐ *I ran for it when I saw the police coming.*

run for one's **life** to run away to save one's life. ☐ *The dam has burst! Run for your life!* ☐ *The captain told us all to run for our lives.*

***a run for** one's **money 1.** *Fig.* the results or rewards one deserves, expects, or wants. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I get a run for my money at the club tennis tournament.* ☐ *I had a run for my money in the stock market.* **2.** *Fig.* a challenge. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Bob got a run for his money when he*

R

tried to beat Mary at pool. ☐ *Bill got a run for his money playing cards with John.*

run for something **1.** to travel quickly by running to a place of safety. ☐ *The picnickers ran for the shelter when the rain started to fall.* ☐ *Tom and Jane ran for the house as soon as they heard your call.* **2.** to try to be elected to a particular office. ☐ *Who's going to run for president?* ☐ *I am running for mayor.*

run for the hills Go to head for the hills.

run from someone or something to flee someone or something, usually on foot. ☐ *She ran from the mugger who had accosted her.* ☐ *Mary ran from the dog and jumped over a fence to safety.*

run from something **to** something to travel on foot from one thing or place to another, running. ☐ *Do you think you can run from the bank downtown to the post office on Maple Street?* ☐ *I ran from door to door, telling people what had happened.*

run in circles 1. *Lit.* to run in a circular path. ☐ *The horses ran in circles around the corral for their daily exercise.* ☐ *The children ran in circles around the tree.* **2.** and **run around in circles** *Fig.* to waste one's time in aimless activity. ☐ *Stop running in circles and try to organize yourself so that you are more productive.* ☐ *I have been running around in circles over this matter for days.*

run in something to compete in something, such as a race or an election. ☐ *I will run in the one-hundred-yard dash.* ☐ *I will not run in a race this time.* ☐ *Who will run in this year's election?*

run in the family [for a characteristic] to appear in many (or all) members of a family. ☐ *My grandparents lived well into their nineties, and it runs in the family.* ☐ *My brothers and I have red hair. It runs in the family.*

run into a stone wall *Fig.* to come to a barrier against further progress. ☐ *We've run into a stone wall in our investigation.* ☐ *Algebra was hard for Tom, but he really ran into a stone wall with geometry.*

run into someone Go to bump into someone.

run into someone or something to bump into someone or something. ☐ *I didn't mean to run into you. I'm sorry.* ☐ *Mary ran into the fence and scraped her elbow.*

R

run in(to something**) 1.** [for a liquid] to flow into something or a place. ☐ *The water is running into the basement!* ☐ *It's running in very fast.* **2.** to enter something or a place on foot, running. ☐ *The boys ran into the room and out again.* ☐ *They ran in and knocked over a lamp.* **3.** to stop by a place for a quick visit or to make a purchase quickly. ☐ *I have to run in the drugstore for a minute.* ☐ *I ran into the store for a loaf of bread.* ☐ *I want to visit Mrs. Potter. I can't stay long. I can only run in for a minute.*

Run it by (me) again. Go to Run that by (me) again.

run it down *Sl.* to tell the whole story; to tell the truth. ☐ *Come on! What happened? Run it down for me!* ☐ *I don't care what happened. Run it down. I can take it.*

run its course [for something] to continue through its cycle of existence, especially a disease. ☐ *Sorry. There is no medicine for it. It will just have to run its course.*

run like clockwork to run very well; to progress very well. ☐ *I want this office to run like clockwork—with everything on time and everything done right.* ☐ *The plans for the party were made and we knew that we could depend on Alice to make sure that everything ran like clockwork.*

run like stink Go to like stink.

run like the wind Go to like the wind.

run low (on something**)** to near the end of a supply of something. ☐ *We are running low on salt. It's time to buy more.* ☐ *The car is running low on gas.*

run off 1. to flee. ☐ *The children rang our doorbell and then ran off.* ☐ *They ran off as fast as they could.* **2.** to have diarrhea. ☐ *He said he was running off all night.* ☐ *One of the children was running off and had to stay home from school.* **3.** [for a fluid] to drain away from a flat area. ☐ *By noon, all the rainwater had run off the playground.*

run off at the mouth *Sl.* to talk too much. ☐ *I wish you would stop running off at the mouth.* ☐ *Tom runs off at the mouth too much. I wish he would temper his remarks.*

run off in all directions *Fig.* [for people] to set out to do something or go somewhere in an aimless and disorganized fashion. (Can also apply to one person. See also ride off in all directions.) ☐ *The people in the marketing department need some organization. They are always running off in all directions.* ☐ *Stop running off in all directions and focus your energy.*

run off something to drive or travel off something, such as rails, tracks, a road, etc. ☐ *The train ran off its rails and piled up in a cornfield.* ☐ *We almost ran off the road during the storm.*

run off (with someone**)** to run away with someone, as in an elopement. ☐ *Tom ran off with Ann.* ☐ *Tom and Ann ran off and got married.*

run off with someone or something **1.** to take someone or something away, possibly running. (See also run off (with someone).) ☐ *Fred ran off with Ken. They'll be back in a minute.* ☐ *Who ran off with my dictionary?* **2.** to capture and take away someone or something; to steal someone or something. ☐ *The kidnappers ran off with little Valerie.* ☐ *The kids ran off with a whole box of candy, and the storekeeper is going to press charges.*

run on 1. to continue running. ☐ *I wanted to stop her and ask her something, but she just ran on.* ☐ *The joggers had a chance to stop and rest, but they just ran on.* **2.** to continue on for a long time. ☐ *The lecture ran on and bored everyone to tears.* ☐ *How long is this symphony likely to run on?*

run on all cylinders 1. *Lit.* [for an engine] to run well and smoothly. ☐ *This car is now running on all cylinders, thanks to the tune-up.* ☐ *You can hear if an engine is not running on all cylinders.* **2.** *Fig.* to function well or energetically. ☐ *Our department seems to be running on all cylinders. Congratulations.* ☐ *I am back at my desk after my illness—running on all cylinders.*

a **run on** something Go to a rush on something.

run one's **eye over** something *Fig.* to gaze at the whole of something; to glance at all of something. ☐ *She ran her eyes over the lines of the automobile and nodded her approval.* ☐ *He ran his eyes over the drawing and decided that he had to have it.*

run one's **feet off** *Fig.* to run very hard and fast. □ *I ran my feet off and I'm really tired now that the race is over.* □ *I almost ran my feet off getting over here to see you!*

run one's **fingers through** one's **hair** and **run** one's **hand through** one's **hair** to comb one's hair with one's fingers. □ *I came in out of the wind and ran my fingers through my hair to straighten it out a bit.* □ *He ran his hand through his hair and tried to make himself presentable.*

run one's **hand through** one's **hair** Go to previous.

run one's **head against a brick wall** *Fig.* to be frustrated by coming up against an insurmountable obstacle. □ *There is no point in running your head against a brick wall. If you can't succeed in this case, don't even try.* □ *I have been running my head against a brick wall about this problem long enough.*

run one's **rhymes** *Sl.* to say what you have to say; to give one's speech or make one's plea. □ *Go run your rhymes with somebody else!* □ *I told him to run his rhymes elsewhere.*

run out at someone or something to come out of a place and charge or attack someone or something. □ *The badger ran out at us and then went back to its den.* □ *The dogs ran out at the speeding car.*

run out of gas Go to out of gas.

run out of patience Go to out of patience.

run out of some place to leave a place quickly, on foot; to flee a place. □ *He ran out of the room as fast as he could.* □ *We ran out of the building as soon as we felt the first signs of the earthquake.*

run out (of something**)** Go to out (of something).

run out of steam *Fig.* to lose momentum and fail. □ *Toward the end of the lecture, he seemed to run out of steam, leaving us with no summary or conclusion.*

run out of time to have used up most of the allotted time; to have no time left. □ *You have just about run out of time.* □ *I ran out of time before I could finish the test.*

run out (on someone**)** to depart and leave someone behind. □ *My date ran out on me at the restaurant, and I had to pay the bill.* □ *Her boyfriend ran out when she needed him the most.*

run over 1. to come by for a quick visit. □ *Can you run over for a minute after work?* □ *I will run over for a minute as soon as I can.* **2.** to overflow. □ *The bathtub ran over and there was water all over the floor.* □ *She poured the coffee until the cup ran over.*

run over someone or something to drive, steer, or travel so as to pass over someone or something. □ *The bus ran over the fallen man.* □ *That car almost ran over my toe.*

run over (something**)** to exceed a limit. □ *The lecture ran over the allotted time.* □ *Bob ran over the amount he was budgeted to spend.*

run over something **with** someone to review something with someone. □ *I would like to run over this with you one more time.* □ *I want to run over the proposal with Carl again.*

run over to something to go to something or some place, running or by any independent mode of transportation. □ *Would you run over to the store and get me some eggs?* □ *I have to run over to the bank to cash a check.*

run over with something to drop over for a visit, bringing something. □ *Do you mind if I run over with the cup of sugar I borrowed last week?* □ *Mary ran over with the papers you requested.*

run rampant to run, develop, or grow out of control. □ *The children ran rampant through the house.* □ *Weeds have run rampant around the abandoned house.*

run rings around someone Go to run circles around someone.

run riot and **run wild** *Fig.* to get out of control. □ *The dandelions have run riot in our lawn.* □ *The children ran wild at the birthday party and had to be taken home.*

run roughshod over someone or something Go to ride roughshod over someone or something.

run scared to behave as if one were going to fail. □ *The mayor was running scared, but won anyway.* □ *When we lost that big contract, everyone in the office was running scared. We thought we'd be fired.*

run short (of something**)** to begin to run out of something. □ *We are running short of eggs.* □ *I always keep enough so I will never run short.*

run someone **in**† to arrest one and take one to the police station. □ *The cop ran George in so they could question him extensively.* □ *They ran in George to protect him from the rioters.*

run someone or something **down**† **1.** to collide with and knock down someone or something. □ *The drunken driver ran three pedestrians down.* □ *Mary ran down a stop sign.* **2.** to criticize or deride someone or something. □ *Please stop running me down all the time. I can't be that bad!* □ *You run down everybody who takes your old job!* **3.** to hunt for and locate someone or something. □ *Could you run some information down for me?* □ *I was finally able to run down my old friend.*

run someone or something **into** something and **run** someone or something **in**† to take or drive someone or something into something or some place. □ *Let me run you into the city this morning. I need the car today.* □ *Do you want to go to town? I have to run in George and you can come along.*

R

run someone or something **off (of)** something and **run** someone or something **off**† to drive someone or something off something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) □ *Go out and run those dogs off the lawn.* □ *Go run off the dogs from the lawn.*

run someone or something **out of** something and **run** someone or something **out**† to chase someone or something out of something or some place. □ *The old man ran the kids out of his orchard.* □ *He ran out the kids.*

run someone or something **to earth** to find something after a search. □ *Lisa finally ran her long-lost cousin to earth in Paris.* □ *After months of searching, I ran a copy of Jim's book to earth.*

run someone or something **to** something **1.** to run someone or something to some extreme extent, such as death. □ *The villain's idea was to run his victim to death by chasing him.* □ *He nearly ran his horse to death.* **2.** to drive some-

one or something to some place. □ *Could you run me to the store?* □ *Please run these clothes to the cleaners.*

run someone **ragged** *Fig.* to keep someone or something very busy. □ *This busy season is running us all ragged at the store.* □ *What a busy day. I ran myself ragged.*

run someone **through** something **1.** to make or guide someone though an area while running. □ *They ran us through a maze as part of our training.* □ *We ran the little boys through the park so they could get some exercise.* **2.** to guide a person through a process. □ *Let me run you through the process so you will know what is happening to you.* □ *Can I run you through this procedure again?* **3.** to rehearse someone. □ *The director ran the cast through the last act three times.* □ *She ran herself through the part at home between rehearsals.*

run someone **through (with** something**)** to stab a person all the way through with something, such as a sword. □ *The knight ran the attacker through with his own sword.* □ *He ran him through and stole his horse.*

run something **at full blast** Go to at full blast.

run something **back†** to wind something back to the beginning. □ *Run the tape back and listen to it again.* □ *Run back the tape and listen again.*

run something **by (**someone**) (again)** to explain something to someone again; to say something to someone again. □ *I didn't hear you. Please run that by me again.* □ *Please run it by so we can all hear it.*

run something **by the book** Go to by the book.

run something **down†** to use something having batteries, a motor, or an engine until it has no more power and it stops. □ *Who ran my electric toothbrush down?* □ *Someone ran down my batteries.*

run something **in†** Go to run something into something.

run something **in† (for** something**)** to bring or drive something quickly into a place for some purpose. □ *I have to run my car in for an oil change.* □ *I will run in the truck for the mechanic to take a look at it.*

run something **into** something and **run** something **in† 1.** to guide or route something, such as a wire or a pipe, into something or a place. □ *The worker ran the circuit into each room.* □ *He ran in the circuit as specified.* **2.** to guide something into something; to drive or steer something into something else. □ *Bobby ran his bicycle into the wall, bending the front wheel.* □ *Please don't run your car into the wall!*

run something **into the ground** and **drive** something **into the ground 1.** *Lit.* to pound or force something into the ground. □ *Use a heavy mallet to drive the stakes into the ground.* □ *Run this post into the ground and nail this sign to it.* **2.** *Fig.* to carry something too far. □ *It was a good joke at first, Tom, but you've run it into the ground.* □ *Just because everyone laughed once, you don't have to drive it into the ground.*

run something **off† 1.** to get rid of something, such as fat or energy, by running. □ *The little boys are very excited. Send them outside to run it off.* □ *They need to run off their energy.* **2.** to duplicate something, using a mechanical duplicating machine. □ *If the master copy is ready, I will run some other copies off.* □ *I'll run off some more copies.*

run something **onto** something to drive or guide something onto the surface of something. □ *He ran the car onto the grass and washed it.* □ *Please run your bicycle onto the porch and I will try to fix it for you.*

run something **out of** something and **run** something **out†** to drive or steer something out of something or some place. □ *The cowboys ran the cattle out of the corral.* □ *They ran out the cattle.*

run something **over to** someone or something and **run** something **over†** to carry something to someone or something. □ *Would you please run this package over to Mrs. Franklin?* □ *Do you know where Bill lives? Please run over this package.*

run something **through** something **1.** to drive or propel something through the midst of something or a group. □ *The cowboys ran the cattle right through the crowd of people standing at the station.* □ *He ran his truck through the bushes at the end of the driveway.* **2.** to process something by going through a procedure, a deliberative body, or a department. □ *I will have to run this through the board of directors.* □ *She ran the invoice through the accounting department.*

run something **up† 1.** *Lit.* to raise or hoist something, such as a flag. □ *Harry ran the flag up the flagpole each morning.* □ *Will you please run up the flag today?* **2.** *Fig.* to cause something to go higher, such as the price of stocks or commodities. □ *A rumor about higher earnings ran the price of the computer stocks up early in the afternoon.* □ *They ran up the price too high.* **3.** *Fig.* to accumulate indebtedness. □ *I ran up a huge phone bill last month.* □ *Walter ran up a bar bill at the hotel that made his boss angry.* **4.** to stitch something together quickly. □ *She's very clever. I'm sure she can run up a costume for you.* □ *The seamstress ran up a party dress in one afternoon.*

Run that by (me) again. and **Run it by (me) again.** *Inf.* Please repeat what you just said.; Please go over that one more time. □ *Alice: Do you understand? Sue: No. I really didn't understand what you said. Run that by me again, if you don't mind.* □ *John: Put this piece into the longer slot and the remaining piece into the slot on the bottom. Sue: Run that by again. I got lost just after* put. □ *Mary: Keep to the right, past the fork in the road, then turn right at the crossroads. Do you follow? Jane: No. Run it by me again.*

run the gamut to cover a wide range [from one thing to another]. □ *She wants to buy the house, but her requests run the gamut from expensive new carpeting to completely new landscaping.* □ *His hobbies run the gamut from piano repair to portrait painting.*

run the gauntlet 1. *Lit.* to race, as a punishment, between parallel lines of men who thrash one as one runs. □ *The knight was forced to doff his clothes and run the gauntlet.* **2.** and **run the gauntlet of** something *Fig.* to endure a series of problems, threats, or criticism. □ *After the play, the director found himself running the gauntlet of questions and doubts about his ability.*

run the good race to do the best that one could; to live life as well and as fully as possible. □ *He didn't get what he wanted, but he ran the good race.* □ *Joan ran the good race, and she will be remembered by all of us.*

R

run the risk (of something**)** Go to **run a risk (of** something**)**.

run the show to be in charge; to be in command. ☐ *Who's running this show?* ☐ *No, I don't want to have to run the show again.*

run through something **1.** to pass through an area, running. ☐ *Stop running through the living room!* ☐ *We ran through the park as part of our exercise.* **2.** to go through a procedure or sequence; to rehearse a procedure or sequence. ☐ *I want to run through act two again before we end this rehearsal.* **3.** to read or examine something quickly. ☐ *I ran through your report this afternoon.* ☐ *Sally ran through the list, checking off the names of the people who had already paid for tickets.* **4.** to spend or use a supply of something wastefully and rapidly. ☐ *He ran through his inheritance in two years.* ☐ *Have we run through all the peanut butter already?*

run to seed Go to **go to seed**.

run to someone or something to travel quickly on foot to someone or something; to go to someone or something with some urgency. ☐ *Mary ran to Alice and greeted her.* ☐ *I ran to the door and fled.*

run to something to amount to a certain amount of money. ☐ *In the end, the bill ran to thousands of dollars.* ☐ *His account ran to more than I expected.*

run up against someone or something Go to **up against** someone or something.

run up to some place to travel to a place quickly or for a brief time. ☐ *Let's run up to the lake for the weekend.*

run up (to someone or something**)** to run as far as someone or something and stop; to run to the front of someone or something. ☐ *I ran up to the mailman and said hello to him.* ☐ *I ran up and said hello.*

run wild Go to **run riot**.

run with someone or something to stay in the company of someone or some group. ☐ *Fred was out running with Larry when they met Vernon.* ☐ *Let's go out and run with the other guys this morning.*

run with something **1.** *Lit.* to run, showing a particular characteristic. ☐ *Sally runs with speed and grace.* ☐ *Fred runs with tremendous speed.* **2.** *Fig.* to take over something and handle it aggressively and independently. ☐ *I know that Alice can handle the job. She will take it on and run with it.* ☐ *I hope she runs with this next project.*

run with the hare and hunt with the hounds *Fig.* to support both sides of a dispute. ☐ *In our office politics, Sally always tries to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, telling both the clerical workers and the management that she thinks they should prevail.*

***the runaround** a series of excuses, delays, and referrals. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *You'll get the runaround if you ask to see the manager.* ☐ *I hate it when they give me the runaround.*

running high [for feelings] to be in a state of excitement or anger. ☐ *Feelings were running high as the general election approached.* ☐ *The mood of the crowd was running high when they saw the mother slap her child.*

run-of-the-mill common or average; typical. ☐ *The restaurant we went to was nothing special—just run-of-the-mill.* ☐ *The service was good, but the food was run-of-the-mill or worse.*

the **runt of the litter 1.** *Lit.* the smallest animal born in a litter; the animal in a litter least likely to survive. ☐ *No one wanted to buy the runt of the litter, so we kept it.* **2.** and the **runt of the family** *Fig.* the smallest child in the family. ☐ *I was the runt of the litter and the butt of all the jokes.*

rush at someone or something to run at or charge toward someone or something. ☐ *The dog rushed at us and scared us to death.* ☐ *Mary rushed at the door, but it slammed shut before she got there.*

rush for something to hurry to something. ☐ *All the people rushed for the exits when the game was over.* ☐ *We rushed for the picnic tables as soon as they said that lunch was ready.*

rush hour the period of time when heavy traffic is moving into or out of a city. ☐ *This is the slowest rush hour I have ever been in. Traffic is almost in gridlock.*

rush in(to something**) 1.** to run or hurry into a thing or a place. ☐ *Everyone rushed into the shelter when the rain started.* ☐ *They all rushed in at once.* **2.** to begin doing something without the proper preparation. ☐ *Don't rush into this job without thinking it through.* ☐ *Mary rushed in without thinking.*

rush off (from some place**)** to hurry away from some place. ☐ *I'm sorry, but I will have to rush off from this meeting before it's over.* ☐ *Mary had to rush off before the party was over.*

a **rush on** something and a **run on** something a large demand for something. ☐ *There was a rush on bottled water during the drought.* ☐ *During the hot summer, there was a run on air conditioners.*

rush out (of something**)** to exit in a hurry. ☐ *Everyone rushed out of the room at the same time.* ☐ *They rushed out because they smelled smoke.*

rush someone **into** something to hurry someone into doing something. ☐ *We rushed Harry into taking the job.* ☐ *Sally has always hated that dress. Sam rushed her into buying it.*

rush someone or something **into** something and **rush** someone or something **in**† to lead or carry someone or something into something or some place hurriedly. ☐ *I rushed her into the hospital emergency room, and everything was soon all right.* ☐ *The nurse rushed in the emergency medical equipment.*

rush someone or something **out of** something and **rush** someone or something **out**† to lead or guide someone or something out of something or some place hurriedly. ☐ *The ushers rushed everyone out of the church so they could clean the place before the next wedding.* ☐ *They rushed out another edition of the newspaper that afternoon.*

rush someone **to the hospital** to take someone to the hospital very quickly. ☐ *They had to rush her to the hospital because she had stopped breathing.* ☐ *We rushed Uncle Harry to the hospital after he complained of chest pains.*

rush something **into print** to print up something hastily. ☐ *The story was so timely that the newspaper editor rushed it into print without checking all the details.* ☐ *We will rush the book into print as soon as the author finishes.*

rush something **off† (to** someone or something**)** to send something quickly to someone or something. ☐ *I will rush your order off to you immediately.* ☐ *I need to rush off this package to Walter.*

rush something **through (**something**) 1.** *Lit.* to pass something through a physical area rapidly. ☐ *He rushed the ambulance through the gate to the stadium.* ☐ *Strong blowers rushed many cubic feet of air through the ductwork into all the rooms.* **2.** *Fig.* to move something through some process or office in a hurry. ☐ *He was in a hurry so we rushed his order through the shipping department.* ☐ *He asked us to rush it through.*

rush through something to hurry to get something finished; to race through something. ☐ *Please don't rush through this business. Get it right.* ☐ *Timmy rushed through dinner so he could go out and play.*

rush to conclusions to try to reach a conclusion too fast, probably with insufficient evidence; to jump to conclusions. ☐ *I hope that you don't rush to any conclusions. I can explain this.* ☐ *I'm afraid you are rushing to conclusions when you speak of canceling the performance.*

rush to someone or something to hurry to get to someone, something, or some event. ☐ *I rushed to the injured man to try to help him.* ☐ *We all rushed to the office to see what had happened.*

rust away to dissolve away into rust. ☐ *In a few years, this car will rust away if you don't take care of it.* ☐ *The bridge is rusting away, little by little.*

rust belt *Fig.* the industrial north of the United States. (Patterned on sun belt.) ☐ *The economy in the rust belt is slowing down.* ☐ *The salt they put on the roads in the winter made my car all rusty. I guess that's why they call this area the rust belt.*

rust out to develop holes or weak places owing to rust. ☐ *Our hot water heater rusted out and flooded the basement.*

rustle something **up†** *Rur.* to manage to prepare a meal, perhaps on short notice. ☐ *I think I can rustle something up for dinner.* ☐ *Please rustle up something to eat.*

R

Ss

***the sack** and ***the ax** dismissal from one's employment. (*Typically: **get ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Poor Tom got the sack today. He's always late.* ☐ *I was afraid that Sally was going to get the ax.*

sack out to go to bed or go to sleep. ☐ *It's time for me to sack out.* ☐ *Let's sack out early tonight.*

sack something **up†** to put something into bags or sacks. ☐ *Please sack the groceries up and put them in the cart.* ☐ *I will sack up your groceries.*

sacked out asleep. ☐ *Mary is sacked out in her room.* ☐ *Here it is ten o'clock, and you are still sacked out!*

sacred cow *Fig.* something that is regarded by some people with such respect and veneration that they do not like it being criticized by anyone in any way. (From the fact that the cow is regarded as sacred in India and is not eaten or mistreated.) ☐ *A university education is a sacred cow in the Smith family. Fred is regarded as a failure because he quit school at 16.* ☐ *Don't talk about eating meat to Pam. Vegetarianism is one of her sacred cows.*

sacrifice someone or something **for** someone or something to forfeit someone or something for the sake of someone or something. ☐ *Surely you won't sacrifice your dear wife for a silly twit like Francine!* ☐ *Would you sacrifice your bank account for a chance to go to Europe?*

sacrifice someone or something **to** someone or something to make an offering of or give up someone or something to someone or some power. ☐ *The high priest prepared to sacrifice the prisoner to the gods.* ☐ *I sacrificed a lot of money to a fancy lifestyle.*

a **sad sight** Go to a sorry sight.

sadder but wiser *Cliché* unhappy but knowledgeable [about someone or something—after an unpleasant event]. ☐ *After the accident, I was sadder but wiser, and would never make the same mistake again.* ☐ *We left the meeting sadder but wiser, knowing that we could not ever come to an agreement with Becky's aunt.*

saddle an animal **up†** to put a saddle on a horse or some other beast of burden. ☐ *Please saddle my horse up. I have to leave.* ☐ *Would you saddle up my horse for me?*

saddle someone **with** someone or something *Fig.* to burden someone with someone or something undesirable, annoying, or difficult to deal with. ☐ *I apologize for saddling you with my young cousin all day.* ☐ *I didn't mean to saddle you with my problems.*

saddle up 1. *Lit.* to prepare one's horse for riding by putting a saddle on it. ☐ *Let's saddle up and go for a ride.* **2.** *Fig.* to mount one's horse and sit in the saddle. ☐ *The cowboys saddled up and took off after the rustlers.*

saddled with someone or something *Fig.* burdened with someone or something. ☐ *I've been saddled with the children all day. Let's go out tonight.* ☐ *I don't want to be saddled with your work.*

safe and sound unharmed and whole or healthy. ☐ *It was a rough trip, but we got there safe and sound.* ☐ *I'm glad to see you here safe and sound.*

safeguard against someone or something to protect against someone or something. ☐ *We will try to safeguard against accidents.* ☐ *How can I safeguard against prowlers?*

safeguard someone or something **against** someone or something to protect someone or something against someone or something. ☐ *We will take action that will safeguard you against a recurrence of the unpleasantness.* ☐ *I will safeguard my family against the prowler.*

safety in numbers safety achieved by being concealed in or united with large numbers of people or other creatures. ☐ *We stayed close together, thinking that there was safety in numbers.* ☐ *The elderly people went out together for a walk, knowing that there was safety in numbers.*

sag away (from something**)** to settle or droop down or away. ☐ *The cloth sagged away from the edge of the table.*

sag down to droop downward. ☐ *The branch sagged down and nearly touched the ground.* ☐ *When the rain got the drapes wet, they sagged down and touched the floor.*

sag under something to droop under the burden of something. ☐ *The porch roof sagged under the weight of the snow.* ☐ *The springs of the car sagged under the weight of all the passengers.*

sage advice very good and wise advice. ☐ *My parents gave me some sage advice when I turned 18.* ☐ *I asked my uncle for some of his sage advice.*

sail against something to operate a boat or ship, so as to move against the wind. ☐ *It takes skill and training to sail against the wind.* ☐ *The huge cruise ship sailed against the wind all the way to St. Thomas.*

sail along (something**)** to travel on a course in a boat or plane. ☐ *The huge white ship sailed along the Amazon River slowly and peacefully.* ☐ *The boat sailed along peacefully.*

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sail around to travel by water in a boat or ship. ☐ *We sailed around for about an hour and then went back to the shore.* ☐ *Let's go out and sail around before dinner.*

sail for some place to depart in a boat or ship for some place. ☐ *This ship sails for Bridgetown, Barbados, at noon today.* ☐ *We will sail for home early in the morning.*

sail from some place **to** some place else to move or travel from one place to another in a boat or ship. ☐ *We sailed from San Juan to Acapulco.* ☐ *The ship sailed from its home port to Baltimore overnight.*

sail into someone *Fig.* to attack someone; to chastise someone. (Based on sail into someone or something.) ☐ *The angry coach sailed into the players.* ☐ *The teacher sailed into Timmy for breaking the window.*

sail into someone or something **1.** to crash into someone or something with a boat or ship. ☐ *The boat sailed into the dock, causing considerable damage.* ☐ *I was in my skiff when a larger boat sailed into me.* **2.** to crash into someone or something. ☐ *The missile sailed into the soldiers, injuring a few.* ☐ *The car sailed into the lamppost.*

sail in(to something**)** **1.** *Lit.* to travel into something or some place in a boat or ship. ☐ *We sailed into the harbor nearly an hour late.* ☐ *We sailed in at noon.* **2.** *Fig.* to move or proceed into something or some place gracefully or without resistance. ☐ *She sailed into the room wearing a flowing gown.* ☐ *Three young maidens sailed into the room before the door closed.*

sail (right) through something **1.** *Lit.* to travel through something in a boat or ship. ☐ *The line of boats sailed right through the Grenadines in the daylight hours.* ☐ *We sailed through the narrows without a pilot.* **2.** *Fig.* to go through something very quickly and easily. ☐ *The kids just sailed right through the ice cream and cake. There was not a bit left.* ☐ *You have sailed through your allowance already.* **3.** *Fig.* to get through a procedure, evaluation, or vote quickly and easily. ☐ *The proposal sailed through the committee with no debate.* ☐ *I hope that this matter sails through quickly.*

sail under false colors **1.** *Lit.* to sail with false identification. (Pirates often sailed under the national flag of the ship they planned on attacking.) ☐ *The ship, sailing under false colors, suddenly started to pursue our ship.* ☐ *Bluebeard the pirate was known for sailing under false colors.* **2.** *Fig.* to function deceptively. ☐ *You are not who you seem to be. You are sailing under false colors.* ☐ *Tom was sailing under false colors and finally got found out.*

sail up a river to travel upstream on a river in a boat or ship. ☐ *We sailed up the Amazon River in a large, seagoing ship.* ☐ *It was not possible to sail up the Mississippi as far as we wanted.*

Sakes alive! Go to Land(s) sakes (alive)!

sally forth to go forth; to leave and go out. ☐ *The soldiers sallied forth from behind the stone wall.* ☐ *Well, it's time to sally forth and drive to work.*

the **salt of the earth** *Fig.* the most worthy of people; a very good or worthy person. (A biblical reference, Matthew 5:13.) ☐ *Mrs. Jones is the salt of the earth. She is the first to help anyone in trouble.* ☐ *Frank's mother is the salt of the earth. She has five children of her own and yet fosters three others.*

salt something **away**† **1.** *Lit.* to store and preserve a foodstuff by salting it. ☐ *The farmer's wife salted a lot of fish and hams away for the winter.* ☐ *She salted away a lot of food.* **2.** *Fig.* to store something; to place something in reserve. ☐ *I need to salt some money away for my retirement.* ☐ *I will salt away some money for emergencies.*

salt something **down**† to place salt on something, such as icy roads. ☐ *I won't go out until midmorning, after they have salted the roads down.* ☐ *I hope they salt down the roads soon.*

salt something **with** something **1.** *Lit.* to put a variety of salt or a salt substitute onto some food. ☐ *Oscar salts his food with a salt substitute.* ☐ *Did you salt your meat with salt or something else?* **2.** *Fig.* to put something into something as a lure. (Refers to putting a bit of gold dust into a mine in order to deceive someone into buying the mine.) ☐ *The land agent salted the bank of the stream with a little gold dust hoping for a land rush to start.* ☐ *Someone salted the mine to fool the prospectors.*

salute someone **with** something **1.** *Lit.* to greet someone with a formal hand salute. ☐ *He failed to salute the officer with the proper salute and was reprimanded.* ☐ *David saluted the captain with the appropriate salute and passed on by.* **2.** *Fig.* to greet or honor someone with the firing of guns or an overflight of airplanes. (Military or government.) ☐ *The government saluted the visiting dignitary with a twenty-one gun salute.* ☐ *They saluted the prime minister with a flight of acrobatic jets.*

salvage something **from** someone or something to rescue or save something from someone or something. ☐ *The baby got into the eggs, but I was able to salvage about six of them from him before they were broken all over the place.* ☐ *I salvaged a good pair of shoes from the trash.*

the **same as** someone or something identical to someone or something. ☐ *Can you build me a birdhouse the same as yours?* ☐ *Have you noticed that Mary looks the same as her mother?*

same difference the same; no difference at all. ☐ *Pink, fuchsia, what does it matter? Same difference.* ☐ *Whether you go or I go, it's the same difference.*

The **same for me.** Go to I'll have the same.

Same here. Me too!; I agree! ☐ *Bob: I'll have chocolate ice cream! Bill: Same here.* ☐ *Mary: I'll vote for the best candidate. Tom: Same here!*

same o(l)' same o(l)' *Sl.* the same old thing as one has had before or is used to. ☐ *I'm getting tired of the same ol' same ol'.* ☐ *Why not something different? Do you like the same o' same o'?*

the **same old story** something that occurs or has occurred in the same way often. ☐ *Jim's got no money. It's the same old story. He's spent it all on clothing.* ☐ *The company is getting rid of workers. It's the same old story—a shortage of orders.*

The **same to you.** The same comment applies to you. (This can be a polite or a rude comment.) ☐ *Bill: Have a pleasant evening. Bob: Thank you. The same to you.* ☐ *Mary: You're the most horrible person I've ever met! John: The same to you!*

sand something **down**† **1.** to make something smooth by rubbing it with sandpaper. (To act on the main body of the object, not the imperfections.) ☐ *You should sand the board down before you paint it.* ☐ *Please sand down the board.* **2.** to remove bumps or imperfections on the surface of something by rubbing them with sandpaper. (To act on the imperfections, not the main body of the object.) ☐ *Sand these bumps down, will you?* ☐ *Sand down these bumps, please.*

the **sands of time** *Fig.* the accumulated tiny amounts of time; time represented by the sand in an hourglass. ☐ *The sands of time will make you grow old like everyone else.* ☐ *My only enemy is the sands of time.*

sandwich someone or something **between** people or things *Fig.* to enclose someone or something on both sides between people or things in any combination. ☐ *We had

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to sandwich the children between us because there were no other seats close by. ☐ *We had to sandwich the package between Ed and the side of the bus.*

satiate someone or an animal **with** something to provide enough of something for someone or an animal. ☐ *The waiters set out to satiate the guests with whatever sinful desserts they desired.* ☐ *The zookeeper satiated the tigress with a huge leg of beef.*

satisfy someone or an animal **with** something to use something to please or content someone or an animal. ☐ *Do you think I can satisfy Mrs. Franklin with payment for her broken window?* ☐ *A dog biscuit will satisfy the dog until its regular feeding time.*

satisfy something **by** something and **satisfy** something **with** something to fulfill a requirement, using a particular thing, such as a school or college course. ☐ *Can I satisfy the requirements by taking a course in art?* ☐ *Will I satisfy the requirement with this course?*

saturate someone or something **with** something to drench someone or something thoroughly with something. ☐ *The rain saturated them all with cooling water.* ☐ *Irrigation saturated the field with the moisture they needed.*

Saturday night special a small, easily obtainable pistol. ☐ *There was another killing last night with a Saturday night special.* ☐ *That's the tenth shooting done with a Saturday night special this week.*

saunter along to walk along slowly; to ramble along. ☐ *Bob sauntered along, looking as if he didn't have a care in the world.* ☐ *I was just sauntering along, minding my own business, when all of a sudden a mugger jumped out and swiped my purse.*

save a bundle (on something**)** *Fig.* to save a lot of money on the purchase of something. ☐ *I managed to save a bundle on a car by buying a used one.*

Save it! *Inf.* Stop talking.; Shut up!; Tell it to me later. ☐ *I've heard enough. Save it!* ☐ *Save it! You talk too much!*

save (money) on something to save money or some amount of money on the purchase of something. ☐ *I can save a lot of money on this purchase by buying it somewhere else.* ☐ *I am sure you can save on a new car if you shop wisely.*

save (money) toward something to accumulate money toward the purchase of something. ☐ *I am saving my money toward the purchase of a big-screen TV.* ☐ *I'm saving toward a new car.*

save money up† **(for** something**)** to accumulate an amount of money for the purchase of something. ☐ *I'm saving my money up for a car.* ☐ *Save up your money for a car.*

save one's **bacon** Go to save someone's skin.

save one's **breath** *Fig.* to refrain from talking, explaining, or arguing. ☐ *There is no sense in trying to convince her. Save your breath.* ☐ *Tell her to save her breath. He won't listen to her.*

save (one's**) face** *Fig.* to preserve one's good standing, pride, or high position (after a failure). ☐ *The ambassador was more interested in saving his face than winning the argument.* ☐ *Most diplomats are concerned with saving face.*

save oneself **(for marriage)** *Euph.* to remain a virgin until marriage. ☐ *No, I can't. I love you, but I'm saving myself for marriage.* ☐ *His buddies teased him, asking if he was saving himself.*

save someone **in the (very) nick of time** Go to in the (very) nick of time.

save someone or something **from** someone or something to rescue someone or something from someone or something. ☐ *The cop was able to save the kid from his attackers.* ☐ *I managed to save some old photographs from the fire.*

save someone's **neck** Go to next.

save someone's **skin** and **save** someone's **neck; save** one's **bacon** *Fig.* to save someone from injury, embarrassment, or punishment. ☐ *I saved my skin by getting the job done on time.* ☐ *Thanks for saving my neck! I would have fallen down the stairs if you hadn't held my arm.*

save (something**) for a rainy day** and **put** something **aside for a rainy day; hold** something **back for a rainy day; keep** something **for a rainy day** *Fig.* to reserve something—usually money—for some future need. ☐ *I've saved a little money for a rainy day.* ☐ *Keep some extra allowance for a rainy day.*

save something **for** someone or something to reserve something for someone or something. ☐ *Please save some cake for me.* ☐ *I am saving this cake for tomorrow.*

save something **up**† to save something; to accumulate something. ☐ *I'm saving up cans for recycling.* ☐ *If you'd only save your money up, you could buy anything you want.*

save the day to produce a good result when a bad result was expected. ☐ *The team was expected to lose, but Sally made three points and saved the day.* ☐ *Your excellent speech calmed the crowd and saved the day.*

save (up) (for something**)** to accumulate money in order to buy something. ☐ *I can't buy a car because I am saving up for college.* ☐ *I don't have the money now, but I am saving up.*

saved by the bell *Cliché* saved by the timely intervention of someone or something. (Alludes to a boxer who is saved from being counted out by the bell that ends a round.) ☐ *I was going to have to do my part, but someone knocked on the door and I didn't have to do it. I was saved by the bell.* ☐ *I wish I had been saved by the bell.*

saving grace *Cliché* the one thing that saves or redeems someone or something that would otherwise be a total disaster. ☐ *Her saving grace is that she has a lot of money.* ☐ *The saving grace for the whole evening was the good music played by the band.*

savor of something to taste like something. ☐ *This casserole savors of nutmeg.* ☐ *The meat savors of too much garlic.*

saw against the grain Go to against the grain.

saw into something to cut into something with a saw. ☐ *The carpenter sawed into the beam and had it cut in two in no time at all.* ☐ *Be careful not to saw into the table.*

saw something **down**† to cut something down with a saw. ☐ *We are going to have to saw that dead tree down before it falls on the house.* ☐ *I'll saw down the tree.*

saw something **off (of)** something and **saw** something **off**† to cut something off something with a saw. (*Of* is usually

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retained before pronouns.) ☐ *He sawed the branch off of the tree.* ☐ *Sam sawed the dead branch off.* ☐ *Saw off another branch on the other side.*

saw something **(up†) (in(to)** something**)** to cut something up into pieces with a saw. ☐ *Jake sawed the logs up into pieces the right size for the fireplace.* ☐ *Would you saw up the logs into smaller pieces?*

saw through something to cut through something with a saw. ☐ *I can't saw through this wood. It's too hard!* ☐ *I can saw through it!*

say a mouthful *Fig.* to say a lot; to say something very important or meaningful. ☐ *When you said things were busy around here, you said a mouthful. It is terribly busy.* ☐ *You sure said a mouthful, Bob. Things are really busy.*

Say cheese! *Inf.* an expression used by photographers to get people to smile, which they must do while saying the word *cheese.* ☐ *"All of you please stand still and say cheese!" said the photographer.* ☐ *"Is everybody ready? Say cheese!" asked Mary, aiming the camera.*

say grace to say a prayer of gratitude before or after a meal. ☐ *Grandfather always says grace at Thanksgiving.* ☐ *A local preacher said grace at the banquet.*

Say hello to someone **(for me).** Please convey my good wishes to someone. (The *someone* can be a person's name or a pronoun. See also Give my best to someone.; Remember me to someone.) ☐ *Andy: Good-bye, Tom. Say hello to your brother for me. Tom: Sure. Bye, Andy.* ☐ *Sally: Well, good-bye. Mary: Bye. Sally: And say hello to Jane. Mary: Sure. Bye-bye.*

a **say (in** something**)** Go to a voice (in something).

Say no more. *Inf.* I agree.; I will do it.; I concede, no need to continue talking. ☐ *John: Someone ought to take this stuff outside. Bill: Say no more. Consider it done.* ☐ *Mary: Shouldn't we turn here if we plan to visit Jane? Alice: Say no more. Here we go.*

say one's **piece** and **speak** one's **piece** to say what one must say; to recite what one has planned to say. ☐ *Look, just say your piece and get out of here.* ☐ *I said my piece and left.*

say something **about** someone or something **1.** to make remarks about someone or something. ☐ *What did you say about me?* ☐ *I think that Fran must have said something about me to you.* **2.** to indicate or reveal something about someone or something. ☐ *They all cheered. That really says something about Tom's popularity.* ☐ *The fact that almost no one came to his party says something about Walter, I think.*

say something **against** someone or something to speak out against someone or something; to make a case against someone or something. ☐ *I would never say anything against you!* ☐ *No one would say anything against your work.*

say something **for** something [for something] to imply something good about something. ☐ *The speed with which we were able to sell the house says something for the state of the real estate market.* ☐ *The number of new cars on the road says something for the state of the nation's economy.*

say something **in a roundabout way** to imply something without saying it; to say something indirectly; to speak using circumlocution. ☐ *Why don't you say what you mean? Why do you always say something in a roundabout way?* ☐ *What did she mean? Why did she say it in a roundabout way?*

say something **in plain English** Go to in plain English.

say something **in plain language** Go to in plain language.

say something **out loud** to say something so it can be heard; to say something that others might be thinking, but not saying. ☐ *Yes, I said it, but I didn't mean to say it out loud.* ☐ *If you know the answer, please say it out loud.*

say something **over (and over (again))** to repeat something, perhaps many times. ☐ *I have said it over and over again! Why don't you listen?* ☐ *Why do you keep saying it over?*

say something **(right) to** someone's **face** to say something (unpleasant) directly to someone. ☐ *She knew I thought she was rude because I said it right to her face.* ☐ *I thought she felt that way about me, but I never thought she'd say it to my face.*

say something **to** oneself **1.** *Lit.* to mutter something to oneself so that no one else can hear. ☐ *He said something to himself, but I didn't catch what it was.* ☐ *I said the answer to myself and no one else was supposed to hear it.* **2.** *Fig.* to think something to oneself. ☐ *When I thought of him as a basketball player, I said to myself that he really isn't tall enough.* ☐ *I said a few choice critical remarks to myself when she presented her talk.*

say something **to** someone to tell something to someone. ☐ *He didn't say anything to me.* ☐ *Did someone say something to you?*

say something **to** something to say yes or no to a proposal, request, etc. ☐ *I hope you will say yes to my proposal.* ☐ *Nothing was said to your request at the last meeting.*

say something **under** one's **breath** Go to under one's breath.

say that... to assume [something]; to suppose [that something were so]. ☐ *Say that* x *is equal to a whole number greater than 10.* ☐ *Say that two trains leave two different cities at the same time.*

say the word to give a signal to begin; to say yes or okay. ☐ *I'm ready to start any time you say the word.* ☐ *We'll all shout "Happy Birthday!" when I say the word.*

say uncle Go to holler uncle.

Say what? *Inf.* What did you say?; Please repeat what you said. ☐ *Sally: Would you like some more salad? Fred: Say what? Sally: Salad? Would you like some more salad?* ☐ *John: Put this one over there. Sue: Say what? John: Never mind, I'll do it.*

Say when. *Inf.* Tell me when I have given you enough of something, usually a liquid. (Sometimes answered simply with *When.*) ☐ *Tom (pouring milk into Fred's glass): Say when, Fred. Fred: When.* ☐ *John: Do you want some more juice? Mary: Yes. John: Okay. Say when.*

Says me! and **Sez me!** *Inf.* a formulaic answer to *Says who?* ☐ *Tom: Says who? Fred: Says me, that's who!* ☐ *Tom: You? Fred: You got it, buster. Says me!*

Says who? and **Sez who?** *Inf.* a formulaic challenge indicating disagreement with someone who has said something. ☐ *Tom: Says who? Fred: Says me, that's who!* ☐ *She*

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drew herself up to her full height, looked him straight in the eye, and said, "Says who?"

Says you! *Inf.* That's just what you say!; You don't know what you are talking about! ☐ *Fred: You are fat and ugly. Tom: Says you!* ☐ *Mary: People who go around correcting other people were found to be very annoying in a recent survey. Bill: Says you!*

scab over [for a wound] to form a scab. ☐ *The wound soon scabbed over and the injury was well on its way to healing.* ☐ *I hope this shaving cut scabs over before I have to leave for work.*

scale something **down**† to reduce the size or cost of something. ☐ *The bad economy forced us to scale the project down.* ☐ *Liz scaled down the project.*

scale something **to** something to design or adjust the size of one thing to match or complement the size of another thing. ☐ *The architect sought to scale the office building to the buildings surrounding it.* ☐ *The playhouse will have to be scaled to the main house.*

scamper along [for a child or small animal] to run along nimbly. ☐ *The rabbit scampered along, unaware that a fox was following it.* ☐ *It is time for Timmy to scamper along home.*

scamper away [for a child or small animal] to run away nimbly. ☐ *The rabbit scampered away across the lawn.* ☐ *The children scampered away when they heard the teacher coming.*

scar over [for an injury] to form and leave a scar. ☐ *The wound will scar over, but your arm will never be the same as it was before the accident.*

***scarce as hen's teeth** and **scarcer than hen's teeth** *Cliché* scarce; seldom found. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *I do declare, decent people are as scarce as hen's teeth in these chaotic times.* ☐ *Handmade lace is scarcer than hen's teeth; most lace is made by machine.*

scarcely exchange more than some number of **words with** someone Go to **exchange no more than** some number of **words with** someone.

scarcely have time to breathe Go to **hardly have time to breathe.**

scarcer than hen's teeth Go to **scarce as hen's teeth.**

scare one **out of** one's **mind** Go to **frighten** one **out of** one's **wits.**

scare one **out of** one's **wits** Go to **frighten** one **out of** one's **wits.**

scare someone or an animal **off**† to frighten someone or an animal away. ☐ *The dog's barking scared the burglar off.* ☐ *The barking scared off the prowler.*

scare someone or an animal **out**† Go to **scare** someone or an animal **out of** something.

scare someone or an animal **out of** something and **scare** someone or an animal **out**† to frighten someone or an animal out of something or some place. ☐ *The old man tried to scare the kids out of his orchard by shouting at them.* ☐ *Karen scared out the intruder.*

scare someone or an animal **to death** Go to **frighten** someone or an animal **to death.**

scare someone or something **away**† **(from** someone or something**)** to frighten someone or something away from someone or something. ☐ *He put on a gruff exterior to scare everyone away from him.* ☐ *The bear scared away a lot of people from the campground.*

scare someone or something **up**† *Rur.* to search for and find someone or something. ☐ *Go out in the kitchen and scare some food up.* ☐ *I'll see if I can scare up somebody to fix the broken chair.*

scare someone **out of** something to startle someone; to frighten someone into losing something, such as a year's worth of growth, ten years of life, etc. ☐ *You nearly scared me out of my skin!* ☐ *The bad news scared Roger out of ten years' growth.*

scare someone **stiff** *Fig.* to frighten someone severely. (*Stiff* = dead.) ☐ *That loud noise scared me stiff.* ☐ *The robber jumped out and scared us stiff.*

scare something **out of** someone to frighten someone very badly. (The *something* can be *the living daylights, the wits, the hell, the shit,* etc. Use discretion with *shit.*) ☐ *Gee, you scared the living daylights out of me!* ☐ *The police tried to scare the truth out of her.* ☐ *The door blew shut and scared the hell out of me.*

scare the living daylights out of someone Go to **frighten the hell out of** someone.

scare the pants off (of) someone to frighten someone very badly. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Wow! You nearly scared the pants off me!* ☐ *The explosion scared the pants off of everyone.*

scare the wits out of someone Go to **frighten the hell out of** someone.

scared silly frightened very much. ☐ *I was scared silly by the loud explosion.* ☐ *We were scared silly to go into the park after dark.*

scared stiff *Fig.* badly frightened. ☐ *We were scared stiff by the robber.* ☐ *I was scared stiff when the dog growled at me.*

scared to death Go to **frightened to death.**

scarf out *Sl.* to overeat. ☐ *I scarf out whenever we have pizza.* ☐ *My brother scarfs out every day—around the clock!*

scarf something **down**† *Sl.* to eat something, perhaps in a hurry; to swallow something, perhaps in a hurry. ☐ *Are you going to scarf this whole thing down?* ☐ *Here, scarf down this sandwich.*

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scatter something **about**† and **scatter** something **around**† to throw or distribute something about. ☐ *The children scattered the books about and left the room in a general mess.* ☐ *They scattered about all the books and papers.*

scavenge (around) for someone or something to search everywhere for someone or something. ☐ *We had to scavenge for a person who would agree to run for president in my place.* ☐ *Sam scavenged around for a socket wrench.*

scheme against someone or something to plot or conspire against someone or something. ☐ *A group of generals was plotting against the government.* ☐ *They schemed against the king until he caught them and put an end to it.*

scheme for something to plot and plan for something, perhaps using deception. ☐ *She is scheming for a raise.* ☐ *Ted is always scheming for a way to miss work.*

schiz(z) out *Sl.* to freak out; to lose mental control. ☐ *What a day! I nearly schizzed out.* ☐ *I schizzed out during the test. Got an F.*

the **school of hard knocks** *Fig.* the school of life's experiences, as opposed to a formal, classroom education. ☐ *I didn't go to college, but I went to the school of hard knocks. I learned everything by experience.*

school of thought a particular philosophy or way of thinking about something. ☐ *One school of thought holds that cats cause allergic reactions.* ☐ *I come from the school of thought that believes people should always be polite.*

school someone **in** something to train, discipline, or coach someone in something. ☐ *The voice coach schooled the singer in excellent breathing techniques.* ☐ *We were schooled in oratory and debate.* ☐ *She schooled herself in patience.*

scoff at someone or something to show ridicule or scorn for someone or something. ☐ *The directors scoffed at her when she presented her plan.* ☐ *They scoffed at my new hat, not realizing how stylish it was.*

scold someone **about** something to rebuke or chastise someone about something. ☐ *How many times have I scolded you about that?* ☐ *Please don't scold me about something I didn't do.*

scold someone **for** something to rebuke or chastise someone for doing something. ☐ *The manager scolded the worker for misplacing the door key.* ☐ *The teacher scolded all the students for their bad behavior.*

scoop something **out of** something and **scoop** something **out**† to remove something from something by dipping or scooping. ☐ *She scooped the water out of the bottom of the rowboat.* ☐ *Karen scooped out the water.*

scoop something **up**† to gather and remove something by scooping, dipping, or bailing. ☐ *Karen scooped the nuts up and put them in a bag.* ☐ *Jill scooped up all the money she had won and left the poker table.*

scoot down (to some place**)** to go (down) somewhere in a hurry. ☐ *I want you to scoot down to the store and get me a dozen eggs. Okay?* ☐ *I'll scoot down as soon as I finish reading the newspaper.*

scoot over to slide sideways while seated. ☐ *Scoot over and let me sit down.* ☐ *If you scoot over, we can get another person in this row.*

scoot over to someone or something to travel or move over to someone or something or some place in a hurry. ☐ *Scoot over to Don and ask him to come here for a minute.* ☐ *We all scooted over to the stadium for the football game.*

scope (on) someone *Sl.* to evaluate a member of the opposite sex visually. ☐ *He scoped every girl who came in the door.* ☐ *He wouldn't like it if somebody scoped on him. Or would he?*

scope someone or something **out**† *Sl.* to look someone or something over; to check someone or something out. ☐ *Hey, scope the new car out!* ☐ *Dave was scoping out all the girls.*

score against someone or something to make a point or goal against someone or some team. ☐ *Because of his bad ankle, Fred was unable to score against his defender.* ☐ *We never scored against the visiting team.*

score something **for** something **1.** to arrange music for one or more musical instruments; to arrange music for a particular type of voice or voices. ☐ *The arranger scored the music for two pianos.* ☐ *The arranger scored the song for a four-part chorus.* **2.** to scratch something, such as glass, for breaking. ☐ *Valerie scored the piece of glass for breaking and then snapped it off.* ☐ *The worker scored the pane of glass for snapping off.*

score something **(up**†**) against** someone or something to tally up a score against someone or some team. ☐ *Tara scored a few points against Sally.* ☐ *The Bears scored up thirteen points against the Giants.*

score with someone or a group *Inf.* to please someone or a group. ☐ *Her rendition of "Old Kentucky Home" really scored with the audience.* ☐ *You really score with me.*

scour something **for** someone or something to look carefully and thoroughly in something for someone or something. ☐ *I scoured the entire roster of members for a person who would agree to run for president.* ☐ *The police scoured the entire area for any sign of the suspects.*

scour something **off (of)** something and **scour** something **off**† to clean something off something else by scouring. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *See if you can scour the rust off the cookie sheet.* ☐ *I will scour off the rust with steel wool.*

scour something **out**† to clean something out by scouring. ☐ *Would you scour the pans out?* ☐ *Please scour out the pans—don't just wash them.*

scour something **out of** something to clean something out of something by scouring. ☐ *Did you scour the rust out of the pan?* ☐ *Please scour the burned material out of the bowl.*

scout around (for someone or something**)** to look around for someone or something. ☐ *I don't know who would do a good job for you, but I'll scout around for a likely candidate.* ☐ *You stay here. I'll scout around.*

scout someone or something **out**† to search for and discover someone or something. ☐ *I will scout a new salesclerk out for you if you want.* ☐ *I'll scout out a new clerk for you.*

scout someone or something **up**† to search for and find someone or something. ☐ *I'll scout up a costume for the Halloween party.* ☐ *Can you scout a date up for Friday night?*

scowl at someone or something to make a frown of disapproval or displeasure at someone or something. ☐ *Why are you scowling at me? I didn't do anything wrong!* ☐ *Mary scowled at her noisy cat.*

scramble for someone or something to push and struggle to get to someone or something. ☐ *All the teenagers scrambled for the rock star but couldn't catch him.* ☐ *The children scrambled for the candy as it fell from the piñata.*

scrape along (on something**)** and **scrape along (with** something**)** to manage just to get along with a minimum amount of something. ☐ *We can just scrape along on the money I earn from my sewing.* ☐ *Do you think you can scrape along with just $400 per month?*

scrape by (on something**)** and **scrape by (with** something**)** to manage just to get by with something. (Usually applies to a more specific period or time or a more specific event than **scrape along (on** something**)**.) ☐ *There is not really enough money to live on, and we just have to*

scrape by on what we can earn. ☐ *We can't scrape by with only that amount of money.*

scrape by (something**)** to manage just to get by something. ☐ *I scraped by the man standing at the gate and got into the theater without a ticket.* ☐ *Mary scraped by the cart that was blocking the crowded hallway.*

scrape by (with something**)** Go to **scrape by (on** something**)**.

scrape someone or something **together†** and **scrape** someone or something **up†** *Fig.* to find and collect something; to locate and assemble a group of people or things. (Based on **scrape** something **up**.) ☐ *I'm sure we can scrape up someone for the job.* ☐ *Mary scraped a few dollars together for some new books.* ☐ *John barely scraped up enough money to pay his rent.*

scrape something **away† (from** something**)** to scratch or rasp something off something. ☐ *Ted scraped the rough places away from the fender he was repairing.* ☐ *Ted scraped away the rough places.*

scrape something **off (of)** someone or something and **scrape** something **off†** to rub or stroke something off someone or something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *I sat down and scraped the caked mud off of me. It was everywhere!* ☐ *Jake scraped off the rust.*

scrape something **out†** to empty something by scraping. ☐ *Scrape the pan out. Don't leave any of that good sauce inside.* ☐ *Please scrape out the pan.*

scrape something **out of** something and **scrape** something **out†** to remove something by scraping. ☐ *Scrape all the peanut butter out of the jar before you discard it.* ☐ *Scrape out the peanut butter.*

scrape something **together†** to gather things together by scraping. ☐ *The waiter scraped all the crumbs together and removed them from the table with a little gadget.* ☐ *Karen scraped together all the trimmings and set them aside.*

scrape the bottom of the barrel to select from among the worst; to choose from what is left over. ☐ *You've bought a bad-looking car. You really scraped the bottom of the barrel to get that one.* ☐ *The worker you sent over was the worst I've ever seen. Send me another—and don't scrape the bottom of the barrel.*

scrape through (something**) 1.** *Lit.* to move through something, scraping or rubbing the sides. ☐ *The car, going at a very high speed, scraped through the tunnel.* ☐ *It just managed to scrape through.* **2.** *Fig.* to get by something just barely; to pass a test just barely. ☐ *Alice passed the test, but she just scraped through it.* ☐ *I just scraped through my calculus test.*

scratch about (for something**)** and **scratch around (for** something**) 1.** *Lit.* to hunt for something in dirt, gravel, rocks, etc. ☐ *The prospector spent the day scratching about for signs of gold.* ☐ *The chickens were scratching around for something to eat.* **2.** *Fig.* to look very hard for something. ☐ *The children were scratching about the kitchen for something to eat.* ☐ *I've been scratching around for a new assistant for months now.*

scratch at something to scratch something. ☐ *You shouldn't scratch at a chigger bite because it might get infected.* ☐ *Don't scratch at it!*

scratch someone or something **from** something to mark the name of someone or something off a list. ☐ *We were obliged to scratch Dave from the list.* ☐ *The judges scratched the large collie from the eligibility list.*

scratch someone or something **out†** to mark out the name of someone or something. ☐ *I scratched John out and wrote in George instead.* ☐ *I scratched out John and forgot about him.*

scratch someone or something **up†** to damage or mar someone or something by scratching. ☐ *Being thrown clear of the car in the accident didn't break any bones, but it scratched her up a lot.* ☐ *Who scratched up my coffee table?*

scratch someone's **back 1.** *Lit.* to scratch, usually with the fingers, the parts of someone's back that they cannot reach. ☐ *Please scratch my back between my shoulder blades.* **2.** *Fig.* to do a favor for someone in return for a favor done for you. ☐ *You scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours.* ☐ *We believe that the mayor has been scratching the treasurer's back.*

scratch something **away†** to rub or scrape something off by scratching. ☐ *Look at the finish on this furniture. The cat has almost scratched it away!* ☐ *That cat scratched away the finish on the table!*

scratch the surface 1. *Lit.* to scratch something just on the surface, not extending the mark below the finish into the wood, stone, marble, below. ☐ *There is no serious damage done to the bench. You only scratched the surface.* **2.** *Fig.* to just begin to find out about something; to examine only the superficial aspects of something. ☐ *The investigation of the governor's staff revealed some suspicious dealing. It is thought that the investigators have just scratched the surface.* ☐ *We don't know how bad the problem is. We've only scratched the surface.*

scream at someone or something to yell or screech at someone or something. ☐ *Why are you screaming at me?* ☐ *Go scream at the dog, not me!*

scream bloody murder and **yell bloody murder** *Fig.* to complain bitterly; to complain unduly. ☐ *When we put him in an office without a window, he screamed bloody murder.* ☐ *There is something wrong next door. Everyone is yelling bloody murder.*

scream down (on someone or something**)** *Fig.* [for something, such as birds or bombs] to dive down on someone or something, with a loud noise or very swiftly. ☐ *The bombs screamed down on the helpless peasants.* ☐ *As the bombs screamed down, some people ran and some prayed.*

scream for something to yell or shriek for something. ☐ *The teenage audience applauded and screamed for more.* ☐ *The children said they were screaming for ice cream.*

scream someone **down†** to scream loudly at someone; to outscream someone. (Compare this with **shout** someone **down**.) ☐ *The angry crowd screamed down the politician.* ☐ *They screamed her down and drove her from the platform.*

scream something **out†** to say something in a very loud voice. ☐ *She screamed his name out for everyone to hear.* ☐ *Liz screamed out the winner's name.*

scream with something to scream because of something, such as pain, anger, rage, etc. ☐ *Frank screamed with pain*

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when the car door closed on his fingers. ☐ *The teacher screamed with rage when the student talked back.*

screeching (drunk) *Sl.* intoxicated; very drunk. ☐ *How can anybody be so screeching drunk on four beers?* ☐ *She's not just drunk; she's screeching.*

screen someone or something **(off†) (from** someone or something**)** to make someone or something out of sight or blocked off to someone or something by erecting a screen. ☐ *We screened her off from the patient in the next bed.* ☐ *We screened off the yard from the street.*

screen someone or something **out of** something and **screen** someone or something **out†** to filter someone or something out of something. ☐ *The test screened all the unqualified candidates out of the group.* ☐ *We screened out the suppliers who were not financially sound.*

screw around 1. *Inf.* to mess around; to waste time. ☐ *Stop screwing around and get to work!* ☐ *I'm not screwing around, I'm thinking.* **2.** *Inf.* to play sexually; to indulge in sexual intercourse. ☐ *A few couples were screwing around at the party.* ☐ *They say that Ted and Alice are screwing around a lot.*

screw around with someone or something *Inf.* to fiddle with or mess around with someone or something. ☐ *Andy screwed around with his clock until he broke it.* ☐ *Look, chum! Don't screw around with me!*

screw off *Inf.* to waste time. ☐ *Stop screwing off and get busy!* ☐ *I'm not screwing off. This is my lunch hour.*

screw someone **around** *Inf.* to harass or bother someone. ☐ *Don't screw me around, man! I bite back!* ☐ *Max got tired of being screwed around by Lefty.*

screw someone or something **up†** *Inf.* to interfere with someone or something; to mess up someone or something. ☐ *Try again and don't screw it up this time.* ☐ *You really screwed up my brother by not being on time.*

screw someone **out of** something *Inf.* to cheat someone out of something. ☐ *I think you screwed me out of ten bucks on that deal.* ☐ *Max screwed me out of what was due me.*

screw someone **over†** *Sl.* to give someone a very bad time; to scold someone severely. ☐ *Those guys really screwed you over. What started it?* ☐ *Don't think you can screw over me and my friends. I won't let you.*

screw someone **up†** *Inf.* to confuse someone mentally. ☐ *Please don't screw me up again!* ☐ *You screwed up my train of thought.*

screw something **down†** to secure something to the floor or a base by the use of screws. ☐ *You had better screw these seats down or someone will knock them over.* ☐ *Please screw down the shelf.*

screw something **into** something to twist something that is threaded into something. ☐ *I screwed all the screws into the back of the computer and turned it on.* ☐ *Please screw this bracket into the wall.*

screw something **(on)(to** something**)** to attach something to something by the use of screws or other threaded fasteners. ☐ *Screw the bracket onto the wall, will you?* ☐ *Screw on the bracket to the wall.*

screw something **up†** to attach something to a higher place by the use of screws. ☐ *The bracket holding the shelf up has come loose. Will you please screw it up again?* ☐ *Please screw up this loose bracket.*

screw up 1. *Inf.* to mess up. ☐ *I hope I don't screw up this time.* ☐ *The waiter screwed up again.* **2.** *Inf.* a mess; a blunder; utter confusion. (Usually **screw-up**.) ☐ *This is the chef's screw-up, not mine.* ☐ *One more screw-up like that and you're fired.*

screw up one's **courage** *Fig.* to build up one's courage. ☐ *I guess I have to screw up my courage and go to the dentist.* ☐ *I spent all morning screwing up my courage to take my driver's test.*

screwed, blued, and tattooed 1. *Sl.* taken advantage of ☐ *I got a bad deal. I got screwed, blued, and tattooed.* ☐ *When John bought his wreck of a car, he got screwed, blued, and tattooed.* **2.** *Sl.* intoxicated. ☐ *Who wants to go out and get screwed, blued, and tattooed?* ☐ *All four of them went out and got screwed, blued, and tattooed.*

screwed up *Inf.* ruined; messed up. ☐ *This is a really screwed up schedule. Let's start over again.* ☐ *Your schedule is completely screwed up.*

scribble away (at something**)** to write hard and fast at some task. ☐ *He scribbled away at his notes as the lecturer droned on.* ☐ *Jane sat in the library scribbling away.*

scribble something **down†** to write something down fast and not too neatly. ☐ *He scribbled the figure down and raced for the telephone.* ☐ *Liz scribbled down the telephone number.*

scrimp and save and **pinch and scrape** to be very thrifty; to live on very little money, often in order to save up for something. ☐ *We had to scrimp and save in order to send the children to college.* ☐ *The Smiths pinched and scraped all year in order to go on a Caribbean cruise.*

scrimp on something to try to economize on the use of something; to fail to use enough of something. ☐ *Please don't scrimp on the quality of the food.* ☐ *There is enough money. You don't have to scrimp on anything.*

scrounge around (for someone or something**)** *Fig.* to look around all over for someone or something. ☐ *I scrounged around for Jamie, but she was nowhere to be found.* ☐ *I will try to scrounge around for a replacement part that will do the job.*

scrounge someone or something **up†** *Fig.* to find someone or something somewhere; to dig someone or something up. ☐ *I can't think of anyone just now, but I will scrounge someone up.* ☐ *They scrounged up an escort for Liz.*

scrub someone or something **down†** to clean someone or something thoroughly by rubbing. ☐ *The mother scrubbed the baby down gently and put lotion on her.* ☐ *Please scrub down this floor.*

scrub someone or something **off†** to clean someone or something by rubbing. ☐ *Mother scrubbed Timmy off.* ☐ *Liz scrubbed off the countertop.*

scrub something **away†** to clean something away by rubbing. ☐ *See if you can scrub that rust away.* ☐ *Scrub away that rust if you can.*

scrub something **off (of)** something and **scrub** something **off†** to clean something off something by scrubbing. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *I have to scrub the mud off the porch steps.* ☐ *Did you scrub off all the grease?*

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scrub something **out†** to clean out the inside of something by rubbing or brushing. ☐ *Please scrub these pots out and put them away.* ☐ *Jim will scrub out the pots.*

scrub something **out of** something and **scrub** something **out†** to clean something out of something by scrubbing. ☐ *Please scrub the gravy out of the pot.* ☐ *Are you going to scrub out the burned material?*

scrub up 1. *Lit.* to clean oneself up. ☐ *You have to scrub up before dinner.* ☐ *Please go scrub up before you come to the table.* **2.** *Fig.* to clean oneself, especially one's hands and arms, as a preparation for performing a surgical procedure. ☐ *The surgeon scrubbed up thoroughly before the operation.* ☐ *When you finish scrubbing up, someone will help you on with sterile clothing.*

scrunch down to squeeze or huddle down into a smaller shape. ☐ *Mary scrunched down, trying to hide behind the chair.* ☐ *The children scrunched down so they wouldn't be seen.*

scrunch down into something to squeeze down into a small area or container. ☐ *Fred scrunched down into his seat, hoping no one would see him there.* ☐ *Don't scrunch down into your seat. It's bad for your posture.*

scrunch something **down† (into** something**) 1.** to squeeze something into a smaller size or shape. ☐ *He scrunched the wad of paper down into a hard ball.* ☐ *Liz scrunched down the cloth into a pad for the hot pan.* ☐ *Scrunch the boxes down before you throw them away.* **2.** to pack something tightly into something. ☐ *Dave scrunched his clothing down into the drawer and closed it.* ☐ *Dave scrunched down his clothing into the suitcase.*

scrunch something **up†** to crush or crunch up. ☐ *I pounded the biscuits and scrunched them up into crumbs.* ☐ *He scrunched up the note and threw it upon the fire.*

scuff something **up†** to scrape or scratch something. ☐ *Who scuffed my floor up?* ☐ *Please don't scuff up my freshly polished floors!*

scuffle with someone to struggle or have a fight with someone. ☐ *The two prisoners scuffled with each other a little till a guard came along and saw them.* ☐ *The cowboys scuffled with the deputies when they came out of the saloon.*

scurry along to run or scamper along fast. ☐ *The children scurried along, trotting to school.* ☐ *We scurried along the trail, keeping watch out for things that might trip us up.*

scuttle across something to hurry across something. (Said especially of a small animal.) ☐ *A tiny mouse scuttled across the kitchen floor and startled me.* ☐ *A rabbit scuttled across my path.*

scuttle away [for a small animal] to run away. ☐ *The otters scuttled away as we approached.* ☐ *A skunk scuttled away quickly—thank heavens.*

scuzz someone **out†** *Sl.* to nauseate someone. ☐ *He had this unreal face that almost scuzzed me out!* ☐ *It's not nice to scuzz out people like that, especially when you hardly know them.*

a **sea change** *Fig.* a major change or transformation. ☐ *This is not the time for a sea change in our manufacturing division. There are too many orders at the moment.*

seal a bargain and **seal the bargain** *Fig.* to signify or celebrate the reaching of an agreement or bargain. ☐ *They signed the papers and sealed the bargain by drinking champagne.*

seal someone's **fate** *Fig.* to determine finally the fate of someone. ☐ *His lying and cheating sealed his fate. He was convicted and sent to prison.*

seal something **off from** someone or something and **seal** something **off†** to make something inaccessible to someone or something. ☐ *The police sealed the building off from everyone.* ☐ *They sealed off the building from all the reporters.*

seal something **(up†) (with** something**)** to fasten something closed with something. ☐ *Please seal this box up with twine.* ☐ *Would you seal up this box with tape?*

seal the bargain Go to **seal a bargain**.

sealed (up) *Sl.* settled; secured; cinched. ☐ *The matter was sealed by Monday morning.* ☐ *The contract was sealed up just in time.*

sealed with a kiss and **SWAK** written and sent with love and care. (The initialism is sometimes written on love letters. Also an acronym.) ☐ *All her letters come SWAK.* ☐ *I know they are sealed with a kiss, because she says so.*

seam something **with** something to join the edges of something together with something. ☐ *The worker seamed the two parts of the carpet with a special tool.* ☐ *She seamed the material with a strip of cloth to strengthen the seam.*

the **seamy side of life** *Fig.* the most unpleasant or roughest aspect of life. (A reference to the inside of a garment where the seams show.) ☐ *Doctors in that area really see the seamy side of life.* ☐ *Mary saw the seamy side of life when she worked as a volunteer in the homeless shelter.*

search after someone or something to look for someone or something. (Perhaps over a long period of time.) ☐ *We searched after a suitable candidate for weeks.* ☐ *I am searching after a part for my '57 Chevy.*

search for someone or something to look very hard for someone or something. ☐ *I searched for Ted everywhere, but he was already gone.* ☐ *I have searched for my glasses high and low.*

search high and low (for someone or something**)** Go to **hunt high and low (for** someone or something**)**.

Search me. *Inf.* I do not know.; You can search my clothing and my person, but you won't find the answer to your question anywhere near me. (The two words have equal stress.) ☐ *Jane: What time does Mary's flight get in? Sally: Search me.* ☐ *John: What kind of paint should I use on this fence? Bill: Search me.*

search someone **for** something to feel, touch, pat, frisk, or examine electronically a person's body, looking for something hidden underneath the clothes. ☐ *The police searched the suspect for hidden weapons.* ☐ *The airport guard used an electronic instrument to search the passengers for weapons.*

search someone or something **out†** to seek and find someone or something. ☐ *I will search Fred out. I know he's here somewhere.* ☐ *We have to search out the key to the safe-deposit box.*

search something **for** someone or something to examine something, looking for someone or something. ☐ *Everyone searched the house for little Wally, but he was not to be*

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found. ☐ *I searched all my coat pockets for the note, but I didn't find it.*

search something **with a fine-tooth comb** Go to **go over** something **with a fine-tooth comb.**

search through something to examine all the things found in something. ☐ *I searched through my books for the answer.* ☐ *My drawers were searched through thoroughly.*

season something **with** something to make something more flavorful with specific spices and herbs. ☐ *I always season my stews with lots of freshly ground black pepper.* ☐ *The chili was seasoned with cumin and allspice, among other things.*

seat someone **by** someone or something Go to **by** someone or something.

secede from something to withdraw from something. ☐ *Which was the first state to secede from the Union?* ☐ *We do not want to secede from the organization, but we will if we must.*

second-guess someone to try to predict what some person will do before it is known to anyone, including the person. ☐ *There is no point in trying to second-guess Bob. He is completely unpredictable.*

second hand from another person or source, not directly from personal experience or observation. ☐ *I wasn't present at the meeting. I heard about it at second hand.* ☐ *Frank tells stories about the Gulf War, but he got them second hand. He wasn't actually in the desert with the troops.*

***second nature to** someone easy and natural for someone. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *Swimming is second nature to Jane.* ☐ *Flying a helicopter is no problem for Bob. It's become second nature to him.*

***second thoughts (about** someone or something**)** new doubts about someone or something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I'm beginning to get second thoughts about Tom.* ☐ *You're giving me second thoughts about going there.* ☐ *I'm having second thoughts also.*

second to none better than everything else. ☐ *This is an excellent car—second to none.* ☐ *Her suggestion was second to none, and the manager accepted it eagerly.*

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secure something **against** someone, something, or an animal **1.** to fasten something against the entry of someone, an animal, or something. ☐ *Jane secured the doors and windows against the prowler who was roving around the neighborhood.* ☐ *You had better secure the henhouse against coyotes.* **2.** to obtain a legal order involving someone or something. ☐ *I secured an injunction against Harry. If he bothers you again, he'll have to go into court to explain himself.* ☐ *We can't secure an injunction against this ruling.*

security against something something that keeps something safe; something that protects; a protection. ☐ *Insurance provides security against the financial losses owing to theft, loss, or damage.* ☐ *A good education is a security against unemployment.*

seduce someone **from** something to lure someone away from something. ☐ *The crooked agent seduced Jerry from his usual honest behavior.* ☐ *Frank was seduced from his proper ways by the offer of money.*

see a man about a dog *Fig.* to leave for some unmentioned purpose. (Often refers to going to the rest room.) ☐ *I don't know where Tom went. He said he had to see a man about a dog.* ☐ *When John said he was going to see a man about a dog, I thought he would be gone for only a minute.*

see about someone or something to investigate someone or something; to check on something that someone has said. ☐ *I don't know who is going on the trip. You ask Jill, and I'll see about Jerry.* ☐ *I will see about your request.*

see after someone or something to take care of someone or something. (The same as but less common than **look after** someone or something.) ☐ *Would you please see after Walter? He looks a little pale.* ☐ *I will see after the committee while they are meeting.*

see ahead (of someone or something**)** to be able to see into the distance in front of someone or something. ☐ *The fog was so thick I couldn't see ahead of the car.* ☐ *I can't see ahead, so I will have to stop.*

see around something **1.** *Lit.* to see what is on the other side of or partially concealed by something. ☐ *I could not see around the truck in front of me.* ☐ *Do you think I can see around corners?* **2.** *Fig.* to perceive someone's deception. ☐ *I see around your trickery!* ☐ *We all see around your stated purpose!*

see beyond something **1.** *Lit.* to be able to perceive into the distance beyond something. ☐ *Can you see beyond the big tree there, where the barn is on the horizon?* ☐ *I can't see beyond the end of the road. I think I need glasses.* **2.** *Fig.* to be able to imagine the future beyond a certain time or event. ☐ *He can't see beyond the next day—no sense of the future.* ☐ *Todd is usually able to see beyond his immediate situation. I do not know what happened this time.*

see double to see two of everything instead of one, owing to a medical disorder. ☐ *When I was driving, I saw two people on the road instead of one. I'm seeing double. There's something wrong with my eyes.* ☐ *Mike at first thought he was seeing double when he saw Mary with her sister. He didn't know she had a twin.*

see eye to eye (about someone or something**) (with** someone**)** and **see eye to eye (on** someone or something**) (with** someone**)** *Fig.* [for someone] to agree about someone or something with someone else. ☐ *I'm glad we see eye to eye about Todd with Mary.* ☐ *I see eye to eye with Mary.* ☐ *Will labor and management ever see eye to eye on the new contract?*

see fit (to do something**)** to decide to do something. ☐ *If I see fit to return, I'll bring Bill with me.* ☐ *She'll do it if she sees fit.*

See if I care! *Inf.* I do not care if you do it! ☐ *Mary: That does it! I'm going home to Mother! John: See if I care!* ☐ *Sue: I'm putting the sofa here, whether you like it or not. Bill: Go ahead! See if I care!*

see (neither) hide nor hair Go to **(neither) hide nor hair.**

See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil. *Prov.* Ignore any evil that you come in contact with; be virtuous even though there is evil around you. (Often represented by three monkeys, one of which is covering his eyes, one his ears, and one his mouth.) ☐ *Jill: Do you have any idea why*

Fred is staying in the office so late every night? Jane: Not me. Like the three little monkeys, I see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil.

see no further than the end of one's **nose** and **cannot see (any) further than the end of** one's **nose; can't see beyond the end of** one's **nose** *Fig.* to be narrow-minded; to lack understanding and perception. ☐ *She is so selfish she can see no further than the end of her nose.* ☐ *You don't care about anyone but yourself. You can't see any further than the end of your nose.*

see no objection (to something**)** and **not see any objection (to** something**)** not to think of any objection to something. ☐ *I see no objection to your idea.* ☐ *Do you see any objection?* ☐ *I do not see any objection to anything you have done.*

see one's **way (clear) (to** do something**)** to find it possible to do something. ☐ *I'd be happy if you could see your way clear to attend our meeting.* ☐ *I wanted to be there, but I couldn't see my way clear.*

see over something to be able to have a view over something such as a wall, fence, etc. ☐ *I couldn't see over the fence, but I could hear what was going on.* ☐ *We could not see over the wall.*

see red to be angry. ☐ *Whenever I think of the needless destruction of trees, I see red.* ☐ *Bill really saw red when the tax bill arrived.*

see someone **about** someone or something to confer with someone about someone or something. ☐ *Jill has to see the boss about one of her office staff members.* ☐ *I will have to see Jill about getting permission to go.*

see someone **across** something to accompany someone across a dangerous area. ☐ *Paul saw his mother across the field, which contained a number of hazards.* ☐ *Timmy offered to see the elderly lady across the street.*

see someone **as** someone or something to visualize someone as some other person or type of person. ☐ *I see you as a perfect candidate for the job.* ☐ *I don't see you as mayor.*

see someone **as** something to consider someone or something; to deem someone or something as something. ☐ *The manager saw the skilled employee as a godsend.* ☐ *John saw the new salesman as a threat to his territory.*

see someone **back (to** something**)** to accompany someone back to something or some place. ☐ *I saw her back to her apartment.* ☐ *I will see her back safely.*

see someone **down to** something to accompany or escort someone to a lower level. ☐ *I will see you down to the front door.* ☐ *Would you please see Mrs. Bracknell down to the door?*

see someone **home** to accompany someone home. ☐ *Bill agreed to see his aunt home after the movie.* ☐ *You don't need to see me home. It's perfectly safe, and I can get there on my own.*

see someone **into** something and **see** someone **in**† to usher or accompany someone into something or some place. ☐ *Please see her into the room and make sure she is seated where she can hear the speaker.* ☐ *Please see in the speaker and make sure she finds her seat on the stage.*

see someone **off**† to accompany one to the point of departure for a trip and say good-bye upon departure. ☐ *We went to the train station to see Andy off.* ☐ *We saw off all the scouts going to camp.*

see someone **off** something to accompany someone who is leaving something; to escort someone away from something. ☐ *I saw the elderly lady off the station platform safely.* ☐ *The emcee saw the contestants off the stage.*

see someone **on the dot** Go to **on the dot.**

see someone or something **around** something to notice someone or something in the vicinity of something or near something. ☐ *I saw the boys around the swings on the playground.* ☐ *Did you see my cat around the neighborhood anywhere?*

see someone or something **in a new light** *Fig.* to understand someone or something in a different way [than before]. ☐ *After we had a little discussion, I began to see Fred in a new light.* ☐ *I can now see the problem in a new light.*

see someone **out (of** something**)** and **show** someone **out (of** something**)** to accompany or escort someone out of something or some place. ☐ *Please see our guest out of the factory.* ☐ *Please show our guest out.*

see someone **to** some place to escort someone to a place; to make sure that someone gets some place safely; to accompany someone to a place. ☐ *I saw Mary to her apartment, and then got back in my car and left.* ☐ *Bill saw his cousin to the train station, and then they parted.*

see someone **to** something to accompany or escort someone to something or some place. (See also **see** someone **to the door.**) ☐ *Let me see you to the station.* ☐ *Would you please see your aunt to her car?*

see someone **to the door** Go to **show** someone **(to) the door.**

see someone **up to** something to accompany or escort someone to a higher level. ☐ *That is the end of the tour of the wine cellar. I will see you up to the exit.* ☐ *Ted saw Mary up to her apartment.*

see something **against** something **1.** *Lit.* to view something against something else. ☐ *I can't see the cars against the evening sky if their lights aren't on.* ☐ *The cars can't be seen against the evening sky.* **2.** *Fig.* to view or consider something within the context of something else. ☐ *If you can see this issue against the background of a long series of problems, perhaps you will understand how concerned we are.* ☐ *You really need to see this matter against the background of what has happened before.*

see something **as** something **else** to visualize or fantasize something as something else. ☐ *I see this as a wonderful way to interest some new people in our organization.* ☐ *We all see this as a golden opportunity to get to know one another better.*

see something **in** someone or something to appreciate a certain quality in someone or something. ☐ *I see a strong sense of dignity in Fred. That's good.* ☐ *I now see the strong points in your proposal.*

see something **in the cards** Go to **in the cards.**

see something **of** someone or something to know, experience, or visit with someone or some group for some amount of time. ☐ *I hope we are able to see something of you while you*

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are in town. ☐ *We don't see enough of the town council. What does it do?*

see something **through** to follow through on something until it is completed. ☐ *Mary is prepared to see the project through.* ☐ *It's going to be an unpleasant experience, but I hope you'll see it through.*

see stars *Fig.* to seem to see flashing lights after receiving a blow to the head. ☐ *I saw stars when I bumped my head on the attic ceiling.* ☐ *The little boy saw stars when he fell headfirst onto the concrete.*

see the big picture Go to the big picture.

see the color of someone's **money** *Fig.* to verify that someone has money or has enough money. ☐ *So, you want to make a bet? Not until I see the color of your money.* ☐ *I want to see the color of your money before we go any further with this business deal.*

see the (hand)writing on the wall *Fig.* to know that something is about to happen. ☐ *If you don't improve your performance, they'll fire you. Can't you see the writing on the wall?* ☐ *I know I'll get fired. I can see the handwriting on the wall.*

see the last of someone or something to have experienced the last visit, episode, adventure, etc., with someone or something. ☐ *I hope I have seen the last of Robert Ellis!* ☐ *We have seen the last of grandma's homemade strawberry jam.*

see the light *Fig.* to understand something clearly at last. ☐ *After a lot of studying and asking many questions, I finally saw the light.* ☐ *I know that geometry is difficult. Keep working at it. You'll see the light pretty soon.*

see the light (at the end of the tunnel) *Fig.* to foresee an end to one's problems after a long period of time. (See also begin to see the light.) ☐ *I had been horribly ill for two months before I began to see the light at the end of the tunnel.* ☐ *I began to see the light one day in early spring. At that moment, I knew I'd get well.*

see the light (of day) *Fig.* to come to the end of a very busy time. ☐ *Finally, when the holiday season was over, we could see the light of day. We had been so busy!* ☐ *When business lets up for a while, we'll be able to see the light.*

see the sights to see the important things in a place; to see what tourists usually see. ☐ *We plan to visit Paris and see the sights.* ☐ *Everyone left the hotel early in the morning to see the sights.*

see through someone or something **1.** *Lit.* [for one's vision] to penetrate something clear or opaque or a person. ☐ *Of course, I can see through the window!* ☐ *With x-rays, they can see through your body!* **2.** *Fig.* to understand or detect the true nature of someone or something. ☐ *You can't fool me anymore. I can see through you and all your tricks.* ☐ *This plan is designed to make money for you, not to help people. I can see through it! I'm not a fool!*

see (to it) that something is done to make sure of something; to make certain of something; to be certain to do something. ☐ *The manager saw to it that everyone began working on time.* ☐ *The mayor should see that the potholes are repaired.*

see to someone or something to take care of someone or something. ☐ *Tom will see to the horses. Come to the house and freshen up.* ☐ *I hear the doorbell. Will someone please see to answering the door?*

see which way the wind is blowing to determine what is the most expedient thing to do under the conditions at hand. ☐ *We studied the whole situation to see which way the wind was blowing and decided to avoid any conflict at that time.* ☐ *Sam failed to see which way the wind was blowing and got himself caught up in an argument.*

see with the naked eye Go to the naked eye.

See ya. Go to See you.

See ya, bye-bye. *Inf.* Bye. ☐ *Bill: I have to be off. Bob: See ya, bye-bye.* ☐ *Mary: See ya, bye-bye. Sue: Toodle-oo.*

See you. and **See ya.** *Inf.* Good-bye. (See also I'll see you later.) ☐ *Good game, Tom. See ya.* ☐ *See you, old chum. Give me a ring.*

See you around. *Inf.* I will see you again somewhere. ☐ *Bob: Bye for now. Jane: See you around.* ☐ *Tom: See you around, Fred. Fred: Sure, Tom. See you.*

(See you) later. Go to I'll see you later.

See you later, alligator. and **Later, alligator.** *Inf.* Good-bye. (Sometimes the reply is After while(, crocodile.)) ☐ *Bob: See you later, alligator. Jane: After while, crocodile.* ☐ *Bob: Bye, Tom. Tom: See you later, alligator. Bob: Later.*

Seeing is believing. *Prov.* It is hard to believe something you have not seen. (Implies that you will not believe the thing under discussion until you have actually seen it.) ☐ *Jill: They say Melissa has become a wonderful housekeeper now that she has her own apartment. Jane: Seeing is believing.* ☐ *I really didn't think that Jerry's girlfriend could be as pretty as he said she was, but seeing is believing.*

seeing pink elephants and **seeing pink spiders; seeing snakes** intoxicated; recovering from a drinking bout; having the delirium tremens. ☐ *When I got to the point of seeing pink elephants, I knew that something had to be done.* ☐ *The old one who's shaking—he's probably seeing snakes.*

seeing pink spiders Go to previous.

seeing snakes Go to seeing pink elephants.

seeing that... considering...; since... ☐ *Seeing that she has no money, Sally won't be going shopping.* ☐ *Seeing that it's raining, we won't go to the beach.*

seeing things imagining that one sees someone or something that is not there. ☐ *Lisa says that she saw a ghost, but she was just seeing things.* ☐ *I thought I was seeing things when Bill walked into the room. Someone had told me he was dead.*

seek after someone or something to keep looking for someone or something. ☐ *I will continue to seek after the thief who stole my car.* ☐ *The thief was seeking after a late-model sedan.*

Seek and ye shall find. *Prov.* If you search hard enough for something, you will find it. (Biblical. Can imply that the only thing you need to do to get something is look for it.) ☐ *The bookstore on the corner is an excellent one. Any book you want, just seek and ye shall find.*

seek professional help *Euph.* to get psychiatric or psychological treatment. ☐ *If you are seriously thinking of sui-*

cide, now is the time to seek professional help. ☐ *His friends suggested that he seek professional help.*

seek revenge (against someone**)** Go to **take revenge (against** someone**)**.

seek someone or something **out†** to search for and find someone or something. ☐ *We will seek someone out to do the work for us.* ☐ *Liz sought out a helper for Karen.*

seek something **from** someone or something to pursue something from someone or something. ☐ *We will seek an injunction from the judge.* ☐ *My lawyer sought an injunction from the court to try to stop the building project.*

seem high-and-mighty Go to **high-and-mighty**.

seem like a long shot Go to a **long shot**.

seem like oneself **again** Go to oneself **again**.

seem like putty in someone's **hands** Go to **putty in** someone's **hands**.

seem like someone or something to appear to be like some kind of person or something. ☐ *You seemed like such a nice person when I met you.* ☐ *This seems like a nice day.*

seem like the last person Go to the **last person**.

seem out of place Go to **out of place**.

seem pushed for time Go to **pressed for time**.

seep away [for a fluid] to escape little by little, as through a leak. ☐ *All the oil seeped away, leaving none in the engine.* ☐ *The water seeped away after a while.*

seep in(to something**)** [for a fluid] to trickle or leak out of something. ☐ *Water is seeping into the basement.* ☐ *Water is seeping in very slowly.*

seep out (of something**)** [for a fluid] to trickle or leak out of something. ☐ *A lot of oil has seeped out of the car onto the driveway.* ☐ *There is oil seeping out. There must be a leak.*

seep through something [for a fluid] to permeate something and escape. ☐ *The oil seeped through the gasket onto the ground.* ☐ *Some water seeped through the ceiling, ruining our carpet as well as the ceiling.*

seethe with someone or something to swarm or seem to "boil" with someone or something. ☐ *The wedding reception was seething with guests and well-wishers.* ☐ *The room was just seething with flies and other flying creatures.*

seethe with something [for someone] to be agitated with anger, hatred, scorn, disgust, etc. ☐ *Laura was seething with rage as she entered the tax office.* ☐ *We were seething with disgust at the rude way they treated the people who had just moved in.*

segregate someone **from** someone else and **segregate** something **from** something else to separate someone from someone else or something from something else. ☐ *I was asked to segregate the swimmers from the nonswimmers.* ☐ *Let's segregate the larger fish from the smaller ones.*

segregate someone, something, or an animal **into** something to isolate someone, an animal, or something into something or a special place. ☐ *We segregated the infected people into a separate room.* ☐ *Let's segregate the white pigs into a different pen.*

segregate something **from** something else Go to **segregate** someone **from** someone else.

segue into something to make a smooth transition into something. (From filmmaking and broadcasting. Rhymes with *egg - day*.) ☐ *At this point in the script, you should segue into the next scene.* ☐ *Don't segue here, this is where a commercial goes.*

seize onto someone or something to grab onto someone or something. ☐ *The beggar seized onto the well-dressed gentleman and demanded money.* ☐ *Tony seized onto the doorknob and gave it a hard jerk.*

seize someone or something **with** something to grab someone or something with something. ☐ *The robot seized Roger with its mechanical claws.* ☐ *The dockworker seized the cable with a long hook.*

seize something **up†** to grab or take something. ☐ *The crow seized the freshly hatched chick up and flew away.* ☐ *The huge bird seized up the tiny chick.*

seize the opportunity to take advantage of an opportunity when offered. ☐ *My uncle offered me a trip to Europe, so I seized the opportunity.* ☐ *Whenever you have a chance, you should seize the opportunity.*

seize up to freeze or halt; to grind suddenly to a stop. ☐ *The engine seized up, and the car coasted to a stop.* ☐ *My knee seized up in the middle of a football game.*

seize (up)on something **1.** *Lit.* to grasp something tightly. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Dave seized upon the knob of the door and yanked hard.* ☐ *I seized on the railing and held on tight.* **2.** *Fig.* to accept or adopt something, such as a plan, idea, etc. ☐ *I heard her ideas and seized upon them immediately.* ☐ *The committee seized on my plan at once.*

seized with something *Fig.* affected suddenly by something, such as laughter, coughing, sneezing, fits of rage, etc. ☐ *Suddenly, I was seized with a fit of coughing.* ☐ *Mary was seized with laughter at the sight of Ted in a clown suit.*

select from someone or something to make a choice from a group of people or things. ☐ *You will have to select from the people we have asked to interview with you today.* ☐ *They told me that I had to select from what you have in stock.*

select someone **from** something to choose someone from a group of people. ☐ *You will have to select a new secretary from the available pool of workers.* ☐ *I selected Ted from the applicants I had at the time.*

select someone or something **as** something to choose someone or something to be something. ☐ *The voters selected Alice as the county treasurer.* ☐ *We selected Acme as our main distributor.*

select someone or something **for** someone or something to choose someone or something for the benefit of someone or something. ☐ *You need a helper, so I will select someone for you.* ☐ *Jane selected a car for her husband.*

Self-praise is no recommendation. *Prov.* If you praise yourself, people will think that you are boastful and will not respect you. ☐ *After listening to the lawyer brag about his achievements for a solid half hour, I decided I would find someone else to handle my case. Self-praise is no recommendation.*

Self-preservation is the first law of nature. *Prov.* Every living thing will fight to survive.; It is natural to think of yourself first. ☐ *When Joe's best friend was*

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arrested, Joe pretended not to know him. "Perhaps it wasn't very loyal of me," he thought, "but self-preservation is the first law of nature."

sell at something [for something] to be marketed at a particular price. ☐ *This coat formerly sold at twice this price.* ☐ *Next month, this will sell at a 60 percent markup.*

sell like hotcakes *Fig.* [for something] to be sold very fast. ☐ *The delicious candy sold like hotcakes.* ☐ *The fancy new cars were selling like hotcakes.*

sell out [for an item] to be sold until there is no more. ☐ *All the plastic hangers have sold out.*

sell out (to someone**) 1.** to sell everything, such as all one's property or one's company, to someone. ☐ *The farmer finally gave up and sold out to a large corporation.* ☐ *I refuse to sell out no matter what they offer me.* **2.** to betray someone or something to someone. ☐ *I think that you have sold out to the enemy!*

sell someone **a bill of goods** *Fig.* to get someone to believe something that isn't true; to deceive someone. ☐ *Don't pay any attention to what John says. He's just trying to sell you a bill of goods.* ☐ *I'm not selling you a bill of goods. What I say is true.*

sell someone **down the river** Go to **sell** someone **out†.**

sell someone **on** something to convince someone to do something; to convince someone to accept an idea. ☐ *Mary sold me on ordering pizza for dinner.* ☐ *John sold Anne on switching long-distance phone companies.*

sell someone or something **as** something to put someone or something up for consideration as something. ☐ *The political party tried to sell the candidate as a responsible administrator.* ☐ *The sales force was told to sell the paint as the best available anywhere.*

sell someone or something **short** *Fig.* to underestimate someone or something; to fail to see the good qualities of someone or something. ☐ *This is a very good restaurant. Don't sell it short.* ☐ *When you say that John isn't interested in music, you're selling him short. Did you know he plays the violin quite well?*

sell someone **out†** and **sell** someone **down the river** to betray someone; to reveal damaging information about someone. ☐ *Bill told everything he knew about Bob, and that sold Bob down the river.* ☐ *You'll be sorry if you sell me out.* ☐ *Lefty sold out his friends, and we'll all soon be arrested.*

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sell something **at** something **1.** to market something at a particular price. ☐ *Do you think we can sell these things at four dollars each?* ☐ *We cannot sell these at ten times what we paid for them!* **2.** to market something at something or some place. ☐ *We will try to sell our old kitchen sink at the flea market in Adamsville.* ☐ *He sold all his watermelons at the farmers market in town.*

sell something **for** a certain price to market something at a certain price. ☐ *I think I can sell this for twice what I paid for it.* ☐ *This is selling for twice the price at the shop down the street.*

sell something **for a song** *Fig.* to sell something for very little money. (As in trading something of value for the singing of a song.) ☐ *I had to sell my car for a song because I needed the money in a hurry.* ☐ *I have two geometry books and I would sell one of them for a song.*

sell something **off†** to sell all of something. ☐ *We ended up with a large stock of out-of-style coats and we had to sell them all off at a loss.* ☐ *We sold off all the excess stock.*

sell something **on credit** to sell something now and let the purchaser pay for it later. ☐ *I'm sorry, we don't sell groceries on credit. It's strictly cash-and-carry.* ☐ *There is a shop around the corner that sells clothing on credit.*

sell something **out†** to sell all of something. ☐ *Have they sold their supply out yet?* ☐ *The stores sold out their stocks of that game long before Christmas.*

sell the farm and **bet the farm** *Fig.* to liquidate all one's assets in order to raise money to invest in something. ☐ *It's a risky proposition. I wouldn't bet the farm on it.*

a **selling point** a feature of a product or idea that is worth mentioning when trying to sell the product or idea. ☐ *The fact that the book had large type is an important selling point.*

send after someone or something to request that someone or something be brought; to **send for** someone or something. ☐ *You really ought to send after a doctor.* ☐ *Let's send after a taxi to take us to the airport.*

send ahead for something to send a message for something to be ready or available when one arrives. ☐ *I will send ahead for a taxi to meet us at the station.* ☐ *We sent ahead for room reservations at the hotel.*

send away (for something**)** to order something to be brought or sent from some distance. ☐ *I sent away for a new part to replace the one that was broken.* ☐ *I couldn't find the part locally. I had to send away for it.*

send for someone or something to make a request that someone or something be brought. ☐ *Mr. Franklin sent for his secretary.* ☐ *I think we should send for an ambulance.*

send in for something and **send off for** something to dispatch an order for something to a company or other body making a public offer of goods. ☐ *I sent in for a new product that is supposed to make my hair grow back.* ☐ *Did you send in for that country-and-western CD as you said you would?* ☐ *I sent off for the proper contest entry forms.*

send off for something Go to previous.

send one **about** one's **business** to send someone away, usually in an unfriendly way. ☐ *Is that annoying man on the telephone again? Please send him about his business.* ☐ *Ann, I can't clean up the house with you hanging around. I'm going to have to send you about your business.*

send one **to** one's **death** to order one to go on a mission or journey that will result in one's death. ☐ *The general sent many fine young men to their deaths that day.* ☐ *They were sent to their death by the act of a madman.*

send out (for someone or something**)** to send an order by messenger, telephone, cable, or fax that someone or something is to come or be delivered. ☐ *We sent out for a public stenographer to record the will as Uncle Herman dictated it.* ☐ *There was no food in the refrigerator, so we decided to send out.*

send someone **after** someone or something to send someone to get someone or something. ☐ *Please send John after the doctor. This is an emergency.* ☐ *The telephone was out so we sent someone after an ambulance.*

send someone **away** Go to **put** someone **away.**

send someone **away with** something to make someone leave and carry something away. ☐ *I sent him away with a message for his mother.* ☐ *She sent Ted away with a little booklet about manners.*

send someone **back for** something to cause someone to return to get something. ☐ *He came without it, so I sent him back for it.* ☐ *Ted sent Roger back for the rest of the groceries.*

send someone **before** someone or something to cause someone to appear before someone or a group. ☐ *I sent my lawyer before the mayor to plead my cause.* ☐ *Donna sent a friend before the committee.*

send someone **below** to send someone to one of the lower decks of a ship. ☐ *The first mate sent the sailor below to shovel coal into the boiler.* ☐ *The captain sent Mr. Wallace below, where he would be out of the way during the storm.*

send someone **down for** something to request someone to go to a place on a lower level to get something. ☐ *I sent the butler down for another bottle of wine.* ☐ *I sent the butler down for more of this vintage.*

send someone **for** someone or something to cause someone to go and get someone or something. ☐ *Please send Jerry for the doctor. This is an emergency.* ☐ *Could you send someone for pizza?*

send someone **from pillar to post** *Fig.* to send someone to many different places, none of which is the correct place. (Compare this with **send** someone **on a wild-goose chase.**) ☐ *Jill sent Roger from pillar to post to look for a special kind of paper.* ☐ *Roger was sent from pillar to post with his problem.*

send someone **in**† Go to **send** someone **into** something.

send someone **in for** someone to send someone into a game as a replacement for someone else. ☐ *The coach sent Jill in for Alice, who was beginning to tire.* ☐ *Ted sent Bill in for Wally.*

send someone **into** a state or condition to cause someone to be in a certain state or condition. ☐ *The horrifying news sent our family into hysterics.* ☐ *The clerk's rude behavior sent the customer into a fit of anger.*

send someone **into** something and **send** someone **in**† to make someone go into something or some place. ☐ *George sent me into the house for a hammer.* ☐ *The boys know where it is. He should have sent in the boys.* ☐ *George sent me in.*

send someone **off** to participate in saying good-bye to someone who is leaving. ☐ *We had a party to send Tom off on his retirement.* ☐ *Bob's parents sent him off from the airport.*

send someone **off (to** something**)** to send someone away to something or some place, especially away on a journey; to be present when someone sets out on a journey to something or some place. ☐ *We sent both kids off to camp this summer and had peace in the house for the first time in years.* ☐ *Liz sent Karen off to the store.*

send someone **on a wild-goose chase** *Fig.* to send someone on a pointless or futile search. ☐ *You sent me on a wild-goose chase! There are no straw hats for sale anywhere in town!* ☐ *Fred was sent on a wild-goose chase while his friends prepared a surprise party for him.*

send someone or something **across (**something**)** to cause someone or something to cross something. ☐ *The coach sent the player across the field to give a message to someone on the other side.* ☐ *We sent the taxi across the river to pick up Gerald on the other side.*

send someone or something **along**† to help someone or something continue along; to send someone. ☐ *I knew it was time for Johnny to go home, so I sent him along.* ☐ *I will send along the baggage later.*

send someone or something **around**† to cause someone or something to go from place to place. ☐ *I sent my secretary around to look for the missing book.* ☐ *I will send around some papers for you to sign.*

send someone or something **around for** someone or something to make someone or something go somewhere to pick up someone or something. ☐ *I will send my driver around for you at about six.* ☐ *We sent a taxi around for Jane.*

send someone or something **away**† to cause someone, a group, or something to leave. ☐ *I sent the salesman away.* ☐ *The store sent away all late deliveries.*

send someone or something **back**† to cause someone or something to return. ☐ *He came to apologize, but I sent him back.* ☐ *Send back these goods. They are defective.*

send someone or something **down**† to dispatch someone or something to some place on a lower level. ☐ *They wanted someone downstairs to help with the moving, so I sent John down.* ☐ *I sent down John to help.*

send someone or something **on**† **(ahead) (of** someone or something**)** to dispatch someone or something to arrive before someone or something else. ☐ *I sent my personal assistant on ahead of me to get the rooms ready.* ☐ *Jeff sent on his luggage.*

send someone or something **under** something to force someone or something under something. ☐ *The accident sent poor Roger under the wheels of a truck.* ☐ *Mary kicked the ball and sent it under a bush.*

send someone or something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to order someone to go upward to a higher level; to arrange for something to be taken upward to a higher level. ☐ *I'll send up Gary.* ☐ *They are hungry on the tenth floor. Let's send some sandwiches up.* **2.** *Fig.* to parody or ridicule someone or something. ☐ *Comedians love to send the president or some other famous person up.* ☐ *The comedian sent up the vice president.*

send someone **out**† Go to **send** someone **out of** something.

send someone **out**† **(for** someone or something**)** to send someone out to search for someone or something. ☐ *We sent Gerald out for Walter, who was supposed to have been here already.* ☐ *Karen sent out Liz for some medicine.*

send someone **out of** something and **send** someone **out**† to order someone to leave something or some place. ☐ *The teacher sent the student out of the room.* ☐ *The teacher sent out the troublesome students.*

send someone **(out) on an errand** to dispatch someone to perform an errand. ☐ *Jerry will be back in a minute. I sent him out on an errand.* ☐ *Who sent you on an errand?*

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send someone **over (to)** some place and **send** someone **over**† to order someone to go to some place. ☐ *I sent Dave over to the main office.* ☐ *Please send over someone else.*

send someone **packing** *Fig.* to send someone away; to dismiss someone, possibly rudely. ☐ *I couldn't stand him anymore, so I sent him packing.* ☐ *The maid proved to be so incompetent that I had to send her packing.*

send someone **through the mill** Go to through the mill.

send someone **to bed** Go to put someone to bed.

send someone **to glory 1.** *Fig.* to kill someone. ☐ *One shot sent him to glory.* ☐ *You want me to send you to glory or something?* **2.** *Fig.* to officiate at the burial services for someone. ☐ *The preacher sent him to glory amidst the sobs of his relatives.* ☐ *The preacher probably gets fifty bucks for every stiff he sends to glory.*

send someone **to the locker room** Go to next.

send someone **to the showers** and **send** someone **to the locker room** *Fig.* to order a player from the playing field, thus ending the player's participation for the day. ☐ *The coach had sent four players to the showers before the end of the game.* ☐ *He was angry enough to send them all to the locker room.*

send someone **up**† *Fig.* to mock or ridicule, particularly by imitation. ☐ *Last week, he sent the prime minister up.* ☐ *In his act, he sends up famous people.*

send someone **up (the river)** *Fig.* to send someone to prison. (Underworld. As done by a judge or indirectly by the police.) ☐ *They tried to send me up the river, but my testimony got me off.* ☐ *I'm gonna send you up the river if it's the last thing I do.*

send someone **up the wall** *Fig.* to annoy and irritate someone; to drive someone crazy. ☐ *Don't scratch your fingers on the blackboard. It sends me up the wall!* ☐ *That noise sends me up the wall!*

send something **by** something to dispatch something by a particular carrier. ☐ *I will send it to you by special messenger.* ☐ *We sent the package by air freight.*

send something **C.O.D.** to send merchandise to someone who will pay for it when it is delivered. (*C.O.D.* means "cash on delivery" or "collect on delivery.") ☐ *I asked them to send the book C.O.D.* ☐ *This person has ordered a copy of our upcoming release. Send it C.O.D.*

send something **from** something to dispatch something from something or some place. ☐ *Ted sent the package from the downtown post office.* ☐ *The gifts were sent off in a large box from the company's shipping dock.*

send something **into** something and **send** something **in**† to dispatch something, such as an order, to a company or other body making a public offer of goods. ☐ *I sent the order in to the home office.* ☐ *I sent in the order.*

send something **off**† **(to** someone or something**)** to dispatch something to someone, something, or some place. ☐ *I will send the package off to you in tomorrow's mail.* ☐ *Karen sent off a letter to her aunt.*

send something **over**† **((to)** some place**)** to cause something to be taken to some place. ☐ *I sent the package over to your home.* ☐ *Please send over the rest of the mail.*

send something **to** someone or something to dispatch something to someone, something, or some place. ☐ *I will send the books to my parents.* ☐ *I sent the order to Detroit.*

send up a trial balloon to suggest something and see how people respond to it; to test public opinion. ☐ *Mary had an excellent idea, but when we sent up a trial balloon, the response was very negative.* ☐ *Don't start the whole project without sending up a trial balloon.*

send word to someone to get a message to someone by any means. ☐ *I will send word to her as soon as I have something to report.* ☐ *Tom sent word to Bill just in time.*

a **sense of humor** the ability to appreciate good humor and jokes; the ability to create jokes and say funny things. ☐ *Does he have a sense of humor? He looks like he has never laughed in his life.*

sensitize someone **to** something **1.** to make a person have an allergic reaction to something. ☐ *Frequent exposure to the chemical sensitized Harry to it and made him get a rash.* ☐ *He became sensitized to pet dander.* **2.** to make someone more thoughtful and receptive to something. ☐ *We want to sensitize you to the feelings of other people.* ☐ *He never became sensitized to the needs of others.*

sentence someone **to** something **(for** something**)** [for a judge] to order someone to suffer confinement, death, or labor for committing a crime. ☐ *The judge sentenced Roger to three years in prison for the crime.* ☐ *The judge sentenced him to hard labor.*

separate but equal segregated but of equal value or quality. (A doctrine once sanctioned by the U.S. Supreme Court regarding racial segregation.) ☐ *The separate but equal doctrine was abandoned years ago.* ☐ *They were provided with facilities that were said to be separate but equal—but were really of a lower standard.*

separate off (from something**)** to move or head away from something. ☐ *The road to the cabin separates off from the main road and goes along for a mile or two.* ☐ *It separates off about a mile from here.*

separate someone **from** someone else and **separate** something **from** something else to segregate people or things. ☐ *The nurse separated the infected people from the healthy ones.* ☐ *Please separate the spoiled apples from the good ones.*

separate someone or something **into** something to divide people or things into subdivisions. ☐ *We had to separate the kids into smaller groups.* ☐ *Jane separated the apples into three groups by size.*

separate something **from** something else Go to separate someone from someone else.

separate something **off from** something and **separate** something **off**† to remove something from something. ☐ *Frank separated the cream off from the milk.* ☐ *Separate off the hens from the rooster.*

separate something **out of** something and **separate** something **out**† to remove something out from something. ☐ *She used a filter to separate the dirt particles out of the water.* ☐ *A filter separated out the impurities.*

separate the men from the boys and **separate the sheep from the goats** *Fig.* to separate the competent from those who are less competent. (Not necessarily just about males.) ☐ *This is the kind of task that separates the*

men from the boys. ☐ *Working in a challenging place like this really separates the sheep from the goats.*

separate the wheat from the chaff *Prov.* to separate what is useful or valuable from what is worthless. ☐ *When it comes to books, time will separate the wheat from the chaff. Good books will have lasting appeal, and the rest will be forgotten.* ☐ *The managers hoped that the new procedure for evaluating employees would separate the wheat from the chaff.*

serious about someone in love with someone; romantically interested in someone. ☐ *I'm afraid I'm getting serious about Bill.* ☐ *Bill, unfortunately, is pretty serious about Mary.*

serve a (useful) purpose to be useful in accomplishing some purpose. ☐ *This large book should serve a useful purpose. We can use it for a doorstop.*

serve as a guinea pig *Fig.* [for someone] to be experimented on; to allow some sort of test to be performed on one. (Alludes to the use of guinea pigs for biological experiments.) ☐ *Try it on someone else! I don't want to serve as a guinea pig!* ☐ *Jane agreed to serve as a guinea pig. She'll be the one to try out the new flavor of ice cream.*

serve as someone or something to act in the capacity of someone or something. ☐ *I served as the mayor's assistant for a number of years.* ☐ *This brick will not serve as a doorstop.*

serve as the driving force (behind someone or something**)** Go to the **driving force (behind** someone or something**)**.

serve notice (on someone**)** to formally or clearly announce something to someone. ☐ *John served notice that he wouldn't prepare the coffee anymore.* ☐ *I'm serving notice that I'll resign as secretary next month.*

serve on something to carry out one's duty or responsibility on something, such as a committee or a board. ☐ *Will you be able to serve on this committee next year also?* ☐ *Sarah refused to serve on the committee again.*

serve someone **right** [for an act or event] to punish someone fairly (for doing something). ☐ *John copied off my test paper. It would serve him right if he fails the test.* ☐ *It'd serve John right if he got arrested.*

serve someone's **purpose** Go to **answer** someone's **purpose**.

serve someone **with** something to officially deliver something, such as a subpoena, to someone. ☐ *He served her with papers from the circuit court.* ☐ *Has Tom been served with the subpoena?*

serve something **around**† to distribute something to eat or drink to everyone present. ☐ *Please serve the snacks around so that everyone gets some.* ☐ *Serve around the birthday cakes, would you?*

serve something **for** something to distribute something to eat or drink for a particular purpose. ☐ *We served smoked salmon for an appetizer.* ☐ *What will you serve for a main course?*

serve something **in** something to present something to eat or drink in a particular container. ☐ *Kelly served the lemonade in paper cups.* ☐ *What will you serve the soup in?*

serve something **on a silver platter** Go to **on a silver platter**.

serve something **on** someone to officially deliver something, such as a subpoena, to someone. ☐ *A prosecuting attorney served the subpoena on Max.* ☐ *The document was served on the plaintiff by a sheriff's deputy.*

serve something **out**† to carry out one's duty or responsibility for the whole time, all the way to the end. ☐ *She was unable to serve her term out.* ☐ *The convict served out his sentence in solitary confinement.*

serve something **to** someone† **1.** to present someone with something to eat or drink. ☐ *The host served the snacks to everyone and left the room to work on the salad.* ☐ *The snacks were served to everyone in attendance.* **2.** to officially deliver something, such as a subpoena, to someone. ☐ *The sheriff at the door was there to serve a subpoena to Fred.* ☐ *She served the papers to the person who lived there.*

serve something **up**† to distribute or deliver food for people to eat. ☐ *The cook served the stew up and then passed around the bread.* ☐ *Can you serve up the food now?*

serve time to spend a certain amount of time in jail. ☐ *The criminal served ten years in jail.* ☐ *After the felon served his time, he was released from prison.*

serve under someone or something to carry out one's responsibility under the direction or in the employment of someone. ☐ *I served under the president of the company as special assistant.* ☐ *Jane served under the previous administration as an investigator.*

serve with someone to perform military service alongside or with someone. ☐ *I served with Harry when we were both in the army.* ☐ *At the reunion, I met a lot of the guys I served with in the navy.*

Set a beggar on horseback, and he'll ride to the devil. *Prov.* If a poor person becomes wealthy, he or she will quickly become corrupt. ☐ *Jill: Since Phil inherited all that money, all he does is go to parties and take drugs. Jane: Yep. Set a beggar on horseback, and he'll ride to the devil.*

set a precedent to establish a pattern; to set a policy that must be followed in future cases. ☐ *I'll do what you ask this time, but it doesn't set a precedent.* ☐ *We've already set a precedent in matters such as these.*

Set a thief to catch a thief. *Prov.* The best person to catch a thief is another thief, because he or she knows how thieves think. ☐ *The government set a thief to catch a thief, hiring a stockbroker convicted of fraudulent practices to entrap the stockbroker they were investigating for fraud.*

set a trap to adjust and prepare a trap to catch an animal. ☐ *Bill set a mousetrap and baited it with cheese.* ☐ *The old man set a trap to catch an annoying squirrel.*

set about doing something to begin to do something. ☐ *When are you going to set about fixing the roof?* ☐ *We will set about painting the house when the weather gets a little cooler.*

set eyes on someone or something and **lay eyes on** someone or something *Fig.* to see someone or something for the first time. ☐ *I knew when I set eyes on that car that it was the car for me.* ☐ *Have you ever laid eyes on such a beautiful flower?*

S

set fire to someone or something and **set** someone or something **on fire** to ignite someone or something; to put someone or something to flames. ☐ *The thief set fire to the building.* ☐ *The poor man accidentally set himself on fire.*

set foot in some place to enter into some place; to begin to enter some place. ☐ *The judge ordered him never to set foot in her house again.* ☐ *I would never set foot in a place like that.*

set for life prepared to exist for the rest of one's life; having adequate supplies for the rest of one's life. ☐ *As soon as I win the lottery, I will be set for life. I'll never have to work again!*

set forth on something and **launch forth on** something **1.** *Lit.* to start out on something, such as a journey. ☐ *We intend to set forth on our journey very early in the morning.* ☐ *What time will you launch forth on your trip?* **2.** *Fig.* to begin presenting a speech or an explanation. ☐ *As soon as John set forth on his speech, three people walked out.* ☐ *Every time he launches forth on a presentation, it's a half hour before he shuts up.*

set great store by someone or something to have positive expectations for someone or something; to have high hopes for someone or something. ☐ *I set great store by my computer and its ability to help me in my work.* ☐ *Bill sets great store by his expensive tools.*

set in to begin; to become fixed for a period of time. ☐ *A severe cold spell set in early in November.* ☐ *When high temperatures set in, the use of electricity went up considerably.*

set in one's **ways** leading a fixed lifestyle; living according to one's own established patterns. ☐ *At her age, she's getting sort of set in her ways.* ☐ *If you weren't so set in your ways, you'd be able to understand young people better.*

a **set of pipes** *Fig.* a very loud voice; a good singing voice. ☐ *She has a nice set of pipes.* ☐ *With a set of pipes like that, she's a winner.*

a **set of wheels** *Fig.* a car. ☐ *I need a new set of wheels.* ☐ *Man, look at that set of wheels that chick has!*

set off (for something**)** to leave for something or some place. ☐ *We set off for Springfield three hours late.* ☐ *It was afternoon before we could set off.*

S

set off on something to begin on a journey or expedition. ☐ *When do you plan to set off on your journey?* ☐ *We will set off on our adventure tomorrow morning.*

set one **(back) on** one's **feet** and **set** one **on** one's **feet again** *Fig.* to reestablish someone; to help someone become active and productive again. ☐ *Gary's uncle helped set him back on his feet.* ☐ *We will all help set you on your feet again.*

set one **back on** one's **heels** *Fig.* to surprise or shock someone. ☐ *I'll bet that news really set her back on her heels!* ☐ *The bill for the repairs set me back on my heels.*

set one **on** one's **feet again** Go to **set** one **(back) on** one's **feet**.

set one's **heart against** something *Fig.* to turn against something; to become totally against something. ☐ *Jane set her heart against going to Australia.* ☐ *I set my heart against her departure.*

set one's **heart on** someone or something *Fig.* to be determined to get or do someone or something. ☐ *I am sorry you didn't get to pick the one you wanted. I know you had set your heart on Fred.* ☐ *Jane set her heart on going to London.*

set one's **hopes on** someone or something *Fig.* to have one's hopes or expectations dependent on someone or something. ☐ *Please don't set your hopes on me in the race. I can't run as fast as I used to.* ☐ *I have set my hopes on the effectiveness of the new law.*

set one's **house in order** *Fig.* to make certain that one's affairs are in proper legal order. ☐ *Before we can ask for a bank loan, we have to set our house in order.* ☐ *I found an accountant who would help me set my house in order.*

set one's **mind on** someone or something *Fig.* to be determined to get or have someone or something. ☐ *I've set my mind on Dave. I have to have him on my team.* ☐ *Jamie set her mind on the red sports car.*

set one's **mind to** something Go to **put** one's **mind to** something.

set one's **(own) price** to name the (relatively high) price at which one is willing to sell something. ☐ *If you have a first edition of Milton, you can almost set your own price. They are in great demand by collectors.*

set one's **sights on** someone or something *Fig.* to regard having someone or something as one's goal. ☐ *He wanted a wife and he had set his sights on Alice.* ☐ *James set his sights on a law degree.*

set out (for some place**) (from** some place**)** to leave from some place on a journey for some place. ☐ *We set out for home from the cabin on the very next morning.* ☐ *We set out from the cabin at dawn.*

set out on one's **own** Go to **strike out on** one's **own**.

set out (on something**)** to begin a journey; to begin a project. ☐ *We set out on our trip exactly as planned.* ☐ *We set out at noon.*

set out to do something to begin to do something; to intend to do something. ☐ *Jill set out to weed the garden, but pulled up a few valuable plants in the process.* ☐ *I set out to repair the door, not rebuild the whole porch.*

set sail for some place to leave in a ship or boat for some place. (Not limited to ships having sails.) ☐ *We set sail for Grenada at noon.* ☐ *When do we set sail for Nantucket?*

set someone **about** something to make someone begin doing something. ☐ *I set the boys about raking up the leaves.* ☐ *She set herself about repairing the damaged machine.*

set someone **apart from** someone else to make someone stand out when compared to someone else. ☐ *Her flaming red hair sets her apart from all the others in her class.* ☐ *They set themselves apart from the rest due to their superb accomplishments.*

set someone **back (**some amount of money**)** to cost someone (an amount of money). ☐ *This coat set me back about $250.* ☐ *That fancy dinner at the restaurant last night really set us back.*

set someone **down (on(to)** something**)** to place a person one is carrying or lifting onto something. ☐ *I set the small*

boy down onto the desk and gave him a piece of candy. ☐ *Set the baby down and come over here.*

set someone **off**† **1.** *Fig.* to cause someone to become very angry; to ignite someone's anger. (Based on **set** something **off** ①.) ☐ *That kind of thing really sets me off!* ☐ *Your rude behavior set off Mrs. Franklin.* **2.** *Fig.* to cause someone to start talking or lecturing about a particular subject. (Based on **set** something **off** ②.) ☐ *When I mentioned high taxes it really set Walter off. He talked and talked.* ☐ *The subject set off my uncle, and he talked on endlessly.*

set someone **on fire** *Fig.* to excite someone; to make someone passionate. (Based on **set fire to** someone or something.) ☐ *Her oratory set everyone on fire.* ☐ *Ted's presentation didn't exactly set me on fire, but it was a good summary of the project.*

set someone or an animal **on** someone or an animal to command someone or an animal to attack someone or an animal. ☐ *The gang leader set his thugs on the unwary tourists.* ☐ *Scott set his hounds on the raccoon.*

set someone or something **above** someone or something **1.** to place someone or something in a physical location higher than someone or something. ☐ *Timmy's dad set him above the others so he could see better.* ☐ *I set the trophy above the television on a little shelf.* **2.** to regard someone or something as better than someone or something else. ☐ *Fred set his wife and children above everyone else.* ☐ *Gene set his job above his family.*

set someone or something **down**† and **put** someone or something **down**† to lower or set down someone or something. (See also **set** something **down; put** someone or something **down**.) ☐ *Put me down!* ☐ *Please set that vase down. It cost a fortune.* ☐ *Put down that gun!*

set someone or something **free (from** something**)** to release someone or something from something. ☐ *The commando set the secret agent free from the prison.* ☐ *Who set the chickens free from their pens?* ☐ *At last, he set himself free from the inhibitions that held him back.*

set someone or something **on fire** Go to **set fire to** someone or something.

set someone or something **on track** Go to **on track**.

set someone or something **to work** to start someone or something working; to cause someone or something to begin functioning. ☐ *The captain set everyone to work repairing the tears in the fabric of the sails.* ☐ *We will set the machines to work at the regular time.*

set someone or something **up**† **against** someone or something to put someone or something into competition against someone or something. ☐ *The coach set his team up against the Lions.* ☐ *He set up Will against a very fast runner.*

set someone or something **up**† **as** something to arrange for or equip someone or something to be or work as something. ☐ *His uncle set him up as a tax consultant.* ☐ *Lee set up his nephew as a tax consultant.* ☐ *Ken set the company up as a partnership.*

set someone's **mind at ease (about** someone or something**)** to make someone feel mentally comfortable about someone or something. ☐ *Alice is upset. I will have to do something to set her mind at ease about the accident.* ☐ *Please set your mind at ease. Everything will be all right.*

set someone's **teeth on edge 1.** *Fig.* [for a scraping sound] to irritate someone's nerves. ☐ *That noise sets my teeth on edge!* ☐ *Tom's teeth were set on edge by the incessant screaming of the children.* **2.** *Fig.* [for a person or an idea] to upset someone very much. ☐ *Her overbearing manner usually sets my teeth on edge.* ☐ *The very thought of doing that set her teeth on edge.*

set someone **straight** to make certain that someone understands something exactly. (Often said in anger or domination.) ☐ *Please set me straight on this matter. Do you or do you not accept the responsibility for the accident?* ☐ *I set her straight about who she had to ask for permission to leave early.*

set someone **up**† to lead—by deception—a person to play a particular role in an event; to arrange an event—usually by deception—so that a specific person suffers the consequences for the event; to frame someone. (See also **set** someone **up (as** something**)**.) ☐ *I had nothing to do with the robbery! I was just standing there. Somebody must have set me up!* ☐ *John isn't the one who started the fight. Somebody set up the poor guy.*

set someone **up (in business)** to help establish someone in business; to provide the money someone needs to start a business. ☐ *My father set my sisters up in business.* ☐ *He helped set them up so he could keep the business in the family.*

set something **against** someone or something **1.** to place or lean something against someone or something. ☐ *Dave set the chair against Fred and had to move it away.* ☐ *I set the rake against the side of the house.* **2.** to make someone hate or oppose someone or something. ☐ *His second wife set him against his former in-laws.* ☐ *The Civil War set brother against brother.*

set something **apart from** something else **1.** to move something so it is away from something else. ☐ *Set the old ones apart from the others so we can sell them first.* ☐ *The stale loaves were set apart from the fresh ones.* **2.** to make something stand out when compared to something else. ☐ *The bright green really sets this plant apart from the others.* ☐ *Her golden hair sets her apart from all the others.*

set something **aside**† to place something in a place that is to one side or out of the way. ☐ *Betty set the manuscript aside until she had more time to work on it.* ☐ *Liz set aside her book for a while.*

S

set something **aside**† **(for** someone or something**)** to reserve something for someone or some purpose. ☐ *I will set a piece of cake aside for you.* ☐ *Liz set aside some cake for Karen.*

set something **at** something to fix something at a particular value or amount. ☐ *Please set the thermostat at a lower temperature.* ☐ *Who set the refrigerator at freezing?*

set something **back**† and **put** something **back**† to set something, like a timepiece, to a lower number. (*Put* is less common.) ☐ *It's that time of year when you must set your clocks and watches back!* ☐ *Set back your clock tonight.* ☐ *I have to put all the clocks back.*

set something **back from** something else and **set** something **back**† to place something at some distance from something else. ☐ *Set the glasses back from the edge or they will*

get knocked off. ☐ *You should set back the crystal vase a little. It's too close to the edge.*

set something **before** someone, something, or some creature to place something in front of someone, an animal, a group, or something. ☐ *I set the plate of sandwiches before the children and they were gone in a few minutes.* ☐ *Jane set the bowl of food before the cats.*

set something **beside** something to place something near or next to something. ☐ *Please set the chair beside the window.* ☐ *I set the suitcase beside the door so I would not forget it.*

set something **down†** and **put** something **down† 1.** to place something on the surface of something. ☐ *Andy set the hot skillet down on the dishcloth and burned a hole in it.* ☐ *He set down the skillet here and burned the counter.* **2.** to write something on paper. ☐ *Let me put this down on paper so we will have a record of what was said.* ☐ *I will set down this note on paper.* **3.** to land an aircraft. ☐ *The pilot put the plane down exactly on time.* ☐ *I can't set down this plane in the fog.*

set something **down as** something to regard something as something. (See also put something down to something.) ☐ *I set his behavior down as an event that would not repeat itself.* ☐ *Please just set the whole afternoon down as an exercise in patience.*

set something **down† in black and white** Go to put something **down† in black and white.**

set something **down to** something Go to put something down to something.

set something **for** something to adjust something for a particular setting. ☐ *I set the thermostat for a lower temperature.* ☐ *Please set the air conditioning for about 75 degrees.*

set something **forth†** to explain something; to present some information. ☐ *She set her ideas forth in an organized and interesting manner.* ☐ *Please set forth your thoughts quickly and concisely.*

set something **forward 1.** to move something to a more forward position. ☐ *Please set the chair forward a little bit. It is in the walkway.* ☐ *If you set the vase forward, it will show up better against the dark background.* **2.** to reset a timepiece to a later time. ☐ *You are supposed to set your clock forward at this time of year.* ☐ *Did you set your watch forward?*

S

set something **in†** Go to set something into something.

set something **in** a place to locate the action of a play or movie in a place. ☐ *The author set the second act in a wooded glade.* ☐ *The opera was set in a forest outside Moscow.*

set something **in** a type face to set something in type, a particular style of type, or a particular font. ☐ *Why not set this section in italics to make it stand out from the rest?* ☐ *Why was this paragraph set in bold type?*

set something **in motion** to start something moving. ☐ *The mayor set the project in motion by digging the first shovelful of soil.* ☐ *I cannot set the procedure in motion until I receive a purchase order.*

set something **into** something and **set** something **in†** to install something into its place. ☐ *The movers set the stove into its proper place, and the plumber hooked it up two days later.* ☐ *They set in the stove carefully.*

set something **off† 1.** *Lit.* to ignite something, such as fireworks. ☐ *The boys were setting firecrackers off all afternoon.* ☐ *They set off rocket after rocket.* **2.** *Fig.* to cause something to begin. ☐ *The coach set the race off with a shot from the starting pistol.* ☐ *She set off the race with a whistle.* **3.** *Fig.* to make something distinct or outstanding. ☐ *The lovely stonework sets the fireplace off quite nicely.* ☐ *The white hat really sets off Betsy's eyes.*

set something **out† (for** someone or something**)** to remove something and place it so that it is available for someone or some purpose. ☐ *I set a piece of cake out for you to eat whenever you get home.* ☐ *Liz set out some cake for Karen.*

set something **over** something to place something in a position above something else. ☐ *Toby set the plate over the hole in the tablecloth.* ☐ *Please place the kettle over the fire.*

set something **right** and **make** something **right; make** something **good; put** something **right** to correct something; to alter a situation to make it more fair. ☐ *This is a very unfortunate situation. I'll ask the people responsible to set this matter right.* ☐ *I'm sorry that we overcharged you. We'll try to put it right.* ☐ *I know I owe you some money, but don't worry, I'll make it good.*

set something **straight** and **put** something **straight** to figure out and correct something; to straighten out a mess. ☐ *I am sorry for the error. I am sure we can set it straight.* ☐ *We'll put this matter straight in a short time.*

set something **to music** to write a piece of music to accompany a set of words. ☐ *The musician set my lyrics to music.* ☐ *The rock band set the poem to music.*

set something **up† 1.** *Lit.* to put something together; to erect something. ☐ *My parents bought me a dollhouse, but I had to set it up myself.* ☐ *It took nearly an hour to set up the tent.* **2.** *Fig.* to establish or found something. ☐ *We set up a fund to buy food for the needy.* ☐ *The business owners set a bank up in the small town.*

set something **up† (with** someone**)** to make plans for something. ☐ *John is hard at work setting something up with Bill and Mary.* ☐ *Sally and Tom set up a party for Saturday night.*

set something **(up)on** something to place something on the surface of something. ☐ *Mrs. Franklin set a bowl of fruit upon the table.* ☐ *I set my empty glass on the counter.*

set the ball rolling Go to get the ball rolling.

set the record straight *Fig.* to put right a mistake or misunderstanding; to make sure that an account, etc., is correct. ☐ *The manager thought Jean was to blame, but she soon set the record straight.* ☐ *Jane's mother heard that Tom is a married man, but he set the record straight. He's divorced.*

set the stage for something **1.** *Lit.* to arrange a stage for an act or scene of a production. ☐ *The stage crew set the stage for the first act.* ☐ *They set the stage for the second scene while the orchestra played.* **2.** *Fig.* to prepare something for some activity. ☐ *The initial meeting set the stage for further negotiations.* ☐ *Your negative comments set the stage for another big argument.*

set the table to place plates, glasses, napkins, etc., on the table before a meal. (The opposite of clear the table.) ☐

Jane, would you please set the table? ☐ *I'm tired of setting the table. Ask someone else to do it.*

set the world on fire *Fig.* to do exciting things that bring fame and glory. (Frequently with the negative.) ☐ *I'm not very ambitious. I don't want to set the world on fire.* ☐ *You don't have to set the world on fire. Just do a good job.*

set to to begin to fight; to attack or commence someone or something. ☐ *The two boys set to almost as soon as they met each other.* ☐ *They set to and fought for about ten minutes, cursing and screaming.*

***set to** do something ready to do something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I'm all set to go. Are you ready?* ☐ *We are set to leave at a moment's notice.*

set to work (on someone or something**)** to begin working on someone or something. ☐ *We have finished questioning Tom, so we will set to work on Fred.* ☐ *We set to work on dinner at noon.*

set tongues (a)wagging *Fig.* to cause people to start gossiping. ☐ *The affair between the boss and her accountant set tongues awagging.* ☐ *If you don't get the lawn mowed soon, you will set tongues wagging in the neighborhood.*

set type to arrange type for printing; to prepare finished pages for printing. ☐ *Have you finished setting the type for page one yet?* ☐ *John sets type for a living.*

set up shop somewhere to establish one's place of work somewhere. ☐ *Mary set up shop in a small office building on Oak Street.* ☐ *The police officer said, "You can't set up shop right here on the sidewalk!"*

set upon someone or something to attack someone or something violently. ☐ *The dogs set upon the bear and chased it up a tree.* ☐ *Bill set upon Tom and struck him hard in the face.*

settle a score with someone and **settle the score (with** someone**)** *Fig.* to clear up a problem with someone; to get even with someone. ☐ *John wants to settle a score with his neighbor.* ☐ *Tom, it's time you and I settled the score.*

settle down 1. to calm down. ☐ *Now, children, it's time to settle down and start class.* ☐ *If you don't settle down, I'll send you all home.* **2.** to settle into a stable way of life; to get married and settle into a stable way of life. ☐ *Tom, don't you think it's about time you settled down and stopped all of this running around?* ☐ *Bill and Ann decided to settle down and start a family.*

settle for something to agree to accept something (even though something else would be better). ☐ *We wanted a red one, but settled for a blue one.* ☐ *Ask your grocer for Wilson's canned corn—the best corn in cans. Don't settle for less.*

settle in to become accustomed to one's new surroundings; to get used to living in a place or a new dwelling. ☐ *I need a little time to settle in, then I can think about buying a car.*

settle on something to decide on something. ☐ *We've discussed the merits of all of them, and we've settled on this one.* ☐ *I can't settle on one or the other, so I'll buy both.*

settle someone's **affairs** to deal with one's business matters; to manage the business affairs of someone who can't. ☐ *When my uncle died, I had to settle his affairs.* ☐ *I have to settle my affairs before going to Mexico for a year.*

settle someone's **hash** *Sl.* to calm someone down, perhaps by threats or by violence. ☐ *If he comes in here, I'll settle his hash.* ☐ *Now, that ought to settle your hash.*

settle (something**) (out of court)** to end a disagreement and reach an agreement without having to go through trial in a court of justice. ☐ *The plaintiff and defendant decided to settle before the trial.* ☐ *Mary and Sue settled out of court before the trial.*

settle the score (with someone**)** Go to **settle a score with** someone.

settle up with someone to pay someone what one owes; to pay one one's share of something. ☐ *I must settle up with Jim for the bike I bought for him.* ☐ *Bob paid the whole restaurant bill and we all settled up with him later.*

a **seven-day wonder** *Fig.* a person or a process supposedly perfected in only seven days. (Sarcastic.) ☐ *Tommy is no seven-day wonder. It took him 6 years to get through high school!*

the **seven-year itch** a real or imagined longing for other women in a man's seventh year of marriage. ☐ *Looks like Jack has the seven-year itch.* ☐ *The seven-year itch is just a rumor.*

sever ties with someone *Fig.* to end a relationship or agreement suddenly or completely. ☐ *The company severed its ties with the dishonest employee.* ☐ *John has severed all ties with his parents.*

sew someone or something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to stitch together an opening in someone or something. ☐ *The surgeon sewed the patient up and pronounced the operation a success.* ☐ *This is torn. Can you sew up this rip?* **2.** *Fig.* to complete one's dealings with or discussion of someone or something. ☐ *It's time to sew this up and go home.* ☐ *I think we can sew up the shipping contract this afternoon and get on to someone else.* ☐ *Let's sew up this last matter and go.*

***sewed up 1.** *Lit.* [the sewing of a gap in cloth] completed. (*Typically: **get** something **~; have** something **~**.) ☐ *Have you got that tear sewed up yet?* **2.** and ***wrapped up** *Fig.* settled or finished. (*Typically: **get** something **~; have** something **~**.) ☐ *I'll take the contract to the mayor tomorrow morning. I'll get the whole deal sewed up by noon.* ☐ *Don't worry about the car loan. I'll have it wrapped up in time to make the purchase.*

Sez me! Go to **Says me!**

Sez who? Go to **Says who?**

shack up (with someone**)** *Inf.* to sleep or live with someone temporarily in a sexual relationship. ☐ *They shacked up for over a year until her parents found out and stopped sending her money.*

shackle someone **with** something to fetter or hobble someone with something, such as chains, etc. ☐ *The sheriff shackled the prisoner with handcuffs and leg irons.* ☐ *The prisoners were shackled with leg irons.*

shades of someone or something *Fig.* reminders of someone or something; a thing that is reminiscent of someone or something. ☐ *When I met Jim's mother, I thought "shades of Aunt Mary."* ☐ *"Shades of grade school," said Jack as the university lecturer rebuked him for being late.*

S

*a **shadow of** oneself and *a **shadow of itself;** *a **shadow of** one's **former self** *Fig.* someone or something that is not as strong, healthy, full, or lively as before. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *The sick man was a shadow of his former self.* ☐ *The abandoned mansion was merely a shadow of its old self.*

a **shady character** and a **suspicious character** *Fig.* an untrustworthy person; a person who makes people suspicious. ☐ *There is a suspicious character lurking about in the hallway. Please call the police.*

a **shady deal** *Fig.* a questionable and possibly dishonest deal or transaction. ☐ *The lawyer got caught making a shady deal with a convicted felon.*

shag (off) *Sl.* to depart. ☐ *I gotta shag. It's late.* ☐ *Go on! Shag off!* ☐ *I gotta shag. Somebody's calling my name.*

shagged out *Sl.* exhausted. ☐ *What a day! I'm shagged out!* ☐ *You guys look sort of shagged out.*

a **shaggy-dog story** a kind of funny story that relies for its humor on its length and its sudden ridiculous ending. ☐ *Don't let John tell a shaggy-dog story. It'll go on for hours.* ☐ *Mary didn't get the point of Fred's shaggy-dog story.*

shake a disease or illness **off†** *Fig.* [for the body] to fight off a disease or illness. ☐ *I thought I was catching a cold, but I guess I shook it off.* ☐ *I hope I can shake off this flu pretty soon.*

shake a habit Go to kick a habit.

shake a leg 1. to hurry; to move faster. (Often as a command.) ☐ *Let's shake a leg, you guys. We gotta be there in twenty minutes.* ☐ *She told me to shake a leg, so I hurried the best I could.* **2.** to dance. ☐ *Let's shake a leg. The music's great.* ☐ *Hey, Jill! You wanna shake a leg with me?*

shake hands and **shake** someone's **hand** to take someone's hand and move it up and down to greet someone or mark an agreement with someone. (See also shake hands (with someone).) ☐ *David shook my hand when he greeted me.* ☐ *Anne and John shook hands before their business appointment.*

shake (hands) on something to clasp and shake the hand of someone as a sign of agreement about something. ☐ *The two people didn't sign a contract; they just shook hands on the terms of the agreement.* ☐ *I think it would be better to sign an agreement than just shake on it.*

S

shake hands (with someone**)** to clasp and shake the hand of someone as a greeting. ☐ *His hands were full, and I didn't know whether to try to shake hands with him or not.* ☐ *He put down his packages, and we shook hands.*

shake in one's **boots** and **quake in** one's **boots** *Fig.* to be afraid; to shake from fear. ☐ *I was shaking in my boots because I had to go see the manager for being late.* ☐ *Stop quaking in your boots, Bob. I'm not going to fire you.*

Shake it (up)! *Inf.* Hurry!; Move faster! ☐ *Get going, chum! Shake it up!* ☐ *We're late. Shake it!*

shake someone **down† 1.** to blackmail someone. (Underworld.) ☐ *Fred was trying to shake Jane down, but she got the cops in on it.* ☐ *The police chief was trying to shake down just about everybody in town.* **2.** to put pressure on someone to lend one money. ☐ *We tried to shake down Max for a few hundred, but no deal.* ☐ *If you're trying to shake me down, forget it. I have no cash.*

shake someone or something **off†** *Fig.* to get rid of someone; to get free of someone who is bothering you. ☐ *Stop bothering me! What do I have to do to shake you off?* ☐ *I wish I could shake off John. He's such a pest!*

shake someone or something **up†** to jostle or knock someone or something around; to toss someone or something back and forth. ☐ *We rode over a rough road, and that shook us up.* ☐ *The accident shook up John quite a bit.*

shake someone's **hand** Go to shake hands.

shake someone **up†** to shock or upset someone. ☐ *The sight of the injured man shook me up.* ☐ *Your rude remark really shook up Tom.*

shake something **down†** Go to shake something out†.

shake something **off†** to get rid of something that is on one by shaking. (See also shake a disease or illness off.) ☐ *I tried to shake the spider off.* ☐ *The dog shook off the blanket Billy had put on him.*

shake something **out† 1.** *Lit.* to clean something of dirt or crumbs by shaking. ☐ *Please shake the tablecloth out.* ☐ *Can you shake out your coat? It's really dusty.* **2.** and **shake** something **down†** *Fig.* to test something to find out how it works or what the problems are. ☐ *I need to spend some time driving my new car to shake it out.* ☐ *We need to shake down this car before I buy it.*

shake something **up† 1.** *Lit.* to shake a container to mix its contents together well. ☐ *Please shake this up before using it.* ☐ *I shook up the medicine bottle like it says on the label.* **2.** *Fig.* to reorganize a group or organization, not always in a gentle way. ☐ *The new manager shook the office up and made things run a lot better.* ☐ *The coach shook the team up before the last game and made them better organized.*

shake the habit Go to kick a habit.

shake the lead out Go to get the lead out.

The **shame of it (all)!** That is so shameful!; I am so embarrassed; I am shocked. (Considerable use jocularly or as a parody. Compare this with For shame!) ☐ *John: Good grief! I have a pimple! Always, just before a date. Andy: The shame of it all!* ☐ *Tom: John claims that he cheated on his taxes. Bill: Golly! The shame of it!*

Shame on you! a phrase scolding someone for being naughty. (Typically said to a child or to an adult for a childish infraction.) ☐ *John: I think I broke one of your figurines. Mary: Shame on you! John: I'll replace it, of course. Mary: Thanks, I sort of liked it.* ☐ *"Shame on you!" said Mary. "You should have known better!"*

shank it *Sl.* to use one's legs to get somewhere; to walk. ☐ *My car needs fixing so I had to shank it to work today.* ☐ *I like to shank it every now and then.*

shank's mare *Fig.* travel on foot. ☐ *You'll find that shank's mare is the quickest way to get across town.* ☐ *Is there a bus, or do I have to use shank's mare?*

shape someone **up†** to get someone into good physical shape; to make someone behave or perform better. ☐ *I've got to shape myself up to improve my health.* ☐ *The trainer was told that he'd have to shape up the boxer before the fight.*

shape up 1. to improve; to reform. ☐ *I want to get things shaped up around here.* ☐ *I guess I'd better shape up if I want to stay in school.* **2.** to assume a final form or structure. ☐ *The game plan for the election was beginning to*

shape up. ☐ *Her objectives began to shape up in her senior year.*

Shape up or ship out. *Fig.* Either improve one's performance (or behavior) or leave. (Used as a command.) ☐ *Okay, Tom. That's the end. Shape up or ship out!* ☐ *John was late again, so I told him to shape up or ship out.*

share and share alike *Cliché* having or taking equal shares. ☐ *I kept five and gave the other five to Mary—share and share alike.* ☐ *The two roommates agreed that they would divide expenses—share and share alike.*

share someone's **pain** to understand and sympathize with someone's pain or emotional discomfort. (Said in order to sound sympathetic.) ☐ *I am sorry about the loss of your home. I share your pain.* ☐ *We sympathize about the loss of your mother. We share your pain.*

share someone's **sorrow** to grieve as someone else grieves. ☐ *We all share your sorrow on this sad, sad day.* ☐ *I am sorry to hear about the death in your family. I share your sorrow.*

***sharp as a razor 1.** very sharp. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *The penknife is sharp as a razor.* ☐ *The carving knife will have to be as sharp as a razor to cut through this gristle.* **2.** and ***sharp as a tack** very sharp-witted or intelligent. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *The old man's senile, but his wife is as sharp as a razor.* ☐ *Sue can figure things out from even the slightest hint. She's as sharp as a tack.*

***sharp as a tack** Go to previous.

a **sharp tongue** *Fig.* an outspoken or harsh manner; a critical manner of speaking. ☐ *He has quite a sharp tongue. Don't be totally unnerved by what he says or the way he says it.*

a **sharp wit** *Fig.* a good and fast ability to make jokes and funny comments. ☐ *Terry has a sharp wit and often makes cracks that force people to laugh aloud at inappropriate times.*

She will get hers. Go to He will get his.

shed crocodile tears and **cry crocodile tears** *Fig.* to shed false tears; to pretend that one is weeping. ☐ *The child wasn't really hurt, but she shed crocodile tears anyway.* ☐ *He thought he could get his way if he cried crocodile tears.*

shed (some) light on something and **throw (some) light on** something *Fig.* to reveal something about something; to clarify something. (Also with *any*.) ☐ *This discussion has shed some light on the problem.* ☐ *Let's see if Ann can throw any light on this question.*

shell out (an amount of money**)** to spend a certain amount of money. ☐ *I'm not going to shell out $400 for that!* ☐ *Come on. You owe me. Shell out!*

*a **shellacking 1.** *Fig.* a physical beating. (*Typically: **get** ~; **take** ~; **give** someone ~.) ☐ *The boxer took a shellacking and lost the fight.* ☐ *I got a shellacking when I broke the window.* **2.** *Fig.* a beating—as in sports. (*Typically: **get** ~; **take** ~; **give** someone ~.) ☐ *Our team played well, but got a shellacking anyway.* ☐ *I practiced my tennis game so I wouldn't take a shellacking in the tournament.*

shift for oneself and **fend for** oneself to get along by oneself; to support oneself. ☐ *I'm sorry, I can't pay your rent anymore. You'll just have to shift for yourself.* ☐ *When I became twenty years old, I left home and began to fend for myself.*

shift one's **ground** *Fig.* to change one's opinions or arguments, often without being challenged or opposed. ☐ *At first Jack and I were on opposite sides, but he suddenly shifted ground and started agreeing with me.* ☐ *Jim has very fixed views. You won't find him shifting his ground.*

shine up to someone *Fig.* to try to gain someone's favor by being extra nice. ☐ *John is a nice guy, except that he's always trying to shine up to the professor.* ☐ *Mary never tries to shine up to the manager.*

shipping and handling the costs of handling a product and transporting it to a customer. ☐ *Shipping and handling charges were included in the price.* ☐ *The cost of the goods is low and shipping and handling added only a few dollars.*

ships that pass in the night *Cliché* people who meet each other briefly by chance, sometimes having a sexual liaison, and who are unlikely to meet again or have an ongoing relationship. ☐ *Mary wanted to see Jim again, but to him, they were ships that passed in the night.* ☐ *We will never be friends. We are just ships that passed in the night.*

shirk one's **duty** to neglect one's job or task. ☐ *The guard was fired for shirking his duty.* ☐ *You cannot expect to continue shirking your duty without someone noticing.*

Shit happens. *Sl.* Bad things just happen and are unavoidable. (Potentially offensive. Use only with discretion.) ☐ *Too bad that your new car got dented, but shit happens.* ☐ *Shit happens. There's nothing that can be done about it.*

*the **shock of** one's **life** *Fig.* a serious (emotional) shock. (*Typically: **get** ~; **have** ~; **give** one ~.) ☐ *I opened the telegram and got the shock of my life.* ☐ *I had the shock of my life when I won $5,000.*

The **shoe is on the other foot.** *Prov.* One is experiencing the same (often bad) things that one caused another person to experience. (Note the variations in the examples.) ☐ *The teacher is taking a course in summer school and is finding out what it's like when the shoe is on the other foot.* ☐ *When the policeman was arrested, he learned what it was like to have the shoe on the other foot.*

shook up upset; shocked. (See also all shook up.) ☐ *Relax, man! Don't get shook up!* ☐ *I always get shook up when I see a bad accident.*

S

shoot a place up† and **shoot the place up**† *Fig.* to fire a gun in or at a place, usually at people. ☐ *The cowboy walked into the saloon and began to shoot the place up.* ☐ *They shot up the place.*

Shoot first, ask questions later. *Prov.* Assume that everyone you encounter is hostile to you.; Take action, even though you do not know enough to be sure if it is the right action. ☐ *If the foreman saw that one of the workers was working slowly, he didn't stop to find out if the worker was sick or unhappy; he just fired him. He believed in shooting first and asking questions later.*

shoot for something **1.** *Lit.* to aim for or at something. (Usually in reference to basketball.) ☐ *The center shot for the basket just before the end of the game.* ☐ *Wally shot for the basket but missed.* **2.** *Fig.* to aim for something; to set something as one's goal. ☐ *You have to shoot for the very*

best. Don't be satisfied with less. ☐ *She shot for the highest attainable goal.*

shoot for the sky Go to reach for the sky.

shoot from the hip 1. *Lit.* to fire a gun that is held at one's side, beside one's hip. (This increases one's speed in firing a gun but is much less accurate.) ☐ *When I lived at home on the farm, my father taught me to shoot from the hip.* ☐ *I quickly shot the snake before it bit my horse. I'm glad I learned to shoot from the hip.* **2.** *Fig.* to speak directly and frankly. (Alluding to the rapidness of firing a gun from the hip.) ☐ *John has a tendency to shoot from the hip, but he generally speaks the truth.* ☐ *Don't pay any attention to John. He means no harm. It's just his nature to shoot from the hip.*

shoot one's **breakfast** Go to next.

shoot one's **cookies** and **shoot** one's **breakfast; shoot** one's **supper** *Sl.* to empty one's stomach; to vomit. ☐ *I think I'm gonna shoot my cookies.* ☐ *I shot my supper, and I was glad to get rid of it.*

shoot one's **mouth off**† *Inf.* to boast or talk too much; to tell secrets. ☐ *Don't pay any attention to Bob. He's always shooting his mouth off.* ☐ *Oh, Sally! Stop shooting off your mouth! You don't know what you're talking about.*

shoot one's **supper** Go to shoot one's cookies.

shoot one's **wad** *Sl.* to spend all or nearly all one's cash on hand. ☐ *I shot my wad on junk food.* ☐ *I can't afford a cab. I shot my wad at the restaurant.*

shoot oneself **in the foot** *Fig.* to cause oneself difficulty; to be the author of one's own misfortune. ☐ *I am a master at shooting myself in the foot.* ☐ *Again, he shot himself in the foot by saying too much to the press.*

shoot someone **down in flames** *Fig.* to ruin someone; to bring about someone's downfall. (See also go down in flames.) ☐ *It was a bad idea, okay, but you didn't have to shoot me down in flames at the meeting.* ☐ *I didn't mean to shoot you down in flames.*

shoot someone or something **(all) to hell 1.** *Lit.* to destroy someone or something with gunfire. (Use discretion with *hell*.) ☐ *Fred shot the crook to hell with his machine gun.* ☐ *The farm boys had shot the stop sign all to hell.* **2.** *Fig.* to destroy, exhaust, or damage someone or something. ☐ *The hard work in the morning shot me all to hell for the rest of the day.* ☐ *You shot my ideas to hell.*

S

shoot someone, something, or an animal **down**† to bring down someone, something, or an animal by gunfire. ☐ *Fred shot Mike down in the street.* ☐ *They shot down the plane.*

shoot something **down**† *Fig.* to foil a plan through criticism; to counter an idea with criticism. (Based on shoot someone, something, or an animal down.) ☐ *He raised a good point, but the others shot him down almost immediately.* ☐ *Liz shot down Jeff's best idea.*

shoot something **out**† **1.** to stick, throw, or thrust something outward. ☐ *The diamond shot bright shafts of light out when the sun fell on it.* ☐ *The little girl shot out her tongue at the teacher.* **2.** to settle a matter by the use of guns. ☐ *Bill and the cowboy—with whom he had been arguing—went out in the street and shot it out.*

shoot the breeze *Fig.* to chat casually and without purpose. ☐ *We spent the entire afternoon just shooting the breeze.* ☐ *It was good to shoot the breeze with you, Mary.*

shoot the bull and **shoot the crap; shoot the shit** *Inf.* to chat and gossip. (The same as throw the bull. Use caution with *crap, shit.*) ☐ *Let's get together sometime and shoot the bull.* ☐ *You spend too much time shooting the crap.*

shoot the cat *Sl.* to empty one's stomach; to vomit. ☐ *I must have shot the cat a dozen times during the night.* ☐ *Shooting the cat is no fun when you're weak and dizzy.*

shoot the crap Go to shoot the bull.

shoot the shit Go to shoot the bull.

shoot the works 1. to do everything; to use everything; to bet all one's money. ☐ *Okay, let's go out to dinner and shoot the works.* ☐ *Don't shoot the works! Save some for a cab.* **2.** *Sl.* to empty one's stomach; to vomit. ☐ *Suddenly she turned sort of green, and I knew she was going to shoot the works.* ☐ *After she shot the works, she looked fine—but I was sort of pale.*

shoot up *Sl.* to take drugs by injection. ☐ *Wallace was caught by the cops shooting up in the high school rest room.*

shop around (for something**)** to shop at different stores to find what you want at the best price. ☐ *I've been shopping around for a new car, but they are all priced too high.* ☐ *You can find a bargain, but you'll have to shop around.*

shopping list 1. *Lit.* a list of things one needs to buy. ☐ *I made up a shopping list for groceries that we are out of.* ☐ *Don't forget to take the shopping list with you to the store.* **2.** *Fig.* a list of things, especially questions or things one wants. ☐ *I have a shopping list of absolute musts.* ☐ *He showed up for the interview with a shopping list so long that it took two pages.*

shore someone **up**† *Fig.* to (figuratively) prop up or support someone. ☐ *Mary's solid character and personality helped shore her up during her recent problems with the law.* ☐ *Everyone co-operated to shore up John when his mother died.*

shore something **up**† to prop up or support something. ☐ *The fence fell over, so we shored it up with more posts.* ☐ *The storm weakened the foundation of our house, and we had to have workers shore up the house.*

short and sweet *Cliché* brief (and pleasant because of briefness). ☐ *That was a good sermon—short and sweet.* ☐ *I don't care what you say, as long as you make it short and sweet.*

the **short and the long of it** Go to the long and the short of it.

*the **short end of the stick** *Fig.* the smaller or less desirable part, rank, task, or amount. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~; end up with ~**.) ☐ *Why do I always get the short end of the stick? I want my fair share!* ☐ *She's unhappy because she has the short end of the stick again.*

short for something [of a form] being a shortened form of a word or phrase. ☐ Photo *is short for* photograph. ☐ Dave *is short for* David.

short of something not having enough of something. ☐ *I wanted to bake a cake, but I was short of eggs.* ☐ *Usually at the end of the month, I'm short of money.*

Short reckonings make long friends. *Prov.* If you borrow something from a friend, pay it back as soon as possible so that the two of you remain friendly. ☐ *Now that you've finished using Bert's saw, take it right back to him. Short reckonings make long friends.*

(a) **short shrift** a brief period of consideration of a person's ideas or explanations. ☐ *They gave the reporter short shrift and got him out of the office.* ☐ *My plan got short shrift from the board—a ten-minute presentation; they then voted it down.*

a **short temper** Go to a quick temper.

***short with** someone abrupt and a little bit rude in speaking to a person. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Please don't be short with me. I am doing the best that I can.*

a **shot at** someone Go to a try at someone.

shot full of holes and **shot to ribbons; shot to hell; shot to pieces 1.** *Fig.* [of an argument that is] demolished or comprehensively destroyed. ☐ *Come on, that theory was shot full of holes ages ago.* ☐ *Your argument is all shot to hell.* **2.** to be very intoxicated due to drink or drugs. ☐ *Tipsy? Shot to ribbons, more like!* ☐ *Boy, I really felt shot full of holes. I'll never drink another drop.* **3.** totally ruined. (Use *hell* with caution.) ☐ *My car is all shot to hell and can't be depended on.* ☐ *This rusty old knife is shot to hell. I need a sharper one.*

a **shot in the arm 1.** *Lit.* an injection of medicine. ☐ *The doctor administered the antidote to the poison by a shot in the arm.* **2.** *Fig.* a boost or act of encouragement. ☐ *The pep talk was a real shot in the arm for all the guys.* ☐ *The good test grade was a shot in the arm for Gary.* **3.** *Fig.* a drink of liquor. ☐ *I could use a little shot in the arm.* ☐ *How about a little shot in the arm, bartender?*

a **shot in the dark** *Fig.* a very general attempt; a wild guess. ☐ *It was just a shot in the dark. I had no idea I was exactly correct.* ☐ *Come on, try it. Even a shot in the dark may win.*

shot through with something *Fig.* containing something; interwoven, intermixed, or filled with something. ☐ *The rose was a lovely pink shot through with streaks of white.* ☐ *John's comments are often shot through with sarcasm.*

a **shotgun wedding** *Fig.* a forced wedding. (From imagery of the bride's father having threatened the bridegroom with a shotgun to force him to marry the bride because he made her pregnant.) ☐ *Mary was six months pregnant when she married Bill. It was a real shotgun wedding.* ☐ *Bob would never have married Jane if she hadn't been pregnant. Jane's father saw to it that it was a shotgun wedding.*

should have stood in bed *Fig.* an expression used on a bad day, when one should have stayed in one's bed. ☐ *What a horrible day! I should have stood in bed.* ☐ *The minute I got up and heard the news this morning, I knew I should have stood in bed.*

shoulder the blame for something Go to the blame for something.

shoulder to shoulder *Fig.* side by side; with a shared purpose. ☐ *The two armies fought shoulder to shoulder against the joint enemy.* ☐ *The strikers said they would stand shoulder to shoulder against the management.*

shouldn't happen to a dog *Fig.* an expression of something that is so bad that no creature deserves it. ☐ *Poor guy. That shouldn't happen to a dog.* ☐ *This cold I got shouldn't happen to a dog.*

shout about someone or something **1.** to yell about someone or something. ☐ *Alice is shouting about Tom, the guy who stood her up.* ☐ *What are you shouting about?* **2.** to show one's pride or enthusiasm about someone or something. (Usually with the object shifted to the front of the sentence.) ☐ *That's really something to shout about.* ☐ *She's something to shout about.*

shout someone or something **down†** to overwhelm someone or something by shouting. ☐ *Mary was trying to speak, but Sally shouted her down.* ☐ *Ann brought up a very important suggestion, but Bob shouted it down.* ☐ *The lecturer had to shout down the entire audience to be heard.*

shove off Go to push off.

shove one's **way** somewhere to make a path through a crowd by pushing. ☐ *The impatient man shoved his way through the crowd.* ☐ *The reporter shoved her way to the front of the crowd.*

shove someone **around† 1.** *Lit.* to push someone around. ☐ *The bigger boys shoved him around easily because he is so small.* ☐ *Karen shoved around the little kids until they got mad at her.* **2.** *Fig.* to harass someone. ☐ *Stop shoving me around! Who do you think you are?* ☐ *Do you think you can shove around just anybody?*

shove someone or something **down** someone's **throat** and **ram** someone or something **down** someone's **throat; force** someone or something **down** someone's **throat 1.** *Lit.* to force someone to swallow something. ☐ *The harsh nurse forced the medicine down the patient's throat.* ☐ *The zookeepers rammed the food down the python's throat.* **2.** *Fig.* to force someone to accept something. ☐ *Don't try to force that car down my throat! I don't want it!* ☐ *You can't force that nonsense down my throat!* ☐ *I don't want any more insurance, and I don't want anyone to shove any insurance down my throat.* ☐ *Mary isn't invited to my party, and I don't wish for anyone to ram her down my throat!*

show a lot of promise Go to a lot of promise.

show and tell a session where objects are presented and described. (Essentially a kindergarten or grade school activity, but often used figuratively.) ☐ *It was a short lecture with lots of show and tell.* ☐ *I can't take another show and tell session.*

show good faith to demonstrate good intentions or good will. ☐ *I'm certain that you showed good faith when you signed the contract.* ☐ *Do you doubt that she is showing good faith?*

a **show of hands** a display of raised hands [in a group of people] that can be counted for the purpose of votes or surveys. ☐ *We were asked to vote for the candidates for captain by a show of hands.* ☐ *Jack wanted us to vote on paper, not by a show of hands, so that we could have a secret ballot.*

show off to do things in a way that is meant to attract attention. ☐ *Please stop showing off! You embarrass me.* ☐ *John is always showing off to his girlfriend.*

S

show one's **hand** *Fig.* to reveal one's intentions to someone. (From card games.) □ *I don't know whether Jim is intending to marry Jane or not. He's not one to show his hand.* □ *If you want to get a raise, don't show the boss your hand too soon.*

show one's **teeth** and **bare** one's **teeth** *Fig.* to act in an angry or threatening manner. (Alludes to what an angry wolf or dog does.) □ *We thought Bob was meek and mild, but he really showed his teeth when Jack insulted his girlfriend.* □ *The enemy forces didn't expect the country they invaded to bare its teeth.*

show one's **(true) colors** *Fig.* to show what one is really like or what one is really thinking. □ *Whose side are you on, John? Come on. Show your colors.* □ *It's hard to tell what Mary is thinking. She never shows her true colors.*

show one **to** one's **seat** Go to show someone to a seat.

show signs of something to show hints or indications of something. □ *I let the horse run at full speed until it began to show signs of tiring.* □ *Sally is showing signs of going to sleep.*

show someone **around (**some place**)** to give someone a tour of a place. □ *I'm very glad you've come to work here. Let me show you around so you'll know where things are.* □ *Welcome to our town. As soon as you unpack, I'll get someone to show you around.*

show someone **into** somewhere and **show** someone **in**† to lead or usher someone into somewhere. □ *The butler showed me into the sitting room and asked me to wait.* □ *The car dealer showed me into the sales office and asked me to sign some papers.* □ *The butler showed in the guests one by one.*

show someone one's **stuff** *Fig.* to show someone how well one can do something. □ *We'll audition Kate now. Okay, Kate, show us your stuff.*

show someone or something **off**† to display someone or something so that the best features are apparent. □ *Bill drove around all afternoon showing his new car off.* □ *Mrs. Williams was showing off her baby to the neighbors.*

show someone **out (of** something**)** Go to see someone out (of something).

show someone **the big picture** Go to the big picture.

show someone **the ropes** Go to the ropes.

show someone **to a seat** and **show** one **to** one's **seat** to lead or direct someone to a place to sit. □ *May I show you to your seat, sir?* □ *The ushers showed us to our seats politely and efficiently.*

show someone **(to) the door** and **see** someone **to the door** to lead or take someone to the door or exit. □ *After we finished our talk, she showed me to the door.* □ *Bill and I finished our chat as he saw me to the door.*

show someone **the tricks of the trade** Go to the tricks of the trade.

show someone **up**† to make someone's faults or shortcomings apparent. □ *John is always trying to show someone up to make himself look better.* □ *John's excellent effort really showed up Bill, who didn't try very hard at all.*

show someone **up**† **as** something to reveal that someone is really something (else). □ *The investigation showed her up as a fraud.* □ *The test showed up the candidate as unqualified.*

show something **to good advantage** to display the best features of something; to display something so that its best features are apparent. □ *Put the vase in the center of the table and show it to good advantage.* □ *Having and using a large vocabulary shows your intelligence to good advantage.*

show up to appear; to arrive. □ *Where is John? I hope he shows up soon.* □ *When will the bus show up?* □ *Weeds began to show up in the garden.*

show up ahead of time Go to ahead of time.

show up on the dot Go to on the dot.

shower someone or something **with** something to cover someone or something with cascades of something. □ *Mary's friends showered her with gifts on her twenty-first birthday.* □ *The guests showered the bride and groom with confetti and rice.*

a **shrinking violet** *Fig.* someone who is very shy and not assertive. □ *I am not exactly a shrinking violet, but I don't have the guts to say what you said to her.*

shroud someone or something **in** something to wrap or conceal someone or something in something. □ *They shrouded Mr. Carlson in sailcloth and prepared him for burial at sea.* □ *They shrouded the decision in a series of formalities.*

Shrouds have no pockets. *Prov.* You cannot take any material goods with you when you die. □ *You should use your money to enjoy yourself while you're alive. Shrouds have no pockets.*

shrug something **off (as** something**)** and **pass** something **off (as** something**)** to ignore something unpleasant or offensive as if it meant something else. □ *She shrugged off the criticism as harmless.* □ *I passed off the remark as misinformed.* □ *Bill scolded me, but I just passed it off.*

shuck something **off**† **1.** to take something off. □ *Tom shucked his jacket off and sat on the arm of the easy chair.* □ *He shucked off his jacket.* **2.** to get rid of someone or something. □ *She shucked all her bad habits off.* □ *Tom shucked off one girlfriend after another.*

shuffle off this mortal coil *Euph.* to die. (Often jocular or formal euphemism. Not often used in consoling someone.) □ *Cousin Fred shuffled off this mortal coil after suffering a heart attack.* □ *When I shuffle off this mortal coil, I want to go out in style—bells, flowers, and a long, boring funeral.*

shush (up) to be quiet. □ *Shush! I want to hear the weather.* □ *Shush up and listen to the lecture.*

shut down Go to close down.

shut one's **eyes to** something Go to close one's eyes to something.

shut someone or something **out**† to exclude someone or something; to refuse entrance to someone or something. □ *We tried to get into the stadium, but they shut us out because there was no more room.* □ *My parents shut out their children when they made important decisions.*

shut someone **up**† to silence someone. □ *Oh, shut yourself up!* □ *Will you please shut up that crying baby!*

shut something **down**† Go to **close** something **down**†.

shut the door (up)on someone or something and **close the door on** someone or something**; close the door to** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to close a door, preventing someone or something from passing through. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *They shut the door upon me, and I couldn't get in!* ☐ *We quickly closed the door on the smoke.* **2.** *Fig.* to eliminate an opportunity for someone or something. ☐ *The board of directors shut the door on me, and there was no further opportunity for me to pursue.* ☐ *They closed the door on further discussions.*

Shut the stable door after the horse has bolted. and **Lock the stable door after the horse is stolen.** *Prov.* To try to prevent something that has already happened; to act too late. ☐ *When Ray heard that the bank had failed, he tried to withdraw his money, but there was no money to withdraw. He was shutting the stable door after the horse had bolted.* ☐ *Jenny has stopped smoking since the doctor told her that her lungs were in bad shape, but I'm afraid she's locking the stable door after the horse is stolen.*

Shut up! *Inf.* Be quiet! (Impolite.) ☐ *Bob: And another thing. Bill: Oh, shut up, Bob!* ☐ *Andy: Shut up! I've heard enough! Bob: But I have more to say!* ☐ *"Shut up! I can't hear anything because of all your noise!" shouted the director.*

Shut up about it. *Inf.* Do not tell anyone about it. ☐ *Bill: I heard that you had a little trouble with the police. Tom: Just shut up about it! Do you hear?* ☐ *Andy: Didn't you once appear in a movie? Alice: Shut up about it. No one has to know.*

Shut your cake hole! and **Shut your pie hole! Shut your face!** *Inf.* Shut up!; Shut your mouth! ☐ *I've heard enough! Shut your cake hole!*

shuttle someone or something **from person to person** and **shuttle** someone or something **from place to place** (Specific persons or places are sometimes expressed.) to move or pass someone or something from person to person; to move or pass someone or something from place to place. ☐ *My phone call was shuttled from person to person.* ☐ *Mary shuttled her children from home to school to practice.*

shy away (from someone or something**)** to avoid someone or something. ☐ *The dog shies away from John since he kicked it.* ☐ *I can understand why the dog would shy away.*

***sick (and tired) of** someone or something *Fig.* tired of someone or something, especially something that one must do again and again or someone or something that one must deal with repeatedly. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~; get ~; grow ~**.) ☐ *I am sick and tired of cleaning up after you.* ☐ *Mary was sick of being stuck in traffic.*

***sick as a dog** *Cliché* very sick; sick and vomiting. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *We've never been so ill. The whole family was sick as dogs.* ☐ *Sally was as sick as a dog and couldn't go to the party.*

***sick at heart** *Fig.* distressed and depressed. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~; make** someone **~**.) ☐ *I became sick at heart just looking at all the homeless children.*

sick in bed remaining in bed while (one is) ill. ☐ *Tom is sick in bed with the flu.* ☐ *He's been sick in bed for nearly a week.*

sick to death (of someone or something**)** totally disgusted with someone or something. ☐ *I am sick to death of your constant bickering.* ☐ *This reporting about the scandals in the government just has me sick to death.*

sick (up) *Sl.* to empty one's stomach; to vomit. ☐ *I think I'm going to sick up. Isn't there supposed to be a barf bag in one of these seat pockets?* ☐ *He's got to sick, and there's no air sickness bag. Help!*

side against someone to be against someone; to take sides against someone. ☐ *I thought you were my friend! I never thought you would side against me!* ☐ *The two brothers were always siding against their sister.*

side by side (of two or more people or things) lined up so their sides are adjacent. ☐ *We walked side by side across the lawn.*

side with someone to join with someone; to take someone else's part; to be on someone's side. ☐ *Why is it that you always side with him when he and I argue?* ☐ *I never side with anybody. I form my own opinions.*

sidle away (from someone or something**)** to avoid someone or something by moving to the side; to ease away from someone or something. ☐ *The cowboy sidled away from the bar and drew his gun.* ☐ *He sidled away and snuck out the door.*

sidle up (to someone or something**)** to move close to someone or something cautiously or furtively; to move closer to someone or something gradually. ☐ *Tex sidled up to Dolly and said howdy in a soft, shy voice.* ☐ *Dolly sidled up and picked the cowboy's pocket.*

sift something **from** something to remove something from something by sifting. ☐ *Fran sifted all the impurities from the flour before using it.* ☐ *Timmy sifted all the leaves from the sand in his sandbox.*

sift something **out of** something and **sift** something **out**† to get rid of something in something else by sifting. ☐ *Dan sifted the impurities out of the flour.* ☐ *Walter sifted out the foreign matter.*

sift something **through** something to make something pass through something such as a sieve. ☐ *She sifted the powdered sugar through a strainer.* ☐ *Please sift the soil through this screen and watch for bits of pottery.*

sift through something to examine all parts of something. ☐ *The fire inspector sifted through the rubble, looking for clues to the start of the fire.* ☐ *We sifted through all the papers in the old trunk, but we did not find what we were looking for.*

sigh about something to release a deep breath, indicating anxiety, distress, or relief about something. ☐ *What are you sighing about?* ☐ *She sighed about her illness and then shifted her thoughts to something else.*

sigh for someone to release a deep breath, indicating anxiety about one's emotional attachment for someone. ☐ *Dave spent a lot of his time sighing for Laura, on whom he had a crush.* ☐ *Laura has been sighing for some as-yet-unnamed young man.*

a **sight for sore eyes** *Fig.* a welcome sight. ☐ *Oh, am I glad to see you here! You're a sight for sore eyes.* ☐ *I'm sure hungry. This meal is a sight for sore eyes.*

sign for someone to sign something, using one's own signature in place of someone else's signature; to sign something, using another person's name, adding the phrase "by [one's own name]." ☐ *He's not here. I will sign for him. Where do I sign?* ☐ *Who will sign for Mr. Wilson?*

sign for something to sign a piece of paper indicating that one has received something. ☐ *Would you sign for this, please?* ☐ *Ted signed for the package and opened it up.*

sign in to indicate that one has arrived somewhere and at what time by signing a piece of paper or a list. ☐ *Please sign in so we will know you are here.* ☐ *Did you remember to sign in this time?*

a **sign of the times** something that signifies the situation evident in the current times. ☐ *Your neighbor's unmowed grass is just a sign of the times. Nobody really cares any longer.*

a **sign of things to come** Go to a **harbinger of things to come.**

sign off 1. *Lit.* [for a broadcaster] to announce the end of programming for the day; [for an amateur radio operator] to announce the end of a transmission. ☐ *Wally signed off and turned the transmitter off.* ☐ *Channel 43 failed to sign off at the scheduled time last night.* **2.** *Fig.* to quit doing what one has been doing and leave, go to bed, quit trying to do something, etc. ☐ *I have to sign off and get to bed. See you all.* ☐ *When you finally sign off tonight, please turn out all the lights.*

sign off on something to sign a paper, indicating that one has finished with something or agrees with the state of something. ☐ *The publisher signed off on the book and sent it to be printed.* ☐ *I refuse to sign off on this project until it is done correctly.*

sign on to announce the beginning of a broadcast transmission. ☐ *The announcer signed on and then played "The Star-Spangled Banner."* ☐ *We usually sign on at six in the morning.*

sign on the dotted line 1. *Lit.* to indicate one's agreement or assent by placing one's signature on a special line provided for that purpose. (The line may be solid or dotted.) ☐ *I agreed to the contract, but I haven't signed on the dotted line yet.* ☐ *When you have signed on the dotted line, please give me a call.* **2.** *Fig.* to indicate one's agreement to something. ☐ *Okay. I agree to your terms. I'll sign on the dotted line.* ☐ *He is thinking favorably about going with us to Canada, but he hasn't signed on the bottom line.*

sign on (with someone or something**) (as** something**)** to join up with someone or something in a particular capacity by signing a contract or agreement. ☐ *I signed on with the captain of the* Felicity Anne *as first mate.* ☐ *Roger signed on as manager for the new store.*

sign one's **own death warrant** *Fig.* to do something (knowingly) that will most likely result in severe trouble. (As if one were ordering one's own execution.) ☐ *I wouldn't ever gamble a large sum of money. That would be signing my own death warrant.* ☐ *The killer signed his own death warrant when he walked into the police station and gave himself up.*

sign out to indicate that one is leaving a place or going out temporarily by signing a piece of paper or a list. ☐ *I forgot to sign out when I left.* ☐ *Please sign out every time you leave.*

sign someone **in**† to record that someone has arrived somewhere and at what time by recording the information on a paper or a list. ☐ *I will sign you in. What is your name?* ☐ *Do I have to sign in everyone?*

sign someone **on**† to employ someone; to recruit someone as an employee. ☐ *How many workers did the manager sign on?* ☐ *The construction company signed on ten new workers.*

sign someone **out of** some place and **sign** someone **out**† to make a record of someone's departure from some place. ☐ *Did someone sign you out of the factory, or did you just open the door and leave?* ☐ *I signed out those two who just left.*

sign someone **up**† **(for** something**)** to record the agreement of someone, including oneself, to participate in something. ☐ *Has anyone signed you up for the office picnic?* ☐ *Can you sign up Liz for the party?*

sign someone **up**† **(with** someone or something**)** to record the agreement of someone to join someone, a group of people, or an organization. ☐ *I want to sign George up with our softball team.* ☐ *Tom signed up his friends with the agency.*

sign something **away**† to sign a paper in which one gives away one's rights to something. ☐ *Valerie signed her rights away.* ☐ *She signed away her claim to the money.*

sign something **for** someone **1.** to sign one's signature on a paper in place of someone else's signature. ☐ *Would you please sign this for me?* ☐ *I can't sign it right now. Would you sign it for me?* **2.** to sign a paper for another person, using that person's name, adding the phrase "by [one's own name]." ☐ *When the delivery comes, will you please sign my name for me?* ☐ *I signed Ted's name for him.*

sign something **in**† to record that something has been received at a particular time by recording the information on a paper or a list. ☐ *I have to sign this package in, then I will be right with you.* ☐ *Should I sign in this shipment now?*

sign something **out of** some place and **sign** something **out**† to make a record of the borrowing of something from some place. ☐ *Dave signed the tape recorder out of the library.* ☐ *Dave signed out the tape recorder as well as some blank tapes.*

sign something **over**† **(to** someone**)** to sign a paper granting the rights to or ownership of something to a specific person. ☐ *Larry signed all the rights to his book over to the publisher.* ☐ *He signed over all the rights to the publisher.*

sign up (for something**)** to record one's agreement to participate in something. ☐ *I want to sign up for guitar lessons.* ☐ *We will sign up as soon as possible.*

sign (up) with someone or something to enter into an agreement with someone or a group. ☐ *I signed up with Tom and John to crew their ship in the regatta.* ☐ *Did you sign with the office equipment supplier yet?*

signal for someone to make a sign for someone to come. ☐ *I signaled for the waiter and got the check.* ☐ *Ted signaled for the parking lot attendant.*

signal for something to make a sign that something should be done. ☐ *I caught the waiter's eye and signaled for the check.* ☐ *The director signaled for applause.*

signal (to) someone **(to** do something**)** [for someone] to give someone a command or instruction using a signal. ☐ *The traffic cop signaled me to stop.* ☐ *The state trooper signaled the driver to pull over to the side of the road.*

signed, sealed, and delivered *Fig.* formally and officially signed; [for a formal document to be] executed. ☐ *Here is the deed to the property—signed, sealed, and delivered.* ☐ *I can't begin work on this project until I have the contract signed, sealed, and delivered.*

Silence gives consent. *Prov.* If you do not object to what someone says or does, you can be assumed to agree with or condone it. ☐ *Jill: What did Fred say when you told him we were thinking about leaving the office early? Jane: He didn't say anything. Jill: Then he must not mind if we go. Silence gives consent.*

Silence is golden. *Prov.* Silence is often good or desirable. ☐ *Jerry has two teenage children who listen to music using their headphones all day. He knows that silence is golden.* ☐ *Hush! Silence is golden.*

***silent as the dead** and ***silent as the grave** completely silent. (Has ominous connotations because of the reference to death. Usually used to promise someone that you will be silent and therefore not betray a secret. *Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *I knew something was wrong as soon as I entered the classroom; everyone was silent as the dead.* ☐ *Jessica is as silent as the grave on the subject of her first marriage.* ☐ *If you tell me what Katy said about me, I promise to be as silent as the grave.*

silent as the grave Go to previous.

***silly as a goose** very foolish. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Edith is as silly as a goose. She thinks that reading aloud to her houseplants will help them grow.* ☐ *The ad in the newspaper said this lotion would make my hair grow back, but I've been using it for a whole month and my hair is still the same. Jane: You're as silly as a goose! Do you believe everything you read in newspaper ads?*

silt up [for a body of water] to become filled with silt. ☐ *The river moved too fast to silt up.* ☐ *The lake silted up in a very few years.*

simmer down 1. *Lit.* to decrease in intensity. (As boiling dies down when the heat is lowered or removed.) ☐ *The hectic activity of the day finally simmered down.* ☐ *When things simmer down in the fall, this is a much nicer place.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to become calm or less agitated. ☐ *I wish you would simmer down.* ☐ *Please simmer down, you guys!*

sin against someone or something to offend or desecrate someone or something sacred or revered. ☐ *The critic said that Walter sinned against the poet when he read the poem in a sarcastic manner.* ☐ *I would say that Walter sinned against poetry, not just one poet.*

since day one Go to **day one**.

since someone **was knee-high to a grasshopper** Go to **knee-high to a jackrabbit**.

since time immemorial since a very long time ago. (Literally, since time before recorded history.) ☐ *My hometown has had a big parade on the Fourth of July since time immemorial.* ☐ *Since time immemorial, the trees have blossomed each spring.*

Since when? *Inf.* When was that decided?; **That's news to me.**; When was that done? ☐ *Tom: You've been assigned to the night shift. John: Since when?* ☐ *Jane: Fred is now the assistant manager. Pete: Since when? Jane: Since I appointed him, that's when.*

sing a different tune and **sing another tune** *Fig.* to change one's manner, usually from bad to good. (Almost the same as **dance to another tune**.) ☐ *When she learned that I was a bank director, she began to sing a different tune.* ☐ *You will sing another tune as soon as you find out how right I am!*

sing along (with someone or something**)** to sing with someone or with the accompaniment of some instrument(s). ☐ *Harry played all the old songs and everybody sang along.* ☐ *Let's sing along with Mary. She knows some good songs.*

sing another tune Go to **sing a different tune**.

Sing before breakfast, you'll cry before night. and **Sing before breakfast, you'll cry before supper.** *Prov.* If you wake up feeling very happy, your mood will change before the end of the day. ☐ *Jill: I woke up in such a good mood today. I don't even know why, but everything seems good. Jane: Sing before breakfast, you'll cry before night.* ☐ *Alan: Good morning, dear! Isn't it a wonderful day? I feel great. Jane: Sing before breakfast, you'll cry before supper.*

sing from the same hymnbook Go to **read from the same page**.

sing of someone or something to tell about or sing a song about someone or something. ☐ *The folksinger sang of Paul Bunyan.* ☐ *They all sang of happier times in the past.*

sing one's **heart out** Go to **cry** one's **heart out**.

sing out to sing louder. ☐ *Sing out, please. This is a very large hall.* ☐ *The sopranos will have to sing out more.*

sing someone's or something's **praises** and **sing the praises of** someone or something *Fig.* to praise someone highly and enthusiastically. ☐ *The boss is singing his new secretary's praises.* ☐ *The theater critics are singing the praises of the young actor.*

sing someone **to sleep** to sing softly and sweetly to someone until sleep comes. ☐ *The mother sang her baby to sleep.* ☐ *Please sing Timmy to sleep. He is very restless.*

sing something **out**† to sing or announce something loudly. ☐ *The teacher sang the names out loud and clear.* ☐ *She sang out "The Star-Spangled Banner" in a loud voice.*

sing the praises of someone or something Go to **sing** someone's or something's **praises**.

sing to someone or something to sing a song and direct it at someone or something. ☐ *The singer sang to a man in the front row, and he was very embarrassed by it.* ☐ *Claire sang to an older audience and put many of them to sleep.*

sing together [for people] to coordinate their singing. ☐ *Let's sing together now. Everyone should watch the conductor and follow the beat.* ☐ *You have to sing together if you want your words to be understood.*

sing up a storm Go to **up a storm**.

S

single file a line of things or people, one person or one thing wide. (See also **in single file**.) ☐ *Please get into single file.* ☐ *You have to march single file.*

single someone or something **out**† **(for** something**)** to choose or pick someone or something for something; to select an eligible person or thing for something. ☐ *The committee singled her out for a special award.* ☐ *We singled out Liz for special honors.*

sink back (into something**)** to lean back and relax in something, such as a soft chair. ☐ *I can't wait to get home and sink back into my easy chair.* ☐ *He sank back and went to sleep almost immediately.*

sink below someone or something Go to **below** someone or something.

sink below something to descend below a certain level. ☐ *The boat sank below the surface of the water and was gone.* ☐ *The temperature sank below the freezing mark again today.*

sink down to sink or submerge. ☐ *The sun sank down and darkness spread across the land.* ☐ *She sat in the chair and sank down, enjoying her moment of relaxation.*

sink in 1. *Lit.* to sink, submerge, or descend into something. ☐ *How long will it take the water to sink in?* ☐ *It might take days for the oil to sink in, so you have time to clean it up.* **2.** *Fig.* [for knowledge] to be understood. ☐ *I heard what you said, but it took a while for it to sink in.* ☐ *I pay careful attention to everything I hear in calculus class, but it usually doesn't sink in.*

sink into despair to become depressed; to become completely discouraged. ☐ *After facing the hopelessness of the future, Jean Paul sank into despair.* ☐ *Mary sank into despair upon learning of the death of her grandmother.*

sink into oblivion *Fig.* to fade into obscurity. ☐ *She may be famous now, but in no time she will sink into oblivion.* ☐ *In his final years, Wally Wilson sank into oblivion and just faded away.*

sink one's **teeth into** something Go to **get** one's **teeth into** something.

sink or swim *Fig.* to fail or succeed. (Alludes to the choices available to someone who has fallen into the water.) ☐ *After I've studied and learned all I can, I have to take the test and sink or swim.* ☐ *It's too late to help John now. It's sink or swim for him.*

sink something **in(to)** someone or something and **sink** something **in**† **1.** *Lit.* to drive or push something into someone or something. ☐ *The brave hero sank the wooden stake into the vampire.* ☐ *The hero sank in the stake.* **2.** *Fig.* to invest time or money in someone or something. (Sometimes implying that it was wasted.) ☐ *You would not believe how much money I've sunk into that company!* ☐ *She sank in a lot of money, but it was all wasted.*

sink to (doing**)** something *Fig.* to lower oneself to doing something bad or mean. ☐ *I never thought he would sink to doing that.* ☐ *There is nothing that Max wouldn't sink to.*

sink under (something**)** to submerge. ☐ *The small boat turned over and sank under the surface.* ☐ *It sank under and went straight to the bottom.*

*a **sinking feeling** the feeling that everything is going wrong; a bad feeling in the base of one's stomach. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I get a sinking feeling whenever I think of the night of the accident.*

siphon something **off**† **(from** something**) 1.** *Lit.* to suck or draw a liquid off from something. ☐ *Harry siphoned the cream off the milk.* ☐ *He siphoned off the cream.* **2.** *Fig.* to embezzle or steal something a little at a time. *The teller had been siphoning money off for years.* ☐ *She siphoned off a few dollars from the collection every week or so.*

sit around to relax sitting; to waste time sitting. ☐ *Don't just sit around! Get moving!* ☐ *I need to sit around every now and then and reorganize my thoughts.*

sit around something to be seated at the edge or perimeter of something. ☐ *They sat around the campfire for hours.* ☐ *We used to sit around the big kitchen table and talk.*

sit around (somewhere**)** to sit somewhere and relax or do nothing; to sit idly somewhere. ☐ *Tom likes to sit around the house in shorts and a T-shirt on hot days.* ☐ *Too many people are just sitting around doing nothing at my office.*

sit at something to be seated in front of something, such as a table. ☐ *He sat at the table, taking his tea.* ☐ *Please sit at your desk and finish your work before taking a break.*

sit at the feet of someone *Fig.* to pay homage to someone; to pay worshipful attention to someone. ☐ *The graduate student sat at the feet of the famous professor for years.* ☐ *I do not intend to sit at the feet of an incompetent for years and years.*

sit back to push oneself back in one's seat; to lean against the back of one's seat. ☐ *Please sit back. I can't see around you.* ☐ *I sat back and made myself comfortable, assuming that the movie would bore me to sleep.*

sit back and let something **happen** *Fig.* to relax and not interfere with something; to let something happen without playing a part in it. ☐ *I can't just sit back and let you waste all our money!* ☐ *Don't worry. Just sit back and let things take care of themselves.*

sit behind someone or something Go to **behind** someone or something.

sit below someone or something Go to **below** someone or something.

sit beneath something Go to **beneath** something.

sit bolt upright to sit up straight. ☐ *Tony sat bolt upright and listened to what the teacher was saying to him.* ☐ *After sitting bolt upright for almost an hour in that crowded airplane, I swore I would never fly again.*

sit by someone to sit next to someone. ☐ *May I sit by you?* ☐ *Come over here and sit by me.*

sit close to someone or something Go to **close to** someone or something.

sit down to be seated; to sit on something, such as a chair. ☐ *Please sit down and make yourself comfortable.* ☐ *Can I sit down here?*

sit down on something to be seated on something. ☐ *Please sit down on this chair and wait until you are called.* ☐ *I don't want to sit down on this hard bench.*

sit down to something to sit down at a table to do something, such as eat a meal or attend to some business. ☐ *I*

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look forward to going home and sitting down to a quiet supper. ☐ *Ted looked forward to sitting down to a big Thanksgiving dinner.*

sit for an exam to take an exam to qualify for a license, such as a bar exam. ☐ *When do you sit for the bar exam?* ☐ *I will sit for the exam next week.*

sit for one's **portrait** to serve as the subject of a portrait being done by a painter or photographer. ☐ *I sat for the picture for two hours.* ☐ *Do you mind sitting for the painter all day? It will be easier if you get it over with all at once.*

sit for someone **1.** to care for someone in the role of babysitter. ☐ *I sit for Timmy sometimes. I like him. He's a good little kid.* ☐ *Mary doesn't sit for anyone anymore. It leaves no time for a social life.* **2.** to serve as a babysitter in someone's employ. ☐ *I sit for Mrs. Franklin every now and then.* ☐ *Ted used to sit for the Wilsons.* **3.** to serve as a model or subject for someone, such as an artist. ☐ *She sat for the portrait painter every day for a week.* ☐ *She is looking for someone to sit for her so she can develop her skills.*

sit hand in hand Go to hand in hand.

sit idly by and **stand idly by** to remain close, doing nothing to help. ☐ *I do not intend to stand idly by while my children need my help.* ☐ *The wealthy man sat idly by while the poor people starved.*

sit in (for someone**)** to act as a substitute for someone. (Usually involves actual sitting, such as at a meeting.) ☐ *I am not a regular member of this committee. I am sitting in for Larry Smith.* ☐ *Do you mind if I sit in? My representative can't be here.*

sit in judgment (up)on someone or something to make a judgment about someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *I don't want to sit in judgment upon you or anyone else, but I do have some suggestions.* ☐ *There is no need to sit in judgment on the proposal at this time.*

sit in (on something**)** to attend something as a visitor; to act as a temporary participant in something. ☐ *Do you mind if I sit in on your discussion?* ☐ *Please do sit in.*

sit on its hands and **sit on their hands** *Fig.* [for an audience] to refuse to applaud. (See also sit on one's hands.) ☐ *The performance was really quite good, but the audience sat on its hands.* ☐ *They sat on their hands during the first act.*

sit on one's **ass** *Inf.* to sit idle; to sit around doing nothing. (Use *ass* with discretion.) ☐ *Don't just sit on your ass! Get busy!* ☐ *He just sat on his ass, watching what was going on.*

sit on one's **hands** *Fig.* to do nothing; to fail to help. (See also sit on its hands.) ☐ *When we needed help from Mary, she just sat on her hands.* ☐ *We need the cooperation of everyone. You can't sit on your hands!*

sit on someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to place oneself in a sitting position on someone or something. ☐ *The enormous woman knocked the crook out and sat on him until the police came.* ☐ *I need to sit on this chair for a minute and catch my breath.* **2.** *Fig.* to hold someone or something back; to delay someone or something. ☐ *The project cannot be finished because the city council is sitting on the final approval.* ☐ *Ann deserves to be promoted, but the manager is sitting on her because of a disagreement.* ☐ *It's hard to do your best when you know that someone is sitting on you, and no matter what you do, it won't help your advancement.*

sit on the fence *Fig.* not to take sides in a dispute; not to make a clear choice between two possibilities. (Fig. on the image of someone straddling a fence, representing indecision.) ☐ *When Jane and Tom argue, it is best to sit on the fence and not make either of them angry.* ☐ *No one knows which of the candidates Joan will vote for. She's sitting on the fence.*

sit on the fence (about something**)** Go to on the fence (about something).

sit on their hands Go to sit on its hands.

sit out to elect not to participate in something. ☐ *I think I will not join in this game. I'll sit out.* ☐ *I'll sit out for this round.*

sit right with someone *Fig.* [for something] to be acceptable or understandable to someone. (Very close to sit well with someone.) ☐ *What you just said doesn't really sit right with me. Let's talk about it.* ☐ *It didn't sit right with the boss.*

sit something **out†** not to participate in something; to wait until something is over before participating. ☐ *Oh, please play with us. Don't sit it out.* ☐ *I'm tired of playing cards, so I think I'll sit out this game.*

sit still for something **1.** *Lit.* to remain seated without fidgeting during something. ☐ *The child could hardly be expected to sit still for the opera.* ☐ *Timmy would not sit still for his haircut.* **2.** *Fig.* to remain idle rather than act to prevent something; to endure or tolerate something. ☐ *I won't sit still for that kind of treatment.* ☐ *She would not sit still for an insult like that.*

sit through something to remain seated and in attendance for all of something, even though it is boring or poorly done. ☐ *I can't stand to sit through that class one more time!* ☐ *Do I have to sit through the whole lecture?*

sit tight to wait; to wait patiently. (This does not necessarily refer to sitting.) ☐ *Just relax and sit tight. I'll be right with you.* ☐ *We were waiting in line for the gates to open when someone came out and told us to sit tight because it wouldn't be much longer before we could go in.*

sit up 1. to rise from a lying to a sitting position. ☐ *When the alarm went off, he sat up and put his feet on the floor.* ☐ *She couldn't sleep, so she sat up and read a book.* **2.** to sit more straight in one's seat; to hold one's posture more upright while seated. ☐ *Please sit up. Don't slouch!* ☐ *You wouldn't get backaches if you would sit up.*

sit up and take notice to become alert and pay attention. ☐ *A loud noise from the front of the room caused everyone to sit up and take notice.* ☐ *The company wouldn't pay any attention to my complaints. When I had my lawyer write them a letter, they sat up and took notice.*

sit up with someone to stay with someone through the night, especially with a sick or troubled person or with someone who is waiting for something. ☐ *I had to sit up with my younger sister when she was ill.* ☐ *I sat up with Bill while he waited for an overseas telephone call.*

sit well with someone to be acceptable to someone. ☐ *Your explanation of your absence doesn't sit well with the president.* ☐ *The whole affair didn't sit well with the manager.*

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sit with someone **1.** to stay with someone; to **sit up with someone.** □ *My uncle sat with me my first day in the hospital.* **2.** to stay with and care for one or more children; to babysit for someone. □ *I hired Mrs. Wilson to sit with the children.* □ *We couldn't go out for dinner because we couldn't find anyone to sit with the kids.*

***a sitting duck** *Fig.* someone or something vulnerable to attack, physical or verbal. (Alludes to a duck floating on the water, not suspecting that it is the object of a hunter or predator. *Typically: **be ~; like ~; looking like ~.**) □ *You look like a sitting duck out there. Get in here where the enemy cannot fire at you.* □ *The senator was a sitting duck because of his unpopular position on school reform.*

sitting on a gold mine *Fig.* in control of something very valuable; in control of something potentially very valuable. □ *When I found out how much the old book was worth, I realized that I was sitting on a gold mine.* □ *Mary's land is valuable. She is sitting on a gold mine.*

sitting on a powder keg *Fig.* in a risky or explosive situation; in a situation where something serious or dangerous may happen at any time. (A powder keg is a keg of gunpowder.) □ *Things are very tense at work. The whole office is sitting on a powder keg.* □ *The fire at the oil field seems to be under control for now, but all the workers there are sitting on a powder keg.*

(sitting) on top of the world *Fig.* feeling wonderful; glorious; ecstatic. □ *Wow, I feel on top of the world.* □ *Since he got a new job, he's on top of the world.*

***sitting pretty** living in comfort or luxury; living in a good situation. (*Typically: **be ~; leave** someone **~.**) □ *My uncle died and left enough money for me to be sitting pretty for the rest of my life.* □ *Now that I have a good-paying job, I'm sitting pretty.*

six feet under *Fig.* dead and buried. □ *Fred died and is six feet under.* □ *They put him six feet under two days after he died.*

six of one and half a dozen of the other *Fig.* about the same one way or another. □ *It doesn't matter to me which way you do it. It's six of one and half a dozen of the other.* □ *What difference does it make? They're both the same—six of one and half a dozen of the other.*

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a **sixth sense** a supposed power to know or feel things that are not perceptible by the five senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. □ *My sixth sense told me to avoid going home by my usual route. Later I discovered there had been a fatal accident on it.* □ *Jane's sixth sense demanded that she not trust Tom, even though he seemed honest enough.*

the **sixty-four-dollar question** *Fig.* the most important question; the question that everyone wants to know the answer to. □ *Who will win? Now, that is the sixty-four-dollar question.* □ *Now for the sixty-four-dollar question. What's the stock market going to do this year?*

size someone or something **up**† to observe someone or something to get information; to **check** someone or something **out.** □ *The comedian sized the audience up and decided not to use his new material.* □ *I like to size up a situation before I act.*

skate around to skate here and there in no particular direction. □ *Let's go over to the pond and skate around.* □ *We will skate around for a while until we get too cold.*

skate around someone or something **1.** to skate to one side or the other of someone or something. □ *Somehow I managed to skate around the child without knocking her down.* □ *I skated around the tree limb and avoided an accident.* **2.** to circle someone or something while skating. □ *The children skated around their instructor until she was satisfied with their form.* □ *We skated around the post in a circle.*

skate on something to skate on a particular surface. □ *You can't skate on that ice! It's too thin.* □ *Don't skate on the ice until it has been scraped smooth.*

skate on thin ice *Fig.* to be in a risky situation. (Fig. on the image of someone taking the risk of ice skating on thin ice.) □ *I try to stay well informed so I don't end up skating on thin ice when the teacher asks me a question.* □ *You are skating on thin ice when you ask me that!*

skate over something **1.** *Lit.* to move over something, skating. □ *I love to be the first one to skate over newly frozen ice.* □ *I skated over the pond too soon and the ice cracked while I was on it.* **2.** *Fig.* to move over or deal with something quickly. □ *The speaker skated over the touchy issues with discretion.* □ *I will skate over the things that I am not sure about.*

skeleton(s) in the closet a hidden and shocking secret. □ *You can ask anyone about how reliable I am. I don't mind. I don't have any skeletons in the closet.* □ *My uncle was in jail for a day once. That's our family's skeleton in the closet.*

sketch something **in**† to draw in the image of someone or something. □ *I sketched a figure of a woman in so that she appears to be standing beneath the tree.* □ *I'll sketch in the house in the upper left corner.*

sketch something **out**† to create a rough idea or image of something by sketching or some other means. (Does not necessarily require an actual sketch.) □ *Sally sketched the furniture arrangement out so we could get an idea of what it was to look like.* □ *Would you sketch out your ideas, please?*

skid across something to slip or glide across something, such as ice or wet pavement. □ *The car skidded across the pavement and crashed into a tree.* □ *Our bus skidded across the icy bridge and ran into a ditch on the other side.*

skid into someone or something to slip or glide into someone or something. □ *The bicycle skidded into a pedestrian.* □ *The car skidded into a guard rail.*

skim over something **1.** *Lit.* to glide across something. □ *The sailboat skimmed over the waves like a bird.* □ *The bird skimmed over the treetops, darting and dodging.* **2.** *Fig.* to go over or review something hastily. □ *I just skimmed over the material and still got an A on the test!* □ *Please skim over chapter four for Thursday.*

skim something **off (of)** something and **skim** something **off**† **1.** *Lit.* to scoop something off the surface of something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) □ *The cook skimmed the fat off the stew.* □ *The cook skimmed off the fat.* **2.** *Fig.* to remove a portion of something of value, such as money, from an account. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) □ *The auditor was skimming a few dol-*

lars a day off the bank's cash flow. ☐ *Kelly skimmed off a few dollars each day.*

skim through something to go through something hastily; to read through something hastily. ☐ *She skimmed through the catalogs, looking for a nice gift for Gary.* ☐ *I will skim through your manuscript and see whether it looks promising.*

skimp on something to use too little of something; to save something by using less of it than needed for something. ☐ *Please don't skimp on the gravy. I like my potatoes swimming in it.* ☐ *They skimped on quality a little when they furnished the lobby.*

Skin me! Go to Give me five!

skin someone **alive** *Fig.* to be very angry with someone; to scold someone severely. (Fig. on being angry enough to do this kind of bodily harm to someone.) ☐ *I was so mad at Jane that I could have skinned her alive.* ☐ *If I don't get home on time, my parents will skin me alive.*

***skinny as a beanpole** very thin; very skinny. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *I exercised and dieted until I was skinny as a beanpole.*

skinny-dip to swim naked. ☐ *The boys were skinny-dipping in the creek when Bob's mother drove up.*

skip bail Go to jump bail.

Skip it! *Inf.* Never mind!; Forget it! (Shows impatience or disappointment.) ☐ *John: I need some help on this project. Mary: What? John: Oh, skip it!* ☐ *Jane: Will you be able to do this, or should I get someone with more experience? Bob: What did you say? Jane: Oh, skip it!*

skip off (with something**)** *Fig.* to leave and take something with one. ☐ *The little kid with the freckles skipped off with a candy bar.* ☐ *He took the candy bar I offered him and skipped off.*

skip (out) *Inf.* to leave; to run away without doing something, such as paying a bill. ☐ *The guy skipped when the waitress wasn't looking.* ☐ *Fred skipped out, leaving me with the bill.*

skip out (on someone or something**)** *Fig.* to sneak away from someone or some event; to leave someone or an event suddenly or in secret. ☐ *I heard that Bill skipped out on his wife.* ☐ *I'm not surprised. I thought he should have skipped out long ago.*

skip out with something *Fig.* to leave and take something with one; to steal something. ☐ *The hotel guest skipped out with the towels.* ☐ *Someone skipped out with the petty cash box.*

skip over someone or something not to choose someone or something next in line. ☐ *She skipped over me and chose the next one in line.* ☐ *I skipped over the red ones and took a blue one.*

skip rope to jump over an arc of rope that is swung beneath one's feet then over one's head, repeatedly. ☐ *The children skipped rope on the playground.* ☐ *The boxer skipped rope while training.*

skip through something to go through a book or a stack of papers without dealing with every page. ☐ *I skipped through the book, just looking at the pictures.* ☐ *Ted skipped through the report, not bothering to read it.*

skirmish with someone or something to have a minor fight with someone, a group, or something. ☐ *Tim skirmished a bit with his brother and then ran into the house.* ☐ *I don't want to skirmish with the committee.*

skirt around someone or something *Fig.* to move around and avoid someone or something. (*Something* can be a topic of conversation.) ☐ *We talked the whole evening and managed to skirt around Fred.* ☐ *We had to skirt around the subject.*

The **sky's the limit.** *Inf.* there is no upper limit. ☐ *I can afford it. The sky's the limit.* ☐ *You can do anything you set your mind to, Billy. The sky's the limit.*

slack off 1. to taper off; to reduce gradually. ☐ *Business tends to slack off during the winter months.* ☐ *The storms begin to slack off in April.* **2.** [for someone] to become lazy or inefficient. ☐ *Near the end of the school year, Sally began to slack off, and her grades showed it.* ☐ *John got fired for slacking off during the busy season.*

slack up (on something**)** and **slack off (on** something**)** to release the pressure or tension on something. (See also slack off.) ☐ *Slack up on the rope a bit, will you?* ☐ *Please slack off!*

slam dunk 1. *Lit.* [in basketball] a goal scored by shooting the ball down from above the rim. ☐ *He was wide open and scored on an easy slam dunk.* **2.** *Fig.* an action or accomplishment that is easily done. ☐ *Finishing that project with all his experience should be a slam dunk for George.*

slam into someone or something to crash into someone or something. ☐ *The race car—out of control—slammed into the stands.* ☐ *The bus slammed into a truck.*

slam someone or something **down**† to drive or strike someone or something downward. ☐ *The wrestler slammed his opponent down hard.* ☐ *He slammed down his opponent and injured him.*

slam something **down**† **(on(to)** something**)** to bang something down onto something. ☐ *She slammed her fist down on the table in anger.* ☐ *Karen slammed down her fist onto the table.*

slam the brakes on† to push on a vehicle's brakes suddenly and hard. (*The* can be replaced by a possessive pronoun.) ☐ *The driver in front of me slammed her brakes on and I nearly ran into her.* ☐ *Don't slam on your brakes when the road is wet.*

slam the door in someone's **face 1.** *Lit.* to swing a door closed with force while someone is standing in the doorway. ☐ *I didn't know Todd was behind me and I accidentally slammed the door in his face.* ☐ *Please don't slam the door in my face!* **2.** *Fig.* suddenly to withdraw an opportunity from someone. ☐ *The events of the last week effectively slammed the door in my face for future employment.* ☐ *We slammed the door in Bill's face since he was so rude when we interviewed him.*

slant against something to rest obliquely against something. ☐ *The bookcase slants against the wall, and it should be straight.* ☐ *The lumber was left slanted against the garage.*

slant something **against** someone or something to bias something against someone or something; to twist information so it is against someone or something. ☐ *The writer slanted the story against the innocent people of the*

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town. ☐ *The reporter slanted her story against one political party.*

slant something **toward** someone or something and **slant** something **in favor of** someone or something to bias something toward someone or something; to twist information so it favors someone or something. ☐ *The writer slanted the story toward the plaintiff's charges.* ☐ *The reporter slanted her story in favor of one political party.*

slant toward someone or something to incline toward someone or something. ☐ *The scenery slanted toward the actors and looked as if it would fall.* ☐ *Everything in your sketch slants toward the right.*

slap against someone or something [for something] to flap or strike against someone or something. ☐ *The flag kept slapping against Ed, making it hard for him to remain at attention.* ☐ *The awning slapped against the side of the house.*

a **slap in the face** an insult; an act that causes disappointment or discouragement. ☐ *Losing the election was a slap in the face for the club president.* ☐ *Failing to get into a good college was a slap in the face to Tim after his years of study.*

*a **slap on the wrist 1.** *Lit.* a hit on the wrist as a mild punishment for putting one's hands where they shouldn't be or taking something. (*Typically: **get ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *When Billy tried to grab another cookie, he got a slap on the wrist.* **2.** *Fig.* to get a light punishment (for doing something wrong). (*Typically: **get ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *He created quite a disturbance, but he only got a slap on the wrist from the judge.* ☐ *I thought I'd get a slap on the wrist for speeding, but I got fined $500.*

slap someone **down**† **1.** *Lit.* to cause someone to fall by striking with the open hand. ☐ *She became enraged and slapped him down when he approached her again.* ☐ *Liz slapped down the insulting wretch.* **2.** *Fig.* to squelch someone; to rebuke or rebuff someone. ☐ *I had a great idea, but the boss slapped me down.* ☐ *Don't slap down people without hearing what they have to say.*

slap someone **in** something *Fig. Inf.* to put or throw someone in jail or prison. ☐ *The sheriff slapped the crooks in jail.* ☐ *Do you want me to slap you in jail?*

slap someone **on** something to slap a particular part of someone. ☐ *Gerald was always slapping his friends on the back.* ☐ *He slapped himself on the knee and laughed very loudly.*

slap someone **on the wrist** and **slap** someone's **wrist 1.** *Lit.* to strike someone's wrist with the open hand, as a punishment. ☐ *Aunt Maude slapped Tony on the wrist when he grabbed a couple of her freshly baked cookies.* ☐ *Tony was slapped on the wrist when he tried to swipe some cookies.* **2.** *Fig.* to administer only the mildest of punishments to someone. ☐ *The judge did nothing but slap the mugger on the wrist.*

slap something **against** someone or something to flap or strike something onto someone or something. ☐ *The wind slapped the branch against Walter.* ☐ *The gusts from the storm slapped the shutters against the side of the house.*

slap something **down**† to strike downward with something flat in one's hand. ☐ *She slapped the dollar bill down in great anger and took her paper cup full of water away with her.* ☐ *Karen slapped down the money that the bailiff demanded.*

slap something **on**† **1.** *Inf.* to dress in something hastily. ☐ *Henry slapped a shirt on and went out to say something to the garbage hauler.* ☐ *He slapped on a shirt and ran to the bus stop.* **2.** Go to **slap** something **onto** someone or something.

slap something **on** someone *Inf.* to serve someone with a legal paper or citation. ☐ *The strange man came into the office and slapped a subpoena on Mary.* ☐ *I will slap a citation on you for speeding if you don't stop arguing.*

slap something **onto** someone or something and **slap** something **on**† to place something onto someone or something by slapping. ☐ *Tim slapped a sign onto Gary that said "kick me."* ☐ *Tim came up to Gary's back and slapped on a sign.*

slap something **together**† Go to **throw** something **together**†.

slash and burn 1. *Lit.* of a farming technique where vegetation is cut down and burned before crops are planted. (Hyphenated before nominals.) ☐ *The small farmers' slash-and-burn technique destroyed thousands of acres of forest.* **2.** *Fig.* of a crude and brash way of doing something. (Hyphenated before nominals.) ☐ *The new manager's method was strictly slash and burn. He looks decisive to his boss and merciless to the people he fires.*

slash (out) at someone to thrust out at someone with a knife or something similar, with the intent of cutting. ☐ *The attacker slashed out at his victim and then ran away.* ☐ *Max slashed at the cop with a pocketknife.*

slate someone or something **for** something to schedule someone or something for some thing or a particular time. ☐ *They slated me for a trip to Columbia, Missouri, in August.* ☐ *Wally slated the meeting room for his presentation.*

***slated for** something scheduled for something. (As if a schedule had been written on a slate. *Typically: **be ~; have** someone **~**.) ☐ *John was slated for Friday's game, but he couldn't play with the team.* ☐ *Ann is slated for promotion next year.*

***slated to** do something scheduled to do something. (*Typically: **be ~; have** someone **~**.) ☐ *Mary is slated to go to Washington in the fall.* ☐ *We are slated to leave in November.*

slave away (at something**)** *Fig.* to work very hard (doing something). ☐ *I'm tired of slaving away at this and getting nowhere.* ☐ *I'm slaving away for $7.00 an hour and have no prospects for the future.*

slave over something *Fig.* to stand over something, working at it very hard, typically cooking over a hot stove. ☐ *I've been slaving over this hot stove for hours to cook this meal!* ☐ *Ted slaved over his special dessert for hours.*

*a **slave to** something *Fig.* someone who is under the control of something; someone whose time or attention is controlled or "owned by" by something. (Fig. on being a slave to a person. *Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *Mary is a slave to her job.* ☐ *Bill is a slave to his drug addiction.*

sled down something to ride down something on a sled. ☐ *I love to sled down the hill in the winter.* ☐ *This hill is too steep to sled down safely.*

S

sled over something to travel over something, such as snow, in a sled. ☐ *We sledded rapidly over the fresh snow, scooting down the hill.* ☐ *We wanted to sled over the new snow, but we had to wait until Uncle Herman had taken a picture of it for his scrapbook.*

sleep around the clock to sleep for a full twenty-four hours; to sleep for a very long time. ☐ *I was so tired I could have slept around the clock.* ☐ *When I got home, I lay down and slept around the clock.*

sleep around (with someone**)** *Inf.* to have sex with several partners over time; to be promiscuous. ☐ *They say she sleeps around with just anybody all the time.* ☐ *Yes, she sleeps around.*

sleep in to oversleep; to sleep late in the morning. ☐ *If you sleep in again, you'll get fired.* ☐ *I really felt like sleeping in this morning.*

sleep in the buff Go to in the altogether.

sleep like a log and **sleep like a baby** to sleep very soundly. ☐ *Everyone in our family sleeps like a log, so no one heard the thunderstorm in the middle of the night.* ☐ *Nothing can wake me up. I usually sleep like a baby.*

sleep on something **1.** *Lit.* to recline on something and slumber. ☐ *I like to sleep on a firm bed.* ☐ *Mary had to sleep on the floor because her sister was visiting.* **2.** *Fig.* to postpone a decision until one has slept through the night. (As if one were going to think through the decision while sleeping.) ☐ *It sounds like a good idea, but I'd like to sleep on it before giving you my response.* ☐ *You go home and sleep on it and give me your answer in the morning.*

sleep out to sleep outside or away from one's home. ☐ *Can I sleep out tonight?* ☐ *Didn't you sleep out last night?*

sleep over (with someone**) (**some place**)** to spend the night sleeping at someone else's home. (Typically said by teenagers or younger children who spend the night with a friend.) ☐ *Mom, can I sleep over with Tony?* ☐ *Can I sleep over at Tony's house?*

sleep something **away†** to spend or waste a specific period of time sleeping. ☐ *You can't sleep the whole day away!* ☐ *Jim slept away his whole vacation.*

sleep something **off†** to sleep while the effects of liquor or drugs pass away. ☐ *John drank too much and went home to sleep it off.* ☐ *Bill is at home sleeping off the effects of the drug they gave him.*

sleep through something to remain sleeping through some event. ☐ *I didn't hear the storm. I guess I slept through it.* ☐ *Wally slept through the entire opera—even the loud part.*

sleep tight to sleep warm and safe. (Usually said with good night to someone going to bed.) ☐ *Sleep tight, Bobby. See you in the morning.*

sleep together 1. [for two or more people] to share a bed. ☐ *Do you mean that Fred and Dave have to sleep together?* ☐ *My brother and I used to have to sleep together.* **2.** *Euph.* [for two people] to copulate. ☐ *Do you think they slept together?* ☐ *Ted and Alice slept together a lot when they were in college.*

sleep with someone **1.** to share a bed with someone. ☐ *Do I have to sleep with my little brother?* ☐ *Many little boys have to sleep with their brothers.* **2.** *Euph.* to copulate with someone. ☐ *I hear Sam's sleeping with Sally now.* ☐ *Whom did you say he slept with?*

a **sleeping giant** a great power that is still and waiting. ☐ *The huge country to the south is a sleeping giant, waiting for its chance to become sufficiently industrialized to have real prosperity.* ☐ *The U.S. was a sleeping giant at the outbreak of both world wars.*

slice in(to something**)** to cut into something, usually with a knife or something similar. ☐ *Betty sliced into the cake and discovered it was chocolate all the way through.* ☐ *It wasn't until she sliced in that she found out what kind of cake it was.*

a **slice of the action** Go to a piece (of the action).

a **slice of the cake** a share of something. ☐ *There's not much work around and so everyone must be content with a slice of the cake.* ☐ *The company makes huge profits and the workers want a slice of the cake.*

slice someone or something **up†** to cut someone or something up into slices. ☐ *The blades of the lawn mower can slice you up if you get too close.* ☐ *The sharp blades sliced up Bobby's rubber ball.*

slice something **off†** to cut something off with slicing motions. ☐ *Sue sliced the dead branches off with a tree saw.* ☐ *Karen sliced off a nice piece of turkey.*

slice through something to cut through something with slicing motions. ☐ *The chef sliced through the ham as if it were butter.* ☐ *The knife was too dull to slice through the tomato.*

***slick as a whistle** quickly and cleanly; quickly and skillfully. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Tom took a broom and a mop and cleaned the place up as slick as a whistle.* ☐ *Slick as a whistle, Sally pulled off the bandage.*

slick something **down†** to brush or comb down hair, usually with some sort of dressing or water. ☐ *He used something gooey—grease or something—to slick his hair down.* ☐ *Please slick down your hair. You look a mess.*

slick something **up†** to tidy up something or some place. ☐ *I have to slick this house up a little.* ☐ *Please slick up this room before company gets here.*

slide along to slip or glide along. ☐ *The sled slid along at a good clip down the gently sloping hill.* ☐ *We slid along on the icy roads and had a hard time stopping and turning.*

S

slide around to slip or skid around. ☐ *Many cars slide around on the roads when they are icy.* ☐ *The pedestrians were sliding around on the icy pavement.*

slide by to get along with a minimum of effort. ☐ *She didn't do a lot of work—she just slid by.* ☐ *Don't just slide by. Put in some effort.*

slide down from something to slip down on something from a higher place. ☐ *Beth slid down from the top of the mound.* ☐ *The boys slid down from the roof of the shed and got their pants all dirty.*

slide down something to slip down something, such as a pole. ☐ *The fire captain slid down the pole and ran to the engine.* ☐ *Please don't slide down the stairs. You'll ruin the carpet.*

slide into something to slip or glide into something, as a car going into a ditch. ☐ *It was raining hard, and car after*

car slid into the ditch at the sharp turn near Wagner Road. ☐ *Mary's car slid right into the side of a bus.*

slide out of something to slip or glide out of something without much effort. ☐ *Mary slid out of the car and ran to the front door.* ☐ *The CD-ROM slid out of the computer.*

slide over something to slip or glide over something. ☐ *The car almost slid over the edge of the cliff.* ☐ *We almost slid over the edge.*

slide something **around** to push, twist, or turn something around. (The thing must be movable, but not often on wheels.) ☐ *Please slide the carton around and look at the address on the other side.* ☐ *Can you slide the refrigerator around so I can clean the back of it?*

slide something **into** something and **slide** something **in**† to insert something into something effortlessly. ☐ *Henry slid the end of the seat-belt buckle into its holder and started the car.* ☐ *Slide in the buckle and make sure it's tight.*

slide something **out of** something and **slide** something **out**† to cause something to slip or glide out of something without much effort. ☐ *The hunter slid his knife out of its sheath and got ready to skin the deer.* ☐ *He slid out the heavy box.*

slightly rattled 1. *Inf.* upset; confused. ☐ *Tom was slightly rattled by the policeman at the door.* ☐ *I'm slightly rattled. I'll get over it.* **2.** *Inf.* tipsy; intoxicated. ☐ *He's only slightly rattled. He'll recover by morning.* ☐ *She can be really drunk and still seem only slightly rattled.*

a **slim chance** a slight chance; a small chance. ☐ *There is a slim chance that I will arrive on Monday, but Tuesday is more likely.*

slim down to become thinner; to lose weight. ☐ *You have really slimmed down a lot since I last saw you.* ☐ *I need to eat less so I can slim down.* ☐ *He slimmed down quite a bit after he had his health problem.*

slim someone **down**† to cause someone to lose weight. ☐ *They started to slim her down in the hospital, but she gained the weight back as soon as she got out.* ☐ *The dietitian slimmed down all the patients under his care.*

sling something **at** someone or something to heave or toss something at someone or something. ☐ *The child slung a handful of mud at his playmate.* ☐ *Who slung this muddy mess at the side of the house?*

S

sling something **out**† **1.** to toss or heave something outward. ☐ *The fishermen slung their nets out into the water.* ☐ *They slung out their nets.* **2.** to throw something away. ☐ *Just sling all that old junk out, if you will.* ☐ *Sling out that stuff into the trash!*

sling the cat *Sl.* to empty one's stomach; to vomit. ☐ *Suddenly Ralph left the room to sling the cat, I guess.* ☐ *That stuff will make you sling the cat.*

slink around to creep or slither around furtively. ☐ *The cat slunk around, waiting for a chance to get at the bird.* ☐ *Don't slink around like that. Someone is likely to take you for a robber.*

slink away to creep or slither away furtively. ☐ *The fox slunk away, leaving the henhouse as quietly as such a thing is possible.* ☐ *I hope that the skunk will slink away as quietly as it came.*

slink in(to something**)** to creep into something. ☐ *The cat slunk into the hallway and lay down in the middle of the floor.* ☐ *I left the door ajar and a cat slunk in.*

slink off to creep away furtively. ☐ *Carl was embarrassed and tried to slink off, but the ushers spotted him.* ☐ *The boys slunk off from the picnic and smoked some cigarettes.*

slink out (of some place**)** to creep out of some place furtively. ☐ *The fox slunk out of the henhouse just as the farmer came out.* ☐ *It slunk out and got away.*

slip around to slide or skid around. ☐ *The pedestrian slipped around and finally fell on the ice.* ☐ *The dog slipped around on the ice and finally made it to shore.*

slip away 1. and **slip off** to go away or escape quietly or in secret; to slip out. ☐ *I slipped away when no one was looking.* ☐ *Let's slip off somewhere and have a little talk.* ☐ *I'll try to slip out for an hour or two when Tom is asleep.* **2.** *Euph.* to die. ☐ *Uncle Charles slipped away in his sleep last night.*

slip back (to someone or something**)** to move quietly and cautiously back to someone or something. ☐ *Walter slipped back to Sally when her parents weren't looking.* ☐ *He slipped back and then Mary's parents slipped back, and there was quite a scene.*

slip between the cracks *Fig.* [for someone or something] to be forgotten or neglected. (Fig. on something being lost by falling between floorboards.) ☐ *Where is Alice? I guess we neglected her and she slipped between the cracks.* ☐ *This issue seems to have slipped between the cracks and become forgotten.*

slip by 1. and **slip by** someone or something to move by someone or something quickly or unnoticed; to move through a tight area or past someone or something in a tight area. ☐ *The hall was narrow, and I could hardly have slipped by.* **2.** [for time] to pass quickly or unnoticed. ☐ *Goodness, almost an hour has slipped by! How time flies.* ☐ *The entire workday slipped by before I knew it.*

slip down to slide or glide downward. ☐ *His socks kept slipping down.* ☐ *He lost so much weight that his pants almost slipped down.*

slip from something to fall away from something; to lose one's step or grasp and fall from something. ☐ *He slipped from the top step and fell down the other three.* ☐ *Ted slipped from the stool and fell on the floor.*

slip in (some place**)** to sneak or go into a place quietly and unnoticed. ☐ *I think we can slip in the rear door unnoticed.* ☐ *We slipped in and crept up the stairs.*

slip in(to something**)** to slide or glide into something, such as clothing, a sleeping bag, a tight place, etc. ☐ *I don't want to slip into a cold sleeping bag. How can I warm it up?* ☐ *I opened the bag and slipped in.*

Slip me five! Go to Give me five!

a **slip of the tongue** an error in speaking in which a word is pronounced incorrectly, or in which the speaker says something unintentionally. ☐ *I didn't mean to tell her that. It was a slip of the tongue.* ☐ *I failed to understand the instructions because the speaker made a slip of the tongue at an important point.*

slip off Go to slip away.

slip off ((of) someone or something**)** to fall away from or off someone or something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) □ *The jacket slipped off of Sally, but she grabbed it before it hit the floor.* □ *She hung the jacket on the back of the chair, but it slipped off.*

slip off (to some place**)** to sneak away to some place. □ *Judy and Jeff slipped off to the movies unnoticed.* □ *They slipped off and no one saw them leave.*

slip on something to step on and slide on something. □ *Valerie slipped on a banana peel and hurt her back.* □ *Don't slip on that wet spot on the floor!*

slip one over on someone or something Go to slip something over on someone or something.

slip one's **mind** [for something that was to be remembered] to be forgotten. □ *I meant to go to the grocery store on the way home, but it slipped my mind.* □ *My birthday slipped my mind. I guess I wanted to forget it.*

slip one's **trolley** *Sl.* to become a little crazy; to lose one's composure. □ *I was afraid I would slip my trolley.* □ *He slipped his trolley and went totally bonkers.*

slip out 1. [for someone] to exit quietly without bothering anyone. □ *I slipped out during intermission.* **2.** [for information] to be spoken without realizing that it is secret or privileged. □ *The secret about her divorce slipped out when we were discussing old friends.*

slip out (of something**) 1.** to sneak out of a place unnoticed. □ *Gloria slipped out of the theater at intermission.* □ *She slipped out and went home.* **2.** to slide out of an article of clothing. □ *She slipped out of her dress and hung it neatly in the closet.* □ *Ted slipped out of his T-shirt and left it on the floor where it fell.*

slip past someone or something to sneak or move past someone or something unnoticed. □ *It is impossible to slip past the armed guards and metal detectors.* □ *Do you think I can slip past the doorway without being seen?*

slip someone **a Mickey** to secretly put a *Mickey Finn* in someone's alcoholic drink. (This drug either makes the victim ill or causes immediate diarrhea.) □ *Somebody slipped Barlowe a Mickey and sent him into action.* □ *For a ten-spot, the bartender slipped Slim a Mickey.*

slip someone **five** *Sl.* to shake someone's hand. □ *Billy slipped me five, and we sat down to discuss old times.* □ *Come on, man, slip me five!*

slip someone or something **past** someone or something to cause someone or something to move past someone or something unnoticed; to manage to get something past the scrutiny of someone. □ *I slipped another one of my friends past the usher into the theater.* □ *Do you think I can slip this sausage past the customs officers?* □ *I slipped a note past the guard.*

slip something **back**† **1.** to pull or place something back. □ *Alice slipped the gearshift lever back and away they went.* □ *She slipped back the gearshift and sped away.* **2.** to return something secretively. □ *Someone took my wallet away and slipped it back later.* □ *The thief slipped back my wallet, but the money was gone.*

slip something **down**† to slide something downward. □ *I slipped my pants down a little so the doctor could give me a shot in what they call your "hip."* □ *He slipped down his pants a little.*

slip something **in(to)** something and **slip** something **in**† to cause something to slide or glide into something. □ *Max slipped the bullets into their chambers and got ready to fire.* □ *He slipped the bullets in silently.*

slip something **off**† to let an item of clothing slide off one's body; to remove an item of clothing easily or casually. □ *He slipped his coat off and put it on a chair.* □ *She slipped off her shoes and relaxed.*

slip something **on**† to put on an article of clothing, possibly in haste or casually. □ *I will go in and slip my bathing suit on and join you in a minute.* □ *She slipped on her shoes and we left.*

slip something over on someone or something and **slip one over on** someone or something; **slip something over; slip one over** to deceive someone. □ *Are you trying to slip something over on me?* □ *I think he tried to slip one over on me.*

slip something **over** someone or something to cause something to slide or glide over and onto someone or something. □ *Mother slipped the covers over Timmy and kissed him good night.* □ *Jane slipped the cover over the birdcage for the night.*

slip something **through (**something**) 1.** *Lit.* to cause something to slide or glide through something. □ *The nickel I dropped slipped through the crack in the floor.* □ *It rolled toward a crack in the floor and slipped through.* **2.** *Fig.* to get something approved without much fuss by a group of people, perhaps by deception. □ *I will try to slip this through the committee.* □ *I can slip it through for you.*

slip through someone's **fingers 1.** *Lit.* to slide through and out of one's grasp. □ *The glass slipped through his fingers and crashed to the ground.* □ *The rope slipped through his fingers and followed the anchor to the bottom of the lake.* **2.** *Fig.* to escape from someone; to elude someone's capture or control. □ *The prisoner slipped through the sheriff's fingers.* □ *Don't let Max slip through your fingers again this time!*

slip through something to slide or slither through something narrow or crowded. □ *Gerald slipped through the narrow opening and got away.* □ *The dog slipped through the door and ran out into the street.*

slip through the cracks Go to through the cracks.

slip up to make an error. □ *I hope you don't slip up again. Try to be more careful.*

slip up on someone, something, or an animal to sneak up on someone, something, or an animal quietly. (See also slip up.) □ *I slipped up on Harry and scared him to death.* □ *The cat slipped up on a mouse and grabbed it.*

slip up on something to make an error in something. □ *I guess I slipped up on that last job.* □ *Fred slipped up on compiling that list—there are a lot of names missing.*

slip up something to climb something, slipping along the way. □ *The hikers slipped up the wet slope.* □ *Ted slipped up the stairs, tracking mud and water as he went along.*

***slippery as an eel** devious and untrustworthy, but impossible to catch. (*Also: **as** ~.) □ *Don't sign a lease with that landlord; I think he's as slippery as an eel.* □ *The con artist was slippery as an eel. Although he defrauded many people, he never went to prison.*

S

a **slippery customer 1.** *Fig.* a clever and deceitful customer. ☐ *Watch out for that guy with the big padded coat. He may snatch something. He's a real slippery customer.* **2.** *Fig.* a slippery creature. ☐ *This little fish is a slippery customer. Get me something to scoop it back into its bowl.*

a **slippery slope** a dangerous pathway or route to follow; a route that leads to trouble. ☐ *The matter of euthanasia is a slippery slope with both legal and moral considerations.*

slither along to slink or crawl along. ☐ *The snake slithered along, unmindful of our presence.* ☐ *A pair of otters slithered along playfully.*

slither away to sneak or crawl away, like a snake. ☐ *The little lizards slithered away soundlessly.* ☐ *The snake slithered away while Maggie was still screaming.*

slob up *Sl.* to eat. ☐ *What time do you people slob up around here?* ☐ *Fred stopped slobbing up long enough to change the channel on the TV set.*

slobber (all) over someone or something to drool on someone or something. (See also **slobber over** something.) ☐ *The dog slobbered over the child. It was just being friendly.* ☐ *Jenny has slobbered all over her dress.*

slobber over someone or something *Fig.* to drool with delight or eagerness at the thought of someone or something. (Based on **slobber over** something. See also **slobber (all) over** someone or something.) ☐ *Fred was slobbering over Donna as she lay sunbathing in a tiny bikini.* ☐ *Jamie was slobbering over Mary's new car.*

slobber over something to drool with delight or eagerness before or while eating something. (See also **slobber over** someone or something.) ☐ *The dog was slobbering over a chunk of meat when the cat came in and hissed at the dog.*

slog through something to wade or trudge through something, such as mud or snow. ☐ *Do I have to slog through the snow to go to school? Can't you drive me?* ☐ *When I was your age, I slogged through snow twice this deep to get to school.*

slop around 1. [for someone] to splash around in a body of liquid, such as a bath. ☐ *Timmy was in his bath, slopping around and singing.* ☐ *Bob is out in the pool, slopping around.* **2.** [for a liquid] to splash or rush around in a container. ☐ *The water was slopping around in the bottom of the boat even though the lake we were traveling on was calm.* ☐ *There is some coffee left. I hear it slopping around in the bottom of the pot.*

slop out (of something**)** [for a liquid] to spill or splash out of a container. ☐ *Some of the orange juice slopped out of the container, making a mess on the table.* ☐ *Some milk slopped out. Please clean it up.*

slop over [for a liquid] to splash out of or overflow a container. ☐ *The milk slopped over and messed up the carpet.* ☐ *Her cup slopped over and spilled its contents on the kitchen table.*

slop something **around**† to spill portions of a liquid here and there. ☐ *Don't slop the milk around as you pour it.* ☐ *Please don't slop around the paint while you work.*

slop something **on(to)** someone or something to spill or splash a liquid onto someone or something. ☐ *Don't slop the pancake batter onto yourself.* ☐ *Who slopped paint on the floor?*

slop something **over** something to spill or splash some liquid onto something. ☐ *He slopped the starting fluid over the charcoal and lit it.* ☐ *The artist slopped some grape juice over the canvas and proceeded to spread it around in an artistic fashion.*

slope away from something to slant downward and away from something. ☐ *The lawn sloped away from the patio toward the riverbank.* ☐ *The porch sloped away from the house at a very slight angle.*

slope down (to something or some place**)** to slant downward toward something or some place from a higher level. ☐ *The wide white beach sloped down to the azure water.* ☐ *The yard sloped down, making a lovely view from the living room.*

slope (down) toward something to slant downward toward something. ☐ *The backyard slopes down toward the river.* ☐ *It slopes toward the water.*

slope up (to something**)** to slant upward in the direction of something. ☐ *The ramp sloped up to the door, allowing wheelchairs to enter.* ☐ *It sloped up rather steeply.*

slosh around (in something**) 1.** [for a liquid] to rush or splash around in an enclosure or container. ☐ *The milk sloshed around in the pitcher and splashed over a little bit.* ☐ *The fluid sloshed around, making a splashing sound.* **2.** to move or splash through a liquid, usually standing on one's feet. ☐ *Billy sloshed around in the wading pool.* ☐ *The kids have been sloshing around in puddles again.*

slosh over [for a liquid] to splash over its container. ☐ *The water in the wading pool sloshed over and made the grass slippery.* ☐ *Don't fill the glass too full. It will slosh over.*

slosh something **(all) over** someone or something to spill or splash a liquid over someone or something. ☐ *Laura tripped and sloshed the grape juice all over Martha.* ☐ *Martin sloshed pancake batter over the side of the stove.*

slosh something **around**† to cause a liquid to rush or splash in a container. ☐ *The chef sloshed the dressing around a few times and poured it on the salad.* ☐ *The chef sloshed around the dressing and poured it on the salad.*

slosh something **on(to)** someone or something and **slosh** something **on**† to splash or spill a liquid onto someone or something. ☐ *Betty sloshed the charcoal lighter fluid on Fred, and he went in to wash it off.* ☐ *Then she sloshed the fluid onto the charcoal.* ☐ *Slosh on some more.*

slosh through something [for a person] to wade or splash through something. ☐ *The little kids sloshed through every puddle on their way home.* ☐ *We sloshed through the stream, ruining our shoes and soaking our cuffs.*

slouch around to move around with a stooped or bent body. (One may slouch because of age, illness, fatigue, depression, fear, or with the intention of not being observed.) ☐ *She is slouching around because she is tired.* ☐ *Don't you slouch around when you are tired?*

slouch behind something to remain behind something, slouching with depression, fear, or the intent of not being observed. ☐ *Jim slouched behind a chair where no one could see him.* ☐ *A weary clerk slouched behind the counter, wanting a nap more than anything else.*

slouch down to slump or droop down. ☐ *Don't always slouch down, Timmy! Stand up straight.* ☐ *I slouch down because I am tired.*

slouch down (in something**)** to sink or snuggle down into something, trying to become less visible or more comfortable. ☐ *Please don't slouch down in your chair, Tim.* ☐ *He can't sit in anything without slouching down.*

slouch over to lean or crumple and fall to one side; [for someone] to collapse in a sitting position. ☐ *He slouched over and went to sleep in his chair.* ☐ *When he slouched over, I thought something was wrong.*

slough something **off**† **1.** *Lit.* to brush or rub something off. ☐ *The snake sloughed its old skin off.* ☐ *It sloughed off its skin.* **2.** *Fig.* to ignore or disregard a negative remark or incident. ☐ *I could see that the remark had hurt her feelings, but she just pretended to slough it off.* ☐ *Liz sloughed off the remark.*

Slow and steady wins the race. *Prov.* If you work slowly but constantly, you will succeed better than if you work fast for a short while and do not continue. (Associated with Aesop's fable of "The Tortoise and the Hare.") ☐ *Joy only had a little bit of time to spend sewing every day, but she worked steadily and soon had finished a beautiful quilt. Slow and steady wins the race.*

***slow as molasses in January** and **slower than molasses in January** very slow-moving. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *Can't you get dressed any faster? I declare, you're as slow as molasses in January.* ☐ *The traffic on the way to the concert was slower than molasses in January.*

slow but sure and **slowly but surely** slow but unstoppable. ☐ *Bob's progress on his novel was slow but sure.* ☐ *Nancy is finishing the paint job on her house, slowly but surely.*

slow down to decrease speed; to go slower. ☐ *Please slow down. You are going too fast.*

slow going the rate of speed when one is making slow progress. ☐ *It was slow going at first, but I was able to finish the project by the weekend.* ☐ *Getting the heavy rocks out of the field is slow going.*

slow off the mark 1. *Lit.* slow in starting or reacting. (Compare this with quick off the mark.) ☐ *If you are always that slow off the mark you will never win the race.* ☐ *Boy, you were slow off the mark there!* **2.** *Fig.* slow-witted. ☐ *The guy's slow off the mark but very friendly.* ☐ *Yes, I'm afraid Tony is a bit slow off the mark when it comes to trigonometry.*

slow on the draw 1. *Lit.* slow in drawing a gun. (Cowboy and gangster talk.) ☐ *Bill got shot because he's so slow on the draw.* ☐ *The gunslinger said, "I have to be fast. If I'm slow on the draw, I'm dead."* **2.** and **slow on the uptake** *Fig.* slow to figure something out; slow-thinking. ☐ *Sally didn't get the joke because she's sort of slow on the draw.* ☐ *Bill—who's slow on the uptake—didn't get the joke until it was explained to him.*

slow on the uptake Go to previous.

slow someone or something **up**† and **slow** someone or something **down**† to cause someone or something to reduce speed. ☐ *I'm in a hurry. Don't try to slow me down.* ☐ *Please slow up the train. There are sheep near the track.*

a **slow study** a person who is slow to learn things. (Compare this to a slow study.) ☐ *Fred, who is a slow study, never caught on to the joke.*

slow up to go slower; to reduce speed in order for someone or something to catch up. ☐ *Slow up a little! I can't keep up with you!* ☐ *Please slow up. I can't follow your lecture when you talk so fast.*

slower and slower at a decreasing rate of speed; slow and then even slower. ☐ *The car is going slower and slower and will stop soon.* ☐ *The dog's breathing got slower and slower as it went to sleep.*

slower than molasses in January Go to slow as molasses in January.

slowly but surely Go to slow but sure.

sluff (off) *Sl.* to waste time; to goof off. ☐ *Watch him. He will sluff off if you don't keep after him.* ☐ *He won't sluff. I know I can trust him.*

slug it out to fight something out; to argue intensely about something. ☐ *They finally went outside to slug it out.* ☐ *We'll just have to sit down in the conference room and slug it out.*

sluice something **down**† to rinse something down; to flood the surface of something with water or other liquid to clean it. ☐ *John sluiced the driveway down.* ☐ *Karen sluiced down the garage floor.*

sluice something **out**† to rinse something out; to flood the inside of something to clean it. ☐ *Sluice the wheelbarrow out, will you?* ☐ *Please sluice out the wheelbarrow.*

slump down [for someone] to collapse and fall down; [for someone] to crumple. ☐ *The shot hit Max and he slumped down.* ☐ *Suddenly, Mr. Wilson slumped down in pain.*

slump down in(to) something [for someone] to bend down or collapse into something, such as a chair or bed. ☐ *Gary grabbed at his chest and slumped down into the bed.* ☐ *He slumped down into the chair and draped himself over the arm.*

slump over [for someone] to collapse and fall over forward in a sitting position. ☐ *Just after the gunshot, Bruno slumped over and slid from his chair.*

slur over something **1.** *Lit.* to avoid saying difficult or crucial words by mumbling them; to speak over words unclearly. ☐ *The speaker slurred over so many words that we didn't know what she was saying.* ☐ *Unfortunately, Ted slurred over many of the important parts of his speech.* **2.** *Fig.* to avoid talking about or mentioning an issue. ☐ *The mayor slurred over the major issue of the day.* ☐ *She slurred over the major problems.*

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slush up to become messy with slush. ☐ *As the winter storm increases in intensity, the roads will slush up and become impassable.* ☐ *After an hour of snow and rain, the roads were so slushed up that we could not travel.*

slut's wool Go to curly dirt.

***sly as a fox** and ***cunning as a fox** *Cliché* smart and clever. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *My nephew is as sly as a fox.* ☐ *You have to be cunning as a fox to outwit me.*

smack (dab) in the middle exactly in the middle. ☐ *I came in smack dab in the middle of the play.* ☐ *I want a piece that is not too big and not too small—just smack in the middle.*

a **smack in the face** *Fig.* something that will humiliate someone, often when it is considered deserved; an insult. ☐ *Being rejected by Jane was a real smack in the face for*

Tom, who thought she was fond of him. ☐ *Meg thought she was the best-qualified candidate for the job, and not getting it was a smack in the face.*

smack of something to be reminiscent of something; to imply something. ☐ *The whole scheme smacked of dishonesty and deception.* ☐ *All of this story smacks of illegal practices.*

smack someone **down†** **1.** *Lit.* to knock a person down or cause a person to retreat with a slap or a blow. ☐ *He tried to touch her again and she smacked him down.* ☐ *She smacked down the rude fellow.* **2.** *Fig.* to rebuke someone. ☐ *She smacked him down by telling him that he didn't fit in there anymore.* ☐ *He has a way of smacking down people who ask stupid questions.*

smack something **down† (on(to)** something**)** to slap something down onto something. ☐ *He smacked his bet down onto the table, angry with his mounting losses.* ☐ *Todd smacked down his hand on the table.* ☐ *She smacked her dollar down and grabbed up the newspaper.*

smack the road *Sl.* to leave; to hit the road. ☐ *Time to smack the road! Let's go!* ☐ *Let's smack the road. I have to get up early.*

small change *Fig.* an insignificant person. (Also a rude term of address.) ☐ *Look, small change, why don't you just move along?* ☐ *The guy you think is small change happens to own this building you seem to be guarding so well.*

a **small fortune** a rather sizeable amount of money. ☐ *This set of wheels cost me a small fortune.* ☐ *I've got a small fortune tied up in test equipment.*

small fry **1.** *Lit.* newly hatched fish; small, juvenile fish. ☐ *The catch was bad today. Nothing but small fry.* **2.** *Fig.* unimportant people. ☐ *The police have only caught the small fry. The leader of the gang is still free.* ☐ *You people are just small fry! I want to talk to the boss.* **3.** *Fig.* children. ☐ *Peter's taking the small fry to the zoo.* ☐ *We should take the small fry to the pantomime.*

the **small hours (of the night)** and the **wee hours (of the night)** the hours immediately after midnight. ☐ *The dance went on into the small hours of the night.* ☐ *Jim goes to bed in the wee hours and gets up at lunchtime.*

small potatoes something or someone insignificant; small fry. ☐ *This contract is small potatoes, but it keeps us in business till we get into the real money.* ☐ *Small potatoes are better than no potatoes at all.*

small print and **fine print** an important part of a document that is not easily noticed because of the smallness of the printing. ☐ *You should have read the small print before signing the contract.* ☐ *You should always read the fine print of an insurance policy.*

Small things please small minds. Go to Little things please little minds.

smart ass someone who makes wisecracks and acts cocky. (Potentially offensive. Use only with discretion.) ☐ *Some smart ass came in here and asked for a sky hook.* ☐ *Don't be such a smart ass!*

smart at something to suffer the pains of something. ☐ *Over an hour later she was still smarting at his cruel remarks.* ☐ *For many days Ted smarted at the scolding he got.*

smart from something **1.** *Lit.* to get a stinging pain from something. ☐ *His arm smarted from many mosquito bites.* ☐ *Her legs smarted from the scratches she got from walking through the briars.* **2.** *Fig.* to suffer mental distress from something. ☐ *She smarted from wounded vanity.* ☐ *He smarted for hours from the rude rebuff.*

smart guy someone who acts cocky or rude. ☐ *All right, smart guy, see if you like this one.* ☐ *Some smart guy put chewing gum on this bench.*

smart money money belonging to smart or clever people. ☐ *Most of the smart money is going into utility stocks right now.* ☐ *Watch and see what the smart money is doing.*

smart mouth someone who makes wisecracks; a cocky person who speaks out of turn. ☐ *Don't be a smart mouth with me!* ☐ *Mr. Atkins is going to get a reputation as a smart mouth.*

smart under something to suffer stinging pain under something. ☐ *The sailor's back smarted under the blows of the lash.* ☐ *Ted smarted under the lash for his wrongdoings.*

smarten up to get smarter; to become more alert and knowing. ☐ *You had better smarten up if you want to survive around here.* ☐ *I knew he would smarten up sooner or later.*

a **smash hit** a play, movie, musical, etc., that is a big success. ☐ *Her first book was a smash hit. The second was a disaster.* ☐ *A smash hit doesn't always make people rich.*

smash into something to crash into something; to bump or crash into something. ☐ *Judy smashed into the coffee table and hurt her leg.* ☐ *The car smashed into the side of a bus and caused a lot of damage.*

smash out of something to break [one's way] out of something. ☐ *The prisoner smashed out of his cell and ran.* ☐ *The horse smashed out of its stable.*

smash someone's **face in†** **1.** *Fig.* to crush someone's face. ☐ *The accident smashed Harry's face in, and he had to have extensive surgery.* ☐ *The accident smashed in his face.* **2.** *Inf.* to strike someone in the face. ☐ *You had better stop that or I will smash your face in.* ☐ *Max tried to smash in Lefty's face.*

smash something **in†** to crush something inward; to make something collapse inward by striking it. ☐ *Andy gave one good kick and smashed the box in.* ☐ *Liz smashed in the window.*

smash something **up†** to break something up; to destroy something. ☐ *I hope the children don't smash any of the good china up if we use it tonight.* ☐ *The driver fell asleep and smashed up the car.*

smash through something to break [one's way] through some sort of barrier. ☐ *The fleeing car smashed through the police barrier.* ☐ *Max got angry and smashed through the office door.*

a **smear campaign (against** someone**)** a campaign aimed at damaging someone's reputation by making accusations and spreading rumors. ☐ *The politician's opponents are engaging in a smear campaign against him.* ☐ *Jack started a smear campaign against Tom so that Tom wouldn't get the manager's job.*

smear someone or something **with** something **1.** to spread or rub someone or something with some substance. ☐ *Billy smeared Bobby with mud and made him very angry.* ☐ *You should smear that burn with lotion.* ☐ *He smeared himself with grease and ruined his shirt.* **2.** to damage the reputation of someone or something by spreading serious charges or rumors. ☐ *He smeared his opponent with all sorts of charges.* ☐ *The speaker smeared the entire city with his criticism.*

smear something **on(to)** someone or something and **smear** something **on†** to spread or rub something onto someone or something. ☐ *Judy asked Jeff to smear the sun lotion onto her, and he was very happy to do so.* ☐ *She smeared on the lotion.* ☐ *Jane smeared a little on.*

smell a rat to suspect that something is wrong; to sense that someone has caused something wrong. ☐ *I don't think this was an accident. I smell a rat. Bob had something to do with this.* ☐ *The minute I came in, I smelled a rat. Sure enough, I had been robbed.*

smell blood *Fig.* to be ready for a fight; to be ready to attack; to be ready to act. (Like sharks, which are sent into a frenzy by the smell of blood.) ☐ *Lefty was surrounded, and you could tell that the guys from the other gang smelled blood.* ☐ *The lawyer heard the crash and came running—smelling blood and bucks.*

smell fishy to seem suspicious. ☐ *Barlowe squinted a bit. Something smells fishy here, he thought.* ☐ *Something about the deal smelled fishy—too good to be true.*

smell like a rose *Fig.* to seem innocent. ☐ *I came out of the whole mess smelling like a rose, even though I caused all the trouble.* ☐ *The politician survived the scandal smelling like a rose, but I knew different.*

smell of something to have the smell of something; to smell like something. ☐ *This house smells of onions.* ☐ *Her cooking always smells of entirely too much garlic.*

smell someone, something, or an animal **out†** to locate someone, something, or an animal by smelling or as if by smelling. ☐ *The dog smelled the crook out from the place in the alley where he was hiding.* ☐ *The dog smelled out the raccoon.*

smell something **up†** to cause a bad or strong odor in a place or on something. ☐ *Your cooking sure smelled this place up!* ☐ *The spoiled meat really smelled up the house!*

smell to (high) heaven 1. Go to stink to high heaven. **2.** *Fig.* to give signals that cause suspicion. ☐ *This deal is messed up. It smells to high heaven.* ☐ *Something's wrong here. Somebody blabbed. This setup smells to high heaven.*

smile at someone to make a smiling face at someone. ☐ *I love the way you smile at me.* ☐ *I am glad you smile at me occasionally.*

smile on someone or something to be favorable to someone or something. ☐ *Fate smiled on me and I got the job.* ☐ *Lady luck smiled on our venture and we made a profit.*

smile (up)on someone or something to bestow approval on someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Fate has smiled upon me at last!* ☐ *I wish good luck would smile on me.*

Smile when you say that. *Inf.* I will interpret that remark as a joke or as kidding. ☐ *John: You're a real pain in the neck. Bob: Smile when you say that.* ☐ *Sue: I'm going to bop you on the head! John: Smile when you say that!*

smiling like a Cheshire cat *Fig.* smiling very broadly. (Alludes to a grinning cat in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.) ☐ *There he stood, smiling like a Cheshire cat, waiting for his weekly pay.*

smirk at someone or something to smile in a smug or sneering way at someone or something. ☐ *Why are you smirking at me like that?* ☐ *Jane looked at the report and smirked at it.*

smite someone **with** something to strike someone with something. (Literary or biblical.) ☐ *The silver knight approached the black knight and smote him with his sword.* ☐ *Please go and smite the dragon with your sword.*

smoke and mirrors deception and confusion. (Said of statements or more complicated rhetoric used to mislead people rather than inform. Alludes to the way a magician uses optical illusion to create believability while performing a trick. Fixed order.) ☐ *Most people know that the politician was just using smoke and mirrors to make things look better than they really were.* ☐ *Her report was little more than smoke and mirrors. No one will believe any of it.*

smoke like a chimney to smoke a great deal of tobacco or other smokable substances. ☐ *My uncle smoked like a chimney when he was living.* ☐ *Somebody who smokes like a chimney in a restaurant ought to be thrown out.*

smoke someone, something, or an animal **out of** something and **smoke** someone, something, or an animal **out† 1.** *Lit.* to force someone, something, or an animal out of something or a place, using smoke. ☐ *The police used tear gas to smoke the kidnappers out of the house.* ☐ *They smoked out the crooks.* **2.** *Fig.* to drive someone or something out into public view, as if using smoke or something similar. ☐ *What will it take to smoke these crooks out of government?* ☐ *We will smoke out the corrupt officials yet.*

smoke something **up†** to cause something or a place to become smoky. ☐ *Get out of here with that cigarette! I don't want you smoking my house up!* ☐ *The burning beans sure smoked up the house.*

smoke-filled room a room where a small group of people make important decisions. (Usually used in reference to political parties.) ☐ *The smoke-filled rooms are still producing the candidates for most offices, despite all the political reforms.* ☐ *The deal was cut in a smoke-filled room.*

the **smoking gun** *Fig.* the indisputable sign of guilt. (Fig. on a murderer being caught just after shooting the victim.) ☐ *Mr. South was left holding the smoking gun.* ☐ *The chief of staff decided that the the aide should be found with the smoking gun.*

***smooth as glass** and ***smooth as silk** *Cliché* smooth and shiny. (Often used to describe calm bodies of water. *Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *The bay is as smooth as glass, so we should have a pleasant boat trip.* ☐ *This custard is smooth as silk.*

smooth as silk Go to previous.

smooth sailing Go to clear sailing.

smooth something **away†** to remove something, such as wrinkles or other unevenness, by pressing or smoothing. ☐ *Jeff put the cloth on the table and smoothed the wrinkles away with his hand.* ☐ *Jeff smoothed away the wrinkles.*

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smooth something **back**† to flatten and position something by pressing or smoothing. ☐ *He smoothed his hair back out of his eyes.* ☐ *Jeff smoothed back his hair.*

smooth something **down**† to make something flat or smooth by pressing. ☐ *She smoothed her skirt down, fluffed her hair, and went into the boardroom.* ☐ *Karen smoothed down the bedclothes.*

smooth something **onto** someone or something and **smooth** something **on**† to spread or flatten something onto someone or something. ☐ *Ted smoothed the suntan lotion onto Alice, who lay on a towel in the sand.* ☐ *He smoothed on some lotion.*

smooth something **out**† **1.** *Lit.* to flatten or even something by smoothing or pressing. ☐ *Wally smoothed the bedspread out.* ☐ *Wally finished making the bed by smoothing out the spread.* **2.** *Fig.* to polish and refine something. ☐ *The editor smoothed John's style out.* ☐ *You need to smooth out your delivery when you are speaking.* **3.** and **smooth** something **over**† *Fig.* to reduce the intensity of an argument or a misunderstanding; to try to make people feel better about something disagreeable that has happened. (Fig. on ①.) ☐ *Mary and John had a terrible argument, and they are both trying to smooth it over.* ☐ *Let's get everyone together and try to smooth things out. We can't keep on arguing with one another.* ☐ *We can smooth over the whole affair.*

smother someone or something **with** something **1.** *Lit.* to suffocate someone or something with something. ☐ *The villain tried to smother his victim with a pillow.* ☐ *Fred tried to smother the cat with a plastic bag.* **2.** *Fig.* to cover someone or something with something. (An exaggeration.) ☐ *She smothered him with kisses.* ☐ *Aunt Margaret smothered us with the ruffles on the front of her dress when she hugged us.*

smuggle someone or something **across** something to move someone or something across a border illegally and in secret. ☐ *The terrorists smuggled one of their number across the border last night.* ☐ *Larry helped smuggle contraband across the border.*

smuggle someone or something **into** some place and **smuggle** someone or something **in**† to move someone or something across a border into a place illegally and in secret. ☐ *The secret agent smuggled his family into the country and then defected.* ☐ *He smuggled in his family.*

smuggle someone or something **out of** some place and **smuggle** someone or something **out**† to move someone or something across a border out of a place illegally and in secret. ☐ *Judy smuggled her cousin out of the country in a van.* ☐ *She smuggled out her cousin.*

smuggle someone or something **past (**someone or something**)** to move something past a guard or monitor illegally and in secret. ☐ *We failed in our attempt to smuggle Mary past the border.* ☐ *It is easy to smuggle wine past the border guards.*

smuggle someone or something **through (**something**)** to move something through a guard post or other barrier illegally and in secret. ☐ *The officers smuggled the child through the barrier so he could be with his mother.* ☐ *We smuggled some other goods through, too.*

snack off (of) something to eat food, bit by bit, in little snacks. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Please don't snack off the turkey so we can get another meal out of it.* ☐ *Who has been snacking off of last night's roast beef?*

snake along to move along in a curving line, looking like a snake; to move along in a line, moving as a snake moves. ☐ *The train snaked along, gaining speed as it went downhill.* ☐ *The line of people waiting to buy tickets snaked along slowly.*

snake in the grass a sneaky and despised person. ☐ *How could I ever have trusted that snake in the grass?* ☐ *John is such a snake in the grass.*

snakebite medicine *Inf.* inferior whiskey; strong whiskey; homemade whiskey. ☐ *That old-time snakebite medicine is good for what ails you.* ☐ *Snakebite medicine is a tremendous protection against snakebites if you can get the snake to drink the stuff before it bites you.*

snap at someone to speak sharply or angrily to someone. (Based on **snap at** someone or something.) ☐ *Don't snap at me. What did I do?* ☐ *Why did you snap at me? I did nothing wrong.*

snap at someone or something to bite at someone or something. (See also **snap at** someone; **snap at** something.) ☐ *The dog snapped at my pants leg, but I escaped the attack unharmed.* ☐ *The fox snapped at the chicken and finally caught hold of it.* ☐ *The dog snapped at the judge and was disqualified.*

snap at something *Fig.* to seize an opportunity. (See also **snap at** someone or something.) ☐ *It is such a good deal, I knew you would snap at it.* ☐ *Just as I thought, Ted snapped at my final offer.*

snap back (after something**)** to return to normal after an accident or similar event. ☐ *He is upset now, but he will snap back after things settle down.* ☐ *Things will snap back in no time at all.*

snap back (at someone**)** to give a sharp or angry response to someone. ☐ *The telephone operator, unlike in the good old days, snapped back at the caller.* ☐ *Please don't snap back. I've had a bad day.*

snap back (on someone or something**)** [for something] to be jerked back onto someone or something. ☐ *The branch snapped back on Tim and left a welt on his arm.* ☐ *The whip snapped back and stung Tex's hand.*

snap into something [for something] to be put or fit into an opening with an audible snap. ☐ *The larger edge of the card snaps into the slot at the base.* ☐ *This part snaps right into the other part.*

Snap it up! *Inf.* Hurry up! ☐ *John: Come on, Fred. Snap it up! Fred: I'm hurrying! I'm hurrying!* ☐ *Sally: Snap it up! You're going to make us late. John: That's exactly what I had in mind.*

snap one's **cookies** *Sl.* to vomit; to regurgitate. ☐ *I think I'm gonna snap my cookies.* ☐ *Some jerk snapped his cookies on the sidewalk.*

snap out of something *Fig.* to become suddenly freed from a condition. (The condition can be a depression, an illness, unconsciousness, etc.) ☐ *I was very depressed for a week, but this morning I snapped out of it.* ☐ *It isn't often that a cold gets me down. Usually I can snap out of it quickly.*

snap someone's **head off** *Fig.* to speak very sharply to someone. (Based on **snap at** someone.) ☐ *How rude! Don't*

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snap my head off! ☐ *Mary snapped Ted's head off because he had come in late.*

snap something **back†** to cause something to jerk back. ☐ *The force of the crash snapped his head back and injured his neck.* ☐ *The crash snapped back his head.*

snap something **into** something and **snap** something **in†** to put or press something into something with an audible snap. ☐ *Next, you snap this little part into this slot here.* ☐ *Snap in these legs then tighten the screws.*

snap something **off†** to break off something brittle. ☐ *Liz snapped a bit of the rock off and put it in her bag.* ☐ *Carl snapped off a piece of the candy and gave it to Timmy.*

snap something **on†** to attach something to something else, causing an audible snap. ☐ *Dawn took two pills from the bottle and snapped the lid on.* ☐ *She snapped on the lid.*

snap something **out of** something and **snap** something **out†** to remove something from something, causing an audible snap. ☐ *Jeff snapped the plastic plug out of the socket.* ☐ *He snapped out the plug.*

snap something **up† 1.** *Lit.* to grasp something quickly. ☐ *Karen snapped her pencil up and strode out of the room.* ☐ *Harry walked through the kitchen and snapped up two cookies on the way.* **2.** *Fig.* to purchase something quickly, because the price is low or because the item is so hard to find. (Fig. on ①.) ☐ *We put the cheap shirts out for sale this morning and people snapped them up in only a few minutes.* ☐ *They snapped up the bargains quickly.* **3.** *Fig.* to believe something eagerly; to believe a lie readily. ☐ *They are so gullible that you can say anything and they'll snap it up.* ☐ *They will snap up anything that sounds good.*

snap to (attention) *Fig.* to move quickly to military attention. ☐ *The troops snapped to attention when they saw the general appear.* ☐ *Snap to when I tell you!*

Snap to it! *Inf.* Move faster!; Look alert! ☐ *Bill: Snap to it! Mary: Don't rush me!* ☐ *John: Get in line there. Snap to it! Sally: What is this, the army? You just wait till I'm ready!*

snarl at someone, something, or an animal to growl at someone, something, or an animal angrily and threateningly. ☐ *The dog snarled at everyone who passed by.* ☐ *Our dog used to sit in front of the washing machine and snarl at it.*

snarl someone or something **up†** to tangle someone or something; to mess something up. ☐ *The wind snarled my hair up terribly.* ☐ *The wind snarled up my hair.*

snarl something **out†** to utter something by snarling or growling. ☐ *Lefty snarled a naughty word out at the police.* ☐ *Walt the pickpocket snarled out a curse as the cop grabbed his coat collar.*

snatch at someone or something to grasp at someone or something. ☐ *The mugger snatched at Jane just as she sprayed Mace on him.* ☐ *He snatched at the Mace, but it was too late.*

snatch someone **from the jaws of death** Go to snatch someone out of the jaws of death.

snatch someone or something **(away) from** someone or something to grab and take someone or something from someone or something. ☐ *The mother snatched her child away from the doctor and fled.* ☐ *She snatched the candy from the child.*

snatch someone **out of the jaws of death** and **snatch** someone **from the jaws of death** *Fig.* to save someone from almost certain or imminent death. ☐ *The soldier snatched the tiny child from the jaws of death.*

snatch something **out of** something to grab something out of something. ☐ *The police officer snatched the gun out of Don's hand.* ☐ *Mary snatched the piece of chicken out of the fire as soon as it fell in.*

snatch something **up† 1.** *Lit.* to grasp something and lift it up. ☐ *Tom snatched the last cookie up and popped it into his mouth.* ☐ *He snatched up the last piece of cake.* **2.** *Fig.* to collect or acquire as many of something as possible. ☐ *The shoppers snatched the sale merchandise up very quickly.* ☐ *The shoppers snatched up the sale merchandise very quickly.*

snatch victory from the jaws of defeat *Cliché* to win at the last moment. ☐ *At the last moment, the team snatched victory from the jaws of defeat with a last-second full-court basket.*

snazz something **up†** *Sl.* to make something classy or exciting. ☐ *Come on, let's try to snazz this up.* ☐ *What can I do to snazz up my face?*

sneak around (some place**)** to move about a place in a sneaky or stealthy fashion. ☐ *Please don't sneak around the house. It makes me nervous.* ☐ *Please stop sneaking around!*

sneak around someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to creep around or past someone or something. ☐ *The cat sneaked around Molly and ran out the door.* ☐ *We had to sneak around the corner so we wouldn't be seen.* **2.** *Fig.* to circumvent the control or censorship of someone or some group. ☐ *I think we can sneak around the board of directors and authorize this project ourselves.* ☐ *Yes, let's sneak around the board.*

sneak away (from some place**)** to go away from a place quietly and in secret. ☐ *Jeff tried to sneak away from the party, but Judy saw him.* ☐ *They sneaked away together.*

sneak in(to some place**)** to enter a place quietly and in secret, perhaps without a ticket or permission. ☐ *The kids tried to sneak into the rock concert, but they were stopped by the guards.* ☐ *Never try to sneak in. Sometimes they arrest you for trespassing.*

sneak out (of some place**)** to go out of a place quietly and in secret. ☐ *I sneaked out of the meeting, hoping no one would notice.* ☐ *Jamie saw me and sneaked out with me.*

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sneak up on someone or something to approach someone or something quietly and in secret. ☐ *Please don't sneak up on me like that.* ☐ *I sneaked up on the cake, hoping no one would see me. Someone did.*

sneak up to someone or something to move close to someone or something quietly and in secret. ☐ *I sneaked up to Don and scared him to death.* ☐ *Don sneaked up to the punch bowl and helped himself before the party began.*

sneer at someone or something to make a haughty or deprecating face at someone or something; to show one's contempt for someone or something. ☐ *I asked her politely to give me some more room, and she just sneered at me.* ☐ *Jamie sneered at the report that Ken had submitted.*

sneeze at someone to sneeze in someone's direction. ☐ *Please don't sneeze at me! Cover your nose and mouth!* ☐ *You should never sneeze at anyone. It is very bad manners.*

sneeze at something *Fig.* to indicate one's disapproval of something; to belittle someone or something. ☐ *I wouldn't sneeze at that amount of money if I were you. It's better than nothing.* ☐ *I though it was a good offer, but the customer just sneezed at it.*

sneeze into something to aim a sneeze into something. ☐ *You should always sneeze into a handkerchief.* ☐ *Please sneeze into a tissue or something.*

sneeze on someone or something to aim a sneeze onto someone or something, probably by accident. ☐ *Don't sneeze on me!* ☐ *Don't sneeze on anything. Cover your nose and mouth!*

sniff at someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to try to get the smell of someone or something by smelling. ☐ *The dog sniffed at the visitor.* ☐ *The cat sniffed at almost every inch of the rug that the dog had walked on.* **2.** *Fig.* to show one's disapproval of someone or something by sniffing. (Sometimes this is figurative, the "sniffing" being expressed by tone of voice or gesture.) ☐ *I made one suggestion, but Claire just sniffed at me.* ☐ *Gale just sniffed at the idea and would say nothing.*

sniff someone or something **out**† to locate someone or something by sniffing or as if by sniffing. ☐ *The dog sniffed the intruder out and the police captured him.* ☐ *The dog sniffed out the mole in the lawn.*

snip something **off**† Go to **snip** something **off (of)** something.

snip something **off (of)** something and **snip** something **off**† to cut something off something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *She snipped a dead blossom off the rosebush.* ☐ *Jane snipped off a bud.*

snipe at someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to fire a weapon at someone or something from a concealed position. ☐ *Someone with a rifle sniped at the troops as they went through the jungle.* ☐ *A rifleman was busy sniping at the platoon.* **2.** *Fig.* to make petty complaints attacking someone or something. ☐ *Stop sniping at me and everything I do.* ☐ *Ken is always sniping at my reports.*

snitch on someone to tattle on someone. ☐ *You wouldn't snitch on me, would you?* ☐ *Timmy snitched on his older brother.*

snoop around (something**)** to look around in a place, trying to find out something secret or about someone else's affairs. ☐ *Why are you snooping around my house?* ☐ *I am not snooping around.*

snoop into something to pry into something or someone else's affairs. ☐ *I wish you would stop snooping into my business!* ☐ *Whose affairs are they snooping into now?*

snort at someone or something to show one's displeasure with someone or something by snorting. ☐ *The customer snorted at the waiter for his surliness.* ☐ *The customer snorted at the prices and walked out.*

snotnose(d) (kid) *Inf.* a young child; a relatively young person. (Derogatory. Potentially offensive. Use only with discretion.) ☐ *Some little snotnose swiped my wallet.* ☐ *A little snotnosed kid came in and asked for money.*

snow bunny 1. someone learning to ski. ☐ *This little slope is for snow bunnies.* ☐ *Most of the snow bunnies come here to socialize.* **2.** a young, attractive female at a skiing lodge. ☐ *Some cute little snow bunny came over and sat beside me.* ☐ *This place is swarming with snow bunnies who have never even seen a ski.*

a **snow job** a systematic deception; a deceptive story that tries to hide the truth. ☐ *You can generally tell when a student is trying to do a snow job.* ☐ *This snow job you call an explanation just won't do.*

snow someone or something **in**† [for heavy snowfall] to block someone or something in a place. ☐ *The sudden storm snowed us in.* ☐ *The storm snowed in most of the people in town.*

snow someone or something **under with** something and **snow** someone or something **under**† to burden someone or something with something. (Usually too much work.) ☐ *The busy season snowed us all under with too much work.* ☐ *The heavy workload snowed under the office staff.*

snowball into something *Fig.* [for something] to become larger or more serious by growing like a snowball being rolled. ☐ *This whole problem is snowballing into a crisis very rapidly.* ☐ *The argument soon snowballed into a full-blown riot.*

snowed in trapped (somewhere) because of too much snow. ☐ *The snow was so deep that we were snowed in for three days.* ☐ *Being snowed in is no problem if you have enough food.*

snowed under overworked; exceptionally busy. ☐ *Look, I'm really snowed under at the moment. Can this wait?* ☐ *He really has been snowed under with work.*

snuff someone **out**† *Sl.* to kill someone. ☐ *Max really wanted to snuff the eyewiteness out, once and for all.* ☐ *Lefty wanted to snuff out his partner.*

snuff something **out**† to extinguish something, such as a flame. ☐ *She snuffed all the candles out and went to bed.* ☐ *Karen snuffed out the flames one by one.*

***snug as a bug in a rug** *Cliché* wrapped up tight, warm, and comfortable. (Playful; often used when addressing a child. *Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *The bedroom in Aunt Jane's house was cold, but after she wrapped me up in four or five quilts and put a stocking cap on my head, I was snug as a bug in a rug and ready to go to sleep.* ☐ *Alan: Are you warm enough? Jane: Yes, I'm as snug as a bug in a rug.*

snug down (some place**)** to become comfortable and warm in a place. ☐ *The cat snugged down at the foot of the bed.* ☐ *Finally the children snugged down and we could go to sleep.*

snuggle down (into something**)** to nestle into something, such as a warm bed. ☐ *Toby snuggled down into his nice warm bed.* ☐ *He got into bed and snuggled down.*

snuggle down (with someone**)** to nestle [into something] with someone else. ☐ *Billy snuggled down with his sister in the big feather bed.* ☐ *They snuggled down and went to sleep.*

snuggle down (with something**)** to nestle [into something] with something, such as a blanket, doll, book, etc. ☐ *The baby snuggled down with her blanket and was asleep in no time.* ☐ *Sally grabbed onto her favorite doll and snuggled down for the night.*

snuggle (up) against someone or something to press or cuddle against someone or something, as if to keep warm. ☐ *Tiffany snuggled up against Tad and asked him to give*

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her some chewing gum. ☐ *He snuggled against the warm wall on the other side of the fireplace.*

snuggle up (to someone or something**)** to cuddle up close to someone or something. ☐ *Kelly snuggled up to Jeff.* ☐ *She snuggled up and said she wanted him to go pick up a pizza.*

***so bad** one **can taste it** *Fig.* very much, indeed. (*Typically: **need ~; want ~; have to** do something **~**.) ☐ *I want that car so bad I can taste it.* ☐ *He had to get to Philadelphia so bad he could taste it.*

So be it. This is the way it will be. ☐ *If you insist on running off and marrying her, so be it. Only don't say I didn't warn you!* ☐ *Mary has decided that this is what she wants. So be it.*

so clean you could eat off the floor [of a room or a house] very clean. ☐ *Her kitchen is so clean you could eat off the floor!* ☐ *It's so clean here you could eat off the floor. I prefer a little mess, myself.*

so cold you could hang meat *Fig.* very cold; as cold as a meat storage locker. ☐ *Lord it was cold there! So cold you could hang meat.* ☐ *A: How cold was it? B: So cold you could hang meat.*

So do I. I do too. ☐ *Mary: I want some more cake. Sally: So do I.* ☐ *Bob: I have to go home now. Tom: So do I. Bob: Bye.*

so far as anyone **knows** Go to as far as anyone knows.

so far as possible Go to as far as possible.

so far as someone **is concerned** Go to as far as someone is concerned.

so far as something **is concerned** Go to as far as something is concerned.

So far, so good. All is going well so far. ☐ *We are half finished with our project. So far, so good.* ☐ *The operation is proceeding quite nicely—so far, so good.*

So gross! *Sl.* How disgusting! ☐ *He put chocolate syrup on his pie! So gross!* ☐ *He's barfing! So gross!*

So help me(, God)! I so pledge and vow in God's name. ☐ *I will do it. I really will, so help me, God!*

So it goes. *Inf.* That is the kind of thing that happens.; That is life. ☐ *Too bad about John and his problems. So it goes.* ☐ *I just lost a twenty-dollar bill, and I can't find it anywhere. So it goes.*

So long. Good-bye. ☐ *So long, see ya later.* ☐ *It's been good talking to you. So long.*

so long as Go to as long as.

so mad I could scream very mad. ☐ *I am just so mad I could scream! Why is he such a jerk?* ☐ *She makes me so mad I could scream.*

So many countries, so many customs. *Prov.* People in different countries have different ways of behaving. ☐ *In the last place I visited, it was considered rude to put your hands on the table at dinner, but here, it's rude to keep them under the table. So many countries, so many customs.*

so much for someone or something that is the last of someone or something; there is no need to consider someone or something anymore. ☐ *It just started raining. So much for our picnic this afternoon.* ☐ *So much for John. He just called in sick and can't come to work today.*

So much for that. That is the end of that.; We will not be dealing with that anymore. ☐ *John tossed the stub of a pencil into the trash. "So much for that," he muttered, fishing through his drawer for another.* ☐ *Mother: Here, try some carrots. Child (brushing the spoon aside): No! No! Mother: Well, so much for that.*

so much the better even better; all to the better. ☐ *Please come to the picnic. If you can bring a salad, so much the better.* ☐ *The flowers look lovely on the shelf. It would be so much the better if you put them on the table.*

so quiet you could hear a pin drop Go to so still you could hear a pin drop.

So's your old man! *Inf.* The same to you!; Drop dead! (Old. A catch phrase indicating basic disagreement or hostility.) ☐ *Bill: You're acting like an idiot! Tom: So's your old man!* ☐ *I don't know what you said, but so's your old man!*

so soon early; before the regular time; ahead of schedule. ☐ *I got there early because my bus arrived so soon.* ☐ *Because the meeting ended so soon, I had some extra time.*

so still you could hear a pin drop and **so quiet you could hear a pin drop** *Fig.* very quiet. (Also with *can*.) ☐ *When I came into the room, it was so still you could hear a pin drop. Then everyone shouted, "Happy birthday!"* ☐ *Please be quiet. Be so quiet you can hear a pin drop.*

So, sue me. If you are so angry, why don't go ahead and sue me. (A rude way of brushing off an angry person.) ☐ *A: You ran into my car! You didn't even look where you were going! B: So, sue me.*

so to speak as one might say; said a certain way, even though the words are not exactly accurate. ☐ *John helps me with my taxes. He's my accountant, so to speak.* ☐ *I just love my little poodle. She's my baby, so to speak.*

So (what)? *Inf.* Why does that matter? (Can be considered rude.) ☐ *Bob: Your attitude always seems to lack sincerity. Mary: So what?* ☐ *John: Your car sure is dusty. Sue: So?*

(So) what else is new? *Inf.* This isn't new. It has happened before; Not this again. ☐ *Mary: Taxes are going up again. Bob: So what else is new?* ☐ *John: Gee, my pants are getting tight. Maybe I'm putting on a little weight. Sally: What else is new?*

soak in(to something**)** [for moisture] to penetrate something. ☐ *The rain soaked into the parched ground as fast as it fell.* ☐ *I'm glad it soaked in. I was afraid it would run off.*

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soak one's **face** *Sl.* to drink heavily. ☐ *They're down at the tavern soaking their faces.* ☐ *Well, I guess I'll go soak my face in a few beers.*

soak someone or something **with** something to get someone or something thoroughly wet with some liquid. ☐ *The rain soaked us all with icy cold drops of water.* ☐ *The storm soaked the land with much-needed moisture.*

soak someone **to the skin** [for water, rain, or other liquid] to work its way through someone's clothing to the skin. ☐ *The storm soaked us all to the skin.* ☐ *She soaked herself to the skin in the storm.*

soak something **in** something to leave something immersed in a liquid, intending for it to be absorbed. ☐ *Soak your feet in Epsom salts to make them feel better.* ☐ *I had to soak my elbow in ice water to take down the swelling.*

soak something **off (of)** something and **soak** something **off**† to remove something, such as a label or surface soil, from something by soaking in a liquid. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) □ *She soaked the labels off the bottles and jars.* □ *Please soak off the label.*

soak something **out of** something and **soak** something **out**† to remove something, such as a stain, from something by soaking in a liquid. □ *Dan soaked the stain out of his shirt and then washed it.* □ *Dan soaked out the stain.*

soak something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to gather up moisture or a liquid, using an absorbent cloth, paper, etc. □ *Alice soaked the spill up with a sponge.* □ *She soaked up the spilled milk.* **2.** *Lit.* [for cloth, paper, or other absorbent material] to absorb moisture or a liquid. □ *Please get some paper towels to soak the spill up.* □ *The sponge soaked up the orange juice.* **3.** *Fig.* to learn or absorb some information; to learn much information. □ *I can't soak information up as fast as I used to be able to.* □ *The tourists will soak up anything you tell them.*

soak through something [for liquid] to work its way through something, such as cloth or paper. □ *Please wipe up that mess before it soaks through the tablecloth.* □ *It's too late. The grape juice has soaked through the carpet into the mat.*

soaked to the skin wet clear through one's clothing to the skin. □ *I was caught in the rain and got soaked to the skin.* □ *Oh, come in and dry off! You must be soaked to the skin.*

so-and-so a despised person. (This expression is used in place of other very insulting terms. Often modified, as in the examples.) □ *You dirty so-and-so! I can't stand you!* □ *Don't you call me a so-and-so, you creep!*

soap someone or something **down**† to cover someone or something thoroughly with soap or suds. □ *Mother soaped Timmy down and rinsed him off in warm water.* □ *She soaped down the floor.*

sob one's **heart out** Go to **cry** one's **heart out.**

sob oneself **to sleep** to cry until one falls asleep. □ *He sobbed himself to sleep for days after his grandpa died.* □ *The child sobbed himself to sleep night after night.*

sob something **out**† to speak something out while sobbing. □ *Wally sobbed his story out while the police made notes.* □ *He sobbed out his sad tale.*

sob something **to** someone to cry and tell one's troubles to someone. □ *He is always sobbing his sad tale to anyone who will listen.* □ *Timmy sobbed his story to the teacher.*

sob story *Fig.* a sad story that is likely to draw tears. □ *I've heard nothing but sob stories today. Isn't anybody happy?* □ *She had quite a sob story, and I listened to the whole thing.*

***sober as a judge 1.** *Cliché* very formal, somber, or stuffy. (*Also: **as ~**.) □ *You certainly look gloomy, Bill. You're sober as a judge.* □ *Tom's as sober as a judge. I think he's angry.* **2.** *Cliché* not drunk; alert and completely sober. (*Also: **as ~**.) □ *John's drunk? No, he's as sober as a judge.* □ *You should be sober as a judge when you drive a car.*

sober someone **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to take actions that will cause a drunken person to become sober. □ *Some coffee ought to sober him up.* □ *He tried to sober himself up because he had to drive home.* □ *They tried to sober up the guys who had been out all night.* **2.** *Fig.* to cause someone to face reality. □ *The harsh reality of what had happened sobered him up immediately.* □ *The arrival of the police sobered up all the revelers.*

sober up to recover from alcohol or drug intoxication. □ *Barlowe had one hour to sober up and get to the station.* □ *It took him a while to sober up.*

sock it to someone **1.** to punch someone; to punch one's fist at someone. □ *Max really socked it to Lefty!* □ *Lefty socked it to Roger and knocked him down.* **2.** to tell bad news to someone in a straightforward manner. □ *I can take it. Sock it to me!* □ *I don't care how bad it seems. Sock it to me!*

sock someone or something **in**† [for fog] to cause someone or something to remain in place. □ *The heavy fog socked us in for six hours.* □ *The fog socked in the airport for an hour.*

sock something **away**† to place something, such as money, into reserve; to store something in a secure place. □ *I try to sock a little money away each month for my vacation.* □ *I will sock away some money.*

socked in fogged in. □ *The airport was completely socked in.* □ *We couldn't take off because we were socked in.*

A **soft answer turneth away wrath.** *Prov.* If you speak softly and meekly to someone who is angry with you, that person will calm down. (Biblical.) □ *It won't do any good for you to yell at John because he yelled at you. Remember that a soft answer turneth away wrath.*

soft as a baby's backside Go to next.

***soft as a baby's bottom** and **soft as a baby's backside; *soft as down; *soft as silk; *soft as velvet** *Cliché* very soft and smooth to the touch. (*Also: **as ~**.) □ *This cloth is as soft as a baby's bottom.* □ *The kitten's fur was as soft as down.* □ *Your touch is soft as silk.* □ *This lotion will make your skin soft as velvet.*

soft as down Go to previous.

soft as silk Go to **soft as a baby's bottom.**

soft as velvet Go to **soft as a baby's bottom.**

soft in the head *Fig.* stupid; witless. □ *George is just soft in the head. He'll never get away with his little plan.* □ *You're soft in the head if you think I'll go along with that.*

soft money and **easy money** money obtained without much effort. □ *Don't become dependent on soft money.* □ *In college he got spoiled by soft money—a check from his parents every week.*

***soft on** someone **1.** *Fig.* romantically attracted to someone. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) □ *Fred is soft on Martha, I've heard.* □ *He looked like he was getting a little soft on Sally.* **2.** *Fig.* not severe enough on someone; too easy on someone or a class of people. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; grow ~**.) □ *The judge was viewed as being too soft on drug pushers.* □ *The cops are soft on speeders in this town.*

soft sell a polite attempt to sell something; a very gentle sales pitch. □ *Some people won't bother listening to a soft sell. You gotta let them know you believe in what you are selling.* □ *I tried the soft sell, but that didn't work.*

soft soap 1. flattering talk; sweet talk. □ *I don't mind a little soft soap. It won't affect what I decide, though.* □ *Don't waste my time with soft soap. I know you don't mean it.* **2.** (Usually **soft-soap**.) to attempt to convince someone

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(of something) by gentle persuasion. ☐ *We couldn't soft-soap her into it.* ☐ *Don't try to soft-soap her. She's an old battle-ax.*

soft touch 1. a gentle way of handling someone or something. ☐ *Bess has a soft touch and can bring both sides together.* ☐ *Kelly lacks the kind of soft touch needed for this kind of negotiation.* **2.** a gullible person; a likely victim of a scheme. ☐ *John is a soft touch. You can always ask him for a few bucks.* ☐ *Here comes the perfect soft touch—a nerd with a gleam in his eye.*

soften one's **stance (on** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to reduce the severity of one's position regarding someone or something. ☐ *If he would soften his stance on the matter, I could easily become more cooperative.*

soften someone **up†** *Fig.* to prepare to persuade someone of something. ☐ *I will talk to Fred and soften him up for your request.* ☐ *I will soften up your father before you ask him about it.*

soften something **up†** to take actions that will make something softer. ☐ *Soften the butter up before you add it to the batter.* ☐ *Please soften up the ice cream before you try to serve it.*

soften up 1. *Lit.* [for something] to become softer. ☐ *The butter softened up in the heat of the day.* ☐ *The candles will probably soften up and bend over in this hot weather.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to adopt a more gentle manner. ☐ *After a while, she softened up and was more friendly.* ☐ *It was weeks before Ted softened up and treated us more kindly.*

soft-pedal something to play something down; to deemphasize something. (Alludes to the soft pedal on the piano, which reduces the volume.) ☐ *Try to soft-pedal the problems we have with the cooling system.* ☐ *I won't soft-pedal anything. Everyone must know the truth.*

soil one's **diaper(s)** [for a baby] to excrete waste into its diaper. ☐ *The baby soiled his diapers.* ☐ *I detect that someone has soiled his diaper.*

soil one's **hands** Go to **get** one's **hands dirty.**

sold on someone or something convinced of the value of someone or something. ☐ *I'm not yet sold on your idea.* ☐ *The crowd was sold on Gary. Nothing he had done or could do would cool their enthusiasm.*

sold out [of a product] completely sold with no more items remaining; [of a store] having no more of a particular product. ☐ *The tickets were sold out so we couldn't go to the concert.* ☐ *I wanted new shoes like yours, but they were sold out.*

solicit for someone or something to seek money or other contributions for someone or something, such as a charitable cause. ☐ *I am soliciting for crippled children. Would you care to contribute?* ☐ *Are you soliciting for a local cause?*

solicit someone **for** something to attempt to persuade someone to give something, such as money, for a specific purpose. ☐ *The school band solicited the owners of the business for a contribution.* ☐ *Fred solicited everyone in his department for at least a dollar.*

***solid as a rock** *Cliché* very solid; dependable. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Jean has been lifting weights every day, and her arm muscles are solid as a rock.* ☐ *This company has always built power tools that are as solid as a rock.*

*a **(solid) grasp of** something and *a **(sound) grasp of** something; *a **(good) grasp of** something *Fig.* a firm understanding of something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Try to get a grasp of the basic rules.* ☐ *You don't have a good grasp of the principles yet.* ☐ *John was unable to get a solid grasp of the methods used in his work, and we had to let him go.*

some creature's **time has come** Go to someone's **time has come.**

***some elbow room** *Fig.* room to move about in; extra space to move about in. (*Typically: **allow ~; get ~; have ~; give** someone **~; need ~**.) ☐ *This table is too crowded. We all need some elbow room.*

***some loose ends** *Fig.* some things that are not yet finished; some problems not yet solved. (*Typically: **are ~; have ~; leave~; tie ~ up†; take care of ~**.) ☐ *I have to stay in town this weekend and tie up some loose ends.*

(some) new blood and **fresh blood** *Fig.* new personnel; new members brought into a group to revive it. ☐ *This company needs some new blood on its board to bring in new ideas.* ☐ *We're trying to get some new blood in the club. Our membership is falling.*

Some people (just) don't know when to quit. and **Some people (just) don't know when to give up.; Some people (just) don't know when to stop. 1.** You, or someone being talked about, should stop doing something, such as talking, arguing, scolding, etc. (Often directed toward the person being addressed.) ☐ *Bill: I hate to say it again, but that lipstick is all wrong for you. It brings out the wrong color in your eyes, and it makes your mouth larger than it really is. Jane: Oh, stop, stop! That's enough! Some people just don't know when to quit.* ☐ *John: Those bushes out in the backyard need trimming. Sally: You keep criticizing! Is there no end to it? Some people don't know when to stop!* **2.** Some people do not know when to slow down and stop working so hard. ☐ *Jane: He just kept on gambling. Finally, he had no money left. Sally: Some people don't know when to quit.*

some pumpkins and **some punkins** someone or something great or special. (Old.) ☐ *That chick is some punkins!* ☐ *Isn't this little gadget really some pumpkins?*

***some shut-eye** some sleep. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; use ~; need ~**.) ☐ *I need to get home and get some shut-eye before I do anything else.* ☐ *We all could use some shut-eye.*

Someone **had better keep still about it.** Go to **Better keep still about it.**

someone **of note** a person who is famous. ☐ *We invited a speaker of note to lecture at the next meeting.* ☐ *The baseball player of note was inducted into the Hall of Fame.*

the someone or something **from hell** *Fig.* someone or something that is terrible or unbearable. ☐ *I just attended the meeting from hell! It was quite a strain on all of us.* ☐ *We live next to the neighbors from hell. They are constantly fighting and their vicious dog terrorizes our kids.*

Someone or something **is supposed to.** Go to **Supposed to.**

someone's **ace in the hole** Go to **ace in the hole.**

someone's **bread and butter** *Fig.* someone's basic income; someone's livelihood—the source of one's food. ☐ *I can't*

miss another day of work. That's my bread and butter. ☐ *I worked as a bartender for a year, and it was the tips that were my bread and butter.*

someone's **claim to fame** someone's reason for being well-known or famous. ☐ *Her claim to fame is that she can recite the entire works of Shakespeare.*

someone's **dirty laundry** *Fig.* someone's unpleasant secrets. ☐ *I don't want to hear about her dirty laundry. Why do you feel it necessary to gossip about things like this?*

someone's **fate is sealed** *Fig.* the destiny of somene has been determined. ☐ *When the driver finally saw that the bridge was out, he knew his fate was sealed.*

someone's **hands are tied** *Fig.* someone is not able to help or intervene. (See also have one's hands tied.) ☐ *I'm sorry. There's nothing I can do. My hands are tied.*

someone's **level best** one's very best effort. ☐ *I will do my level best to find your husband.* ☐ *Don't go to a whole lot of trouble. Your level best is good enough.*

(Someone's**) not supposed to.** Go to (It's) not supposed to.

someone's **point is well taken** someone's idea or opinion is accepted and appreciated. ☐ *Your point is well taken and I will see that it is not forgotten.*

someone's **time has come** and some creature's **time has come** *Euph.* someone or some creature is about to die. ☐ *The poor old dog's time has come.* ☐ *My time has come. I'm ready to go.*

someone's **train of thought** *Fig.* someone's pattern of thinking or sequence of ideas; what one was just thinking about. (See also lose one's train of thought.) ☐ *My train of thought is probably not as clear as it should be.* ☐ *I cannot seem to follow your train of thought on this matter. Will you explain it a little more carefully, please?*

someone's **true colors** *Fig.* a person's true attitude, opinions, and biases. ☐ *When he lost his temper at his wife, I began to see his true colors.*

(someone's**) ups and downs** a person's good fortune and bad fortune. ☐ *I've had my ups and downs, but in general life has been good to me.* ☐ *All people have their ups and downs.*

someone's **word is good** someone can be believed and trusted. ☐ *You can believe her. Her word is good.*

someone's **word of honor** someone's trustworthy pledge or promise. ☐ *He gave me his word of honor that he would bring the car back by noon today.*

Someone **will be with you in a minute.** Go to With you in a minute.

something about someone or something something alluring or curious about someone or something. ☐ *There is something about Jane. I just can't figure her out.* ☐ *I love Mexican food. There's just something about it.*

something else (again) something entirely different. ☐ *Borrowing is one thing, but stealing is something else.* ☐ *Skindiving is easy and fun, but scuba diving is something else again.*

Something is better than nothing. *Prov.* It is better to get only some of what you want than to get nothing at all. (See also (It's) better than nothing.) ☐ *Fred: I only got $50 for all those books I sold. Jane: Something is better than nothing.* ☐ *Jill: Is your camera very good? Jane: It's better than nothing.*

something **is killing** someone *Fig.* something is causing someone pain. ☐ *Wow, my feet are killing me!*

Something is rotten in (the state of) Denmark. *Prov.* Something suspicious is going on. (From Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*.) ☐ *Jim: Look, there's a light on in the office, even though it's way past the time everyone should have left. John: Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.* ☐ *Jane: I wonder why Fred is coming in so late every morning. Jane: Something is rotten in Denmark.*

something **never fails** a particular thing always works. ☐ *My old folk remedy for hiccups never fails.*

something **of sorts** an inferior example of a kind of something. ☐ *Well, it's a solution of sorts, I suppose.* ☐ *It was a novel of sorts, but not what I'd ever have chosen.*

something of the sort something of the kind just mentioned. ☐ *The tree isn't exactly a spruce tree, just something of the sort.* ☐ *Jane has a cold or something of the sort.*

something or other something unspecified; one thing or another. ☐ *I can't remember what Ann said—something or other.* ☐ *A messenger came by and dropped off something or other at the front desk.*

Something's got to give. Emotions or tempers are strained, and there is going to be an outburst. ☐ *Alice: There are serious problems with Mary and Tom. They fight and fight. Sue: Yes, something's got to give. It can't go on like this.* ☐ *Bill: Things are getting difficult at the office. Something's got to give. Mary: Just stay clear of all the bickering.*

something's up something is going to happen; something is going on. ☐ *Everybody looks very nervous. I think something's up.* ☐ *From the looks of all the activity around here, I think something's up.*

*something **to shout about** *Fig.* something that causes one to show pride or enthusiasm about someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; have ~**.) ☐ *Getting into med school is really something to shout about.* ☐ *She's something to shout about.*

something to that effect something like that just mentioned. ☐ *She said she wouldn't be available until after three, or something to that effect.* ☐ *I was told to keep out of the house—or something to that effect.*

(somewhere) in the neighborhood of something *Fig.* approximately a particular amount or measurement. ☐ *I take somewhere in the neighborhood of ten pills a day for my various ailments.* ☐ *My rent is in the neighborhood of $700 per month.*

somewhere **to hang (up)** one's **hat** *Fig.* a place to live; a place to call one's home. ☐ *What I need is somewhere to hang up my hat. I just can't stand all this traveling.* ☐ *A home is a lot more than a place to hang your hat.*

son of a bachelor Go to son of a gun.

son of a bitch 1. *Inf.* a very horrible person. (Use with caution. Usually intended as a strong insult. Never used casually.) ☐ *Bill called Bob a son of a bitch, and Bob punched Bill in the face.* ☐ *This guy's a son of a bitch. He treats everybody rotten.* **2.** *Inf.* a useless thing. ☐ *This car is a son of a bitch. It won't ever start when it's cold.* ☐ *This*

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bumpy old road needs paving. It's a real son of a bitch. **3.** *Inf.* a difficult task. ☐ *This job is a son of a bitch.* ☐ *I can't do this kind of thing. It's too hard—a real son of a bitch.*

son of a gun and **son of a bachelor** a worthless person. (A substitute for **son of a bitch**.) ☐ *That tightfisted son of a gun won't buy me a beer.* ☐ *He can be a real son of a bachelor when he's in a bad mood.*

son of a sea biscuit *Euph.* a person, usually a male. (Sometimes a substitute for **son of a bitch**.) ☐ *Why, good to see you, you old son of a sea biscuit.* ☐ *You son of a sea biscuit! You make me so mad I could slug you.*

***soon as possible** at the earliest time. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *I'm leaving now. I'll be there as soon as possible.* ☐ *Please pay me soon as possible.*

Soon ripe, soon rotten. Go to **Early ripe, early rotten.**

sooner or later eventually; in the short term or in the long term. ☐ *He'll have to pay the bill sooner or later.* ☐ *She'll get what she deserves sooner or later.*

Sooner than you think. an expression stating that something will happen sooner than a time expected or just mentioned. ☐ *Sally: I'm going to have to stop pretty soon for a rest. Mary: Sooner than you think, I'd say. I think one of our tires is low.* ☐ *Tom: The stock market is bound to run out of steam pretty soon. Bob: Sooner than you think from the look of today's news.*

The **sooner the better.** The sooner something [referred to] gets done, the better things will be. ☐ *Bob: When do you need this? Mary: The sooner the better.* ☐ *Bob: Please get the oil changed in the station wagon. The sooner the better. Alice: I'll do it today.*

sop something **up**† to mop or soak up a liquid. ☐ *Use this rag to sop the spilled milk up.* ☐ *The rag will sop up the mess a little at a time.*

sopping (wet) intoxicated. ☐ *He's soused—you know, sopping wet.*

***sore (at** someone**)** *Fig.* angry at someone. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; make** someone **~**.) ☐ *When Mary hears what you said about her, she'll get sore for sure.* ☐ *Please don't get sore at me.*

sorrow over someone or something to grieve or feel sad about someone or something. ☐ *There is no need to sorrow over Tom. He will come back.* ☐ *He is sorrowing over the business he has lost because of the weather.*

sorry about that and **sorry 'bout that** sorry; whoops. (A gross understatement, said more as a self-deprecating joke than as an apology.) ☐ *You spill hot cocoa on my coat, and all you can say is "Sorry 'bout that"?* ☐ *When the passenger stepped on my toe, she said, "Sorry about that."*

a **sorry sight** and a **sad sight** a sight that one regrets seeing; someone or something that is unpleasant to look at. ☐ *Well, aren't you a sorry sight! Go get cleaned up and put on some fresh clothes.*

Sorry (that) I asked. Now that I have heard the answer, I regret asking the question. ☐ *Alice: Can we get a new car soon? The old one is a wreck. John: Are you kidding? There's no way that we could ever afford a new car! Alice: Sorry I asked.* ☐ *After he heard the long list of all the reasons he wouldn't be allowed to go to the concert, Fred just shrugged and said, "Sorry that I asked."*

Sort of. and **Kind of.** Yes, but only to a small degree. ☐ *Bob: Do you like what you're doing in school? Alice: Kind of.* ☐ *Henry: What do you think about all these new laws? Do they worry you? John: Sort of.*

sort of something and **kind of** something almost something; somewhat; somehow. ☐ *Isn't it sort of cold out?* ☐ *That was kind of a stupid thing to do, wasn't it?*

sort oneself **out** to pull oneself together; to figure out what to do about one's problems. (Fig. on **sort** something **out** ②.) ☐ *I need a few days to sort myself out.* ☐ *I need some time to sort myself out.*

sort something **out**† **1.** *Lit.* to sort something; to arrange according to class or category. ☐ *Let's sort these cards out.* ☐ *Would you please sort out your socks?* **2.** *Fig.* to study a problem and figure it out. ☐ *I can't sort this out without some more time.* ☐ *Let's sort out this mess and settle it once and for all.*

(soul) brother a black person's male, black friend. ☐ *Another brother took a fall last night.* ☐ *Terry's a soul brother, and I'll do anything for him.*

(soul) sister a black person's female, black friend. ☐ *Many of the top singing groups of the '60s featured soul sisters.*

sound as a barrel Go to **all oak and iron bound.**

***sound as a bell** in perfect condition or health; undamaged. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *The doctor says that the old man's heart's as sound as a bell.* ☐ *I thought the vase was broken when it fell, but it was sound as a bell.*

***sound as a dollar 1.** *Cliché* very secure and dependable. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *This investment is as sound as a dollar.* ☐ *I wouldn't put my money in a bank that isn't sound as a dollar.* **2.** *Cliché* sturdy and well-constructed. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *This house is as sound as a dollar.* ☐ *The garage is still sound as a dollar. Why tear it down?*

sound as if and **sound like** to seem, from what has been said, as if something were so. (*Sound like* is colloquial.) ☐ *It sounds as if you had a good vacation.* ☐ *You sound like you are angry.*

sound asleep completely asleep; in a deep sleep. ☐ *I was sound asleep when the fire broke out.*

a **(sound) grasp of** something Go to a **(solid) grasp of** something.

sound like Go to **sound as if.**

sound like a broken record to say the same thing over and over again. (Fig. on a scratch in a phonograph record causing the needle [or stylus] to stay in the same groove and play it over and over.) ☐ *He's always complaining about the way she treats him. He sounds like a broken record!* ☐ *I hate to sound like a broken record, but we just don't have enough people on the payroll to work efficiently.*

sound off to speak something loudly; to call out one's name or one's place in a numerical sequence. ☐ *All right, sound off, you guys!* ☐ *Each one sounded off.*

sound off (about something**) 1.** to complain about something; to gripe about something. ☐ *You are always sounding off about something that gripes your soul.* ☐ *Just sound off if you've got a beef.* **2.** to speak out of turn about some-

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thing. ☐ *Who asked you to sound off about this?* ☐ *Don't just sound off without raising your hand.*

sound someone **out**† to try to find out what someone thinks (about something). ☐ *I don't know what Jane thinks about your suggestion, but I'll sound her out.* ☐ *Please sound out everyone in your department.*

sound something **out**† to pronounce the letters or syllables of a word as a means of figuring out what the word is. (Usually said to a child.) ☐ *This word is easy, Bobby. Try to sound it out.*

Soup's on! *Rur.* The meal is ready to eat. (Said for any food, not just soup.) ☐ *Tom: Soup's on! Bill: The camp chef has dished up another disaster.* ☐ *John: Soup's on! Come and get it! Mary: Well, I guess it's time to eat again.*

soup something **up**† to increase the power of something. ☐ *He souped his car up so it will do nearly 120 miles per hour.* ☐ *If only I could soup up this computer to run just a little faster.*

souped up made more powerful. ☐ *That souped-up car of John's sure makes a lot of noise.* ☐ *Why do all cars driven by males under the age of twenty have to be souped up?*

***sour as vinegar 1.** [of something] very sour. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *This milk is as sour as vinegar.* ☐ *The juice they gave us is sour as vinegar.* **2.** [of someone] ill-natured and disagreeable. (Fig. on ①. *Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *The old man greeted us ill-naturedly, his face as sour as vinegar.* ☐ *Jill: Is Mary in a bad mood today? Jane: Yes, sour as vinegar.*

sour grapes *Fig.* something that one cannot have and so disparages as if it were never desirable. ☐ *Of course you want to buy this expensive jacket. Criticizing it is just sour grapes, but you still really want it.*

sow one's **wild oats** to do wild and foolish things in one's youth. (Often assumed to have some sort of sexual meaning.) ☐ *Jack was out sowing his wild oats last night, and he's in jail this morning.* ☐ *Mrs. Smith told Mr. Smith that he was too old to be sowing his wild oats.*

Sow the wind and reap the whirlwind *Prov.* to start some kind of trouble that grows much larger than you planned. (Biblical.) ☐ *Our enemy has sown the wind by provoking this war, and they will reap the whirlwind when we vanquish them.*

space out to become giddy or disoriented. ☐ *Judy spaced out during the meeting and I didn't understand a word she said.* ☐ *I have a tendency to space out at the end of a hard day.*

space someone **out**† to cause someone to become giddy. ☐ *The circus clowns just spaced me out.* ☐ *The hilarious spectacle spaced out the entire audience.*

spaced (out) silly; giddy. ☐ *I have such spaced-out parents!* ☐ *He's so spaced!*

spade something **up**† to turn over the soil in a garden plot with a spade. ☐ *Please go out and spade the garden up so I can plant the potatoes and onions.* ☐ *I will spade up the garden when I have time.*

spar with someone **1.** *Lit.* to box with someone for practice. ☐ *The champ needs someone to spar with every day.* ☐ *Ted was sparring with his brother when the phone rang and saved him from further exertion.* **2.** *Fig.* to argue or quibble with someone. ☐ *I think you really enjoy sparring with people just to irritate them.* ☐ *Stop sparring with me! I am not here to argue.*

spare someone something to exempt someone from having to listen to or experience something. ☐ *I'll spare you the details and get to the point.* ☐ *Please, spare me the story and tell me what you want.*

Spare the rod and spoil the child. *Prov.* You should punish a child when he or she misbehaves, because if you do not, the child will grow up expecting everyone to indulge him or her. ☐ *Jane: How can you allow your little boy to be so rude? Ellen: It distresses me to punish him. Jane: I can understand that, but spare the rod and spoil the child.*

spare tire 1. a thickness in the waist; a roll of fat around one's waist. ☐ *I've got to get rid of this spare tire.* ☐ *The spare tire started when I was twenty-six.* **2.** an unneeded person; an unproductive person. ☐ *Gary is a spare tire. Send him home.* ☐ *You spare tires over there! Get to work.*

spark something **off**† **1.** *Lit.* to ignite something flammable or explosive. ☐ *The lightning sparked a fire off.* ☐ *The match sparked off a raging inferno.* **2.** *Fig.* to cause or start some violent or energetic activity. ☐ *We were afraid there would be a riot and the speaker nearly sparked it off.* ☐ *The speaker sparked off quite a discussion.*

sparkle with something to glitter or twinkle because of something. ☐ *The crystal goblets sparkled with the light from the flickering candles.* ☐ *Her eyes sparkled with the reflection of the candles.*

spatter on someone or something [for a liquid or something moist] to splash onto someone or something. ☐ *When Kelly painted the hallway, a lot of paint spattered on the floor.* ☐ *The hot fat spattered on me.*

spatter someone or something **up**† to get drops of a liquid or bits of something moist onto someone or something. ☐ *The painter spattered his partner up when he dropped the paint bucket accidentally.* ☐ *The falling paint bucket spattered up the wall.*

spatter someone or something **with** something to splash someone or something with drops of a liquid or bits of something moist. ☐ *Frank spattered us with grapefruit juice as he was eating a half of grapefruit.* ☐ *He even spattered the wall with juice.*

spatter something **around**† to scatter bits or drops of a liquid or something moist here and there. ☐ *Ted spattered paint around everywhere when he redecorated his kitchen.* ☐ *Don't spatter around the paint.*

spatter something **on(to)** someone or something to scatter or splash bits or drops of a liquid or something moist onto someone or something. ☐ *Who spattered barbecue sauce onto the wall?* ☐ *The paint can fell and spattered paint on everyone.*

spaz around *Sl.* to waste time; to mess around. ☐ *You kids are always spazzing around. Why don't you do something useful?* ☐ *We're just spazzing around. Leave us alone.*

spaz down *Sl.* to relax. ☐ *Spaz down, man! Chill out!* ☐ *We tried to get the crowd to spaz down, but they were very excited.*

spaz out 1. *Sl.* to overreact to something; to become overly excited about something. ☐ *I knew you would spaz out! But my grades are not that bad!* ☐ *Come on, don't spaz out!* **2.** *Sl.* an emotional display. (Usually **spaz-out**.) ☐

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There's no need for a spaz-out! □ *She threw a hell of a spaz-out.*

speak about someone or something to mention or discuss someone or something. □ *And now I will speak about Abraham Lincoln.* □ *Let us speak about what happened yesterday.*

speak against someone or something **1.** to criticize someone or something. □ *Many people are speaking against the mayor. She will not be reelected.* □ *Please don't speak against cats in my presence.* **2.** to testify or argue against someone or something. □ *Judy spoke against the candidate at length.* □ *The next speaker spoke against nuclear waste.*

speak as one Go to as one.

speak at great length Go to at great length.

speak down to someone to address someone in simpler terms than necessary; to speak condescendingly to someone. □ *There is no need to speak down to me. I can understand anything you are likely to say.* □ *Sorry. Sometimes I tend to speak down to people over the telephone.*

speak for itself and **speak for themselves** [for something] not to need explaining; to have an obvious meaning. □ *The facts speak for themselves. Tom is guilty.* □ *Your results speak for themselves. You need to work harder.*

speak for oneself to speak on one's own behalf. □ *I can speak for myself. I don't need you to speak for me.* □ *Speak for yourself. What you say does not represent my thinking.*

speak for someone or something **1.** to testify or argue for someone or something. □ *I would be happy to speak for you in court. Just tell me when.* □ *My attorney will speak for our position.* **2.** to lay claim to someone or something. □ *Fred is spoken for.* □ *I want to speak for the red one.*

speak for themselves Go to speak for itself.

speak from something to draw authority or credibility in one's speaking from something such as knowledge or experience. □ *Believe me, I speak from experience.* □ *Listen to her. She speaks from a lot of knowledge and training.*

speak highly of someone or something **1.** [for someone] to say good things about someone or something. □ *She always speaks highly of you.* □ *Everyone spoke highly of this movie, but it is not good.* **2.** [for a fact] to reflect well on someone or something. □ *The success of your project speaks highly of you.* □ *All of this good news speaks highly of your ability to influence people.*

speak ill of someone to say something bad about someone. □ *I refuse to speak ill of any of my friends.* □ *Max speaks ill of no one and refuses to repeat gossip.*

speak in earnest Go to in earnest.

speak of someone or something **1.** to mention or discuss someone or something. □ *Were we speaking of Judy? I don't recall.* □ *We were speaking of the new law.* **2.** [for a type of behavior or action] to reflect a particular quality. □ *Jeff's behavior spoke of a good upbringing.* □ *Her good singing voice speaks of years of training.*

Speak of the devil (and in he walks). and **Talk of the devil (and he is sure to appear).** *Prov.* Talk about a certain person, and that person appears. (Used when someone appears whom you have just been talking about.) □ *Alan: I haven't seen Bob for weeks. Jane: Look, here comes Bob right now. Alan: Well, talk of the devil.* □ *Hi, there. We were just talking about you. Speak of the devil and in he walks.*

speak off-the-cuff *Fig.* to speak without preparing a speech; to speak extemporaneously; to render a spoken opinion or estimate. (As if one's notes had been written hastily on one's cuff.) □ *She is capable of making sense and being convincing even when she speaks off-the-cuff.* □ *I find it very difficult to speak off-the-cuff.*

speak one's **mind** *Fig.* to say frankly what one thinks (about something). □ *Please let me speak my mind, and then you can do whatever you wish.* □ *You can always depend on John to speak his mind. He'll let you know what he really thinks.*

speak one's **piece** Go to say one's piece.

speak out to speak loudly; to speak to be heard. (See also speak out (about someone or something).) □ *Please speak out. We need to hear you.* □ *They won't hear you in the back row if you don't speak out.*

speak out (about someone or something**)** to express oneself about someone or something; to tell what one knows about someone or something. (See also speak out.) □ *I could keep silent no longer. I had to speak out about the alleged accident.* □ *I had to speak out!*

speak out (against someone or something**)** to speak negatively and publicly about someone or something; to reveal something negative, in speech, about someone or something. □ *I don't want to speak out against my friends, but I am afraid I have to.* □ *The citizens spoke out against corruption in government.*

speak out of turn *Fig.* to say something unwise or imprudent; to say something at the wrong time. □ *Excuse me if I'm speaking out of turn, but what you are proposing is quite wrong.* □ *Bob was quite honest, even if he was speaking out of turn.*

speak out (on something**)** to say something frankly and directly; to speak one's mind. □ *This law is wrong, and I intend to speak out on it until it is repealed.* □ *You must speak out. People need to know what you think.*

speak someone's **language** *Fig.* to say something that one agrees with or understands. □ *I gotcha. Now you're speaking my language.* □ *Mary speaks Fred's language. They get along fine.*

speak the same language 1. *Lit.* [for two or more people] to communicate in a shared language. □ *These two people don't speak the same language and need an interpreter.* **2.** *Fig.* [for people] to have similar ideas, tastes, etc. □ *Jane and Jack get along very well. They really speak the same language about almost everything.* □ *Bob and his father didn't speak the same language when it comes to politics.*

speak to someone to talk to someone. □ *I am angry with him and I refuse to speak to him.* □ *Were you speaking to me?*

speak to something [for something] to address, indicate, or signal something. □ *This event speaks to the need for good communication.* □ *Your present state of employment speaks to your need for a better education.*

speak up 1. *Lit.* to speak more loudly. □ *They can't hear you in the back of the room. Please speak up.* □ *What? Speak up, please. I'm hard of hearing.* **2.** *Fig.* to speak out (on

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something). ☐ *If you think that this is wrong, you must speak up and say so.* ☐ *I'm too shy to speak up.*

speak up (against someone or something**)** to end one's silence and speak negatively and publicly about someone or something. ☐ *She finally spoke up against her cruel boss.* ☐ *We all felt like we had to speak up and denounce this tyrant.*

speak up for someone or something to speak in favor of someone or something. ☐ *If anybody says bad things about me, I hope you speak up for me.* ☐ *I want to speak up for the rights of students.*

speak (up)on something to talk about a particular topic. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *This evening, I will speak upon the subject of Plato's thoughts on the universe.* ☐ *What will you speak on today?*

speak volumes *Fig.* [for something that is seen] to reveal a great deal of information. ☐ *The unsightly yard and unpainted house speaks volumes about what kind of people live there.*

speak with a forked tongue *Fig.* to tell lies; to try to deceive someone. ☐ *Jean's mother sounds very charming, but she speaks with a forked tongue.* ☐ *People tend to believe Fred because he seems plausible, but we know he speaks with a forked tongue.*

speak with someone **(about** someone or something**) 1.** to talk with someone about someone or something; to discuss someone or something with someone. ☐ *I was speaking with Fred about Don, who is a mutual friend.* ☐ *I need to know something about Don. I will speak with his friend Fred.* **2.** to reprimand one about one's dealing with someone or something. ☐ *He should not have insulted Kelly. I will speak with him about her.* ☐ *He did what? I will speak with him!*

speaking for oneself an expression indicating that one is expressing only one's own opinion. ☐ *Speaking for myself, I am ready to cancel the contract.* ☐ *Sally is speaking for herself. She is not expressing our opinions.*

speaking (quite) candidly an expression introducing a frank or forthright statement. ☐ *"Speaking quite candidly, I find your behavior a bit offensive," stated Frank, obviously offended.* ☐ *Mary: Tell me what you really think about this skirt. Sally: Speaking candidly, I think you should get your money back.*

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(speaking) (quite) frankly and **frankly speaking** a transitional phrase announcing that the speaker is going to talk in a more familiar and totally forthright manner. ☐ *Tom: Speaking quite frankly, I'm not certain she's the one for the job. Mary: I agree.* ☐ *Bob: We ought to be looking at housing in a lower price bracket. Bill: Quite frankly, I agree.* ☐ *"Frankly speaking," said John, "I think you're out of your mind!"*

spear something **out† (of** something**)** to bring something forth from something by sticking it with something sharp and pulling. ☐ *Richard spears pickles right out of the jar with a fork.* ☐ *He speared out a pickle.*

specialize in something to limit oneself to or be specially trained to practice one particular thing. ☐ *I specialize in tropical medicine.* ☐ *What do you specialize in?*

speculate about someone or something to make guesses about someone or something; to hypothesize about someone or something. ☐ *I refuse to speculate about Sally. I don't presume to guess what she will do.* ☐ *We don't speculate about the future.*

speculate in something to make risky business deals in the buying and selling of something. ☐ *Jeff made a fortune speculating in cotton.* ☐ *I do not wish to speculate in anything. It is too risky.*

speculate on something to make a hypothesis about something. ☐ *I really don't want to speculate on what might happen next.* ☐ *Would you care to speculate on what might happen if you quit your job?*

speed away (from someone or something**)** to move or drive away very fast from someone or something. ☐ *The taxi sped away from the passenger who had just alighted.* ☐ *The car sped away from the accident.* ☐ *The motorcycle sped away.*

speed someone or something **up†** to cause someone or something to move faster. ☐ *We tried to speed him up, but he is just a very slow person.* ☐ *We sped up the process, but it still took too long.*

speed up to go faster. ☐ *Please speed up. We are late.*

***speeds of** some amount a variety of speeds (of movement) of a certain level. (*Typically: **clock** someone **at ~; have ~; hit ~; reach ~**.) ☐ *The cops clocked him at speeds of up to one hundred miles per hour.*

spell disaster *Fig.* to indicate or predict disaster. ☐ *What a horrible plan! It would spell disaster for all of us!*

spell someone **(at** something**)** to take a turn at doing something while the person who was doing it can take a rest. ☐ *I will spell you at selling tickets while you go and grab a bite to eat.*

spell someone **down†** to win over someone in a spelling match. ☐ *Frank spelled everyone else down and won the spelling bee.* ☐ *He spelled down almost everyone.*

spell something **for** someone to spell a word or name for someone's benefit. ☐ *I don't recognize that word. Would you please spell it for me?* ☐ *It is a difficult name. I will have to spell it for you.*

spell something **out† 1.** *Lit.* to spell something (with letters). ☐ *I can't understand your name. Can you spell it out?* ☐ *Please spell out all the strange words so I can write them down correctly.* **2.** *Fig.* to give all the details of something. ☐ *I want you to understand this completely, so I'm going to spell it out very carefully.* ☐ *The instruction book for my computer spells out everything very carefully.*

spell trouble to signify future trouble; to mean trouble. ☐ *This letter that came today spells trouble.* ☐ *The sky looks angry and dark. That spells trouble.*

spend a king's ransom Go to a king's ransom.

spend money like it's going out of style and **spend money like there's no tomorrow** *Fig.* to spend money recklessly; to spend money as if it were worthless or will soon be worthless. ☐ *Extravagant? She spends money like it's going out of style!* ☐ *I can't control it. I spend money like there is no tomorrow.*

spend money like there's no tomorrow Go to previous.

spend something **for** something to pay out an amount of money for something. ☐ *I spent nearly forty dollars for that*

vase! ☐ *How much did you spend for this house—if I may ask?*

spend something **on** someone or something to pay out an amount of money for the benefit of someone or something. ☐ *How much did you spend on him for his birthday?* ☐ *I spent a lot on Mary's gift.*

spend time in something to stay in something or some place for a period of time. ☐ *I spent time in Barbados when I was younger.* ☐ *I am afraid that you will have to spend some time in the hospital until the infection is cleared up.*

spending money cash, as opposed to money in the bank. ☐ *I'm a little short of spending money at the present. Could I borrow ten dollars?* ☐ *I don't have any spending money either.*

spew one's **guts (out) 1.** *Sl.* to empty one's stomach; to vomit. ☐ *Fred is spewing his guts out because of that lousy fish you served.* ☐ *He's spewing his guts because he has the flu.* **2.** *Sl.* to tell everything that one knows; to confess everything. (Underworld.) ☐ *Lefty was sitting there in the police station spewing his guts out about the bank job.* ☐ *If he really is spewing his guts, the mob will cancel his Christmas.*

spew something **out**† to have something gush forth. ☐ *The faucet spewed a little yellowish water out and stopped altogether.* ☐ *The faucet spewed out some yellowish water.*

spew something **up**† to gush something upward. ☐ *The geyser spewed hot water and steam up every hour on the hour.* ☐ *The fountain spewed up a thin stream of cool, clear water.*

spice something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to make some food or drink more spicy. ☐ *Judy spiced the cider up by adding cinnamon and nutmeg.* ☐ *She spiced up the chili too much.* **2.** *Fig.* to make something more interesting, lively, or sexy. ☐ *I'm afraid that the nude scenes spiced the musical up too much. Some people walked out.* ☐ *Judy liked to spice her lectures up by telling jokes.* ☐ *She spiced up each lecture with a joke.* ☐ *They spiced up the play too much.*

spiel something **off**† to recite a list of things very rapidly; to recite something very rapidly. ☐ *I used to be able to spiel the names of the presidents off.* ☐ *Liz spieled off her gift list to the clerk.*

spiff something **up**† to polish and groom something very well; to make something clean and tidy. ☐ *See if you can spiff this place up a little.* ☐ *I will spiff up the room a little.*

spiffed out *Sl.* to be dressed in one's finest clothes and well-groomed. ☐ *He got himself all spiffed out for the wedding reception.* ☐ *Man, are you ever spiffed out!*

spiffed up dressed up, groomed, and polished up nicely; clean and tidy. ☐ *See if you can get yourself a little spiffed up before we go out to dinner. We wouldn't want the Wilmington-Thorpes to think you only have one suit.* ☐ *The house doesn't have to be too spiffed up for the Franklins. They are used to clutter.*

spill one's **guts** *Sl.* to tell all; to confess. ☐ *I had to spill my guts about the broken window. I didn't want you to take the blame.* ☐ *Mary spilled her guts about the window. She confessed that she was trying to shield Bob.*

spill (out) into something and **spill (over) into** something to be so great in number or volume as to expand into another area. ☐ *The crowd spilled out into the street.* ☐ *The well-wishers spilled over into the neighbor's yard.*

spill out (of something**)** to scatter, flow, or drop out of something. ☐ *All the rice spilled out of the box onto the floor.* ☐ *The rice spilled out on the floor.*

spill over 1. [for a container] to overflow. ☐ *I hope your bucket of water doesn't spill over.* ☐ *The milk glass spilled over because it was filled too full.* **2.** [for the contents of a container] to overflow. ☐ *The bucket is too full. I don't know why the water doesn't spill over.* ☐ *The milk spilled over because you overfilled the glass.*

spill (over) into something Go to **spill (out) into** something.

spill over on(to) someone or something [for something] to scatter, flow, or drop (out of something) onto someone or something. ☐ *The bowl of milk spilled over onto the children when they jarred the table.* ☐ *The bowl spilled over on the floor.*

spill the beans and **spill the works** *Fig.* to give away a secret or a surprise. ☐ *There is a surprise party for Heidi on Wednesday. Please don't spill the beans.* ☐ *Paul spilled the works about Heidi's party.*

spill the works Go to previous.

spin a yarn *Fig.* to tell a tale. ☐ *Grandpa spun an unbelievable yarn for us.* ☐ *My uncle is always spinning yarns about his childhood.*

spin around 1. to turn around to face a different direction. ☐ *Jill spun around to face her accuser.* ☐ *Todd spun around in his chair so he could see who was talking to him.* **2.** to rotate, possibly a number of times. ☐ *The propellers spun around and soon the old plane began to taxi down the runway.* ☐ *The merry-go-round spun around at a moderate speed.*

spin doctor someone who gives a twisted or deviously deceptive version of an event. (Usually in the context of manipulating the news for political reasons.) ☐ *Things were going bad for the candidate, so he got himself a new spin doctor.* ☐ *A good spin doctor could have made the incident appear far less damaging.*

spin off [for something] to part and fly away from something that is spinning; [for something] to detach or break loose from something. ☐ *The blade of the lawn mower spun off, but fortunately no one was injured.* ☐ *The rusted-on nut spun off easily after I got it loosened.*

spin one's **wheels** to waste time; to remain in a neutral position, neither advancing nor falling back. (Fig. on a car that is running but is not moving because its wheels are spinning in mud, etc.) ☐ *I'm just spinning my wheels in this job. I need more training to get ahead.* ☐ *The whole project was just spinning its wheels until spring.*

spin out [for a vehicle] to go out of control, spinning. ☐ *You nearly spun out on that last turn!* ☐ *Cars were spinning out all over the highway when the ice storm hit.*

spin something **off**† **1.** *Lit.* [for something rotating] to release a part that flies away. ☐ *The propeller spun one of its blades off and then fell apart all together.* ☐ *It spun off one of its blades.* **2.** *Fig.* [for a business] to divest itself of one of its subparts. ☐ *The large company spun one of its smaller divisions off.* ☐ *It spun off a subsidiary and used the cash to pay down its debt.* **3.** *Fig.* [for an enterprise] to pro-

duce useful or profitable side effects or products. ☐ *We will be able to spin off a number of additional products.* ☐ *The development of this product will allow us to spin off dozens of smaller, innovative products for years to come.*

spin something **out**† to prolong something. ☐ *Was there really any need to spin the whole process out so long?* ☐ *Why did they spin out the graduation ceremony for such a long time?*

spin something **out of** something and **spin** something **out**† to remove liquid from something by spinning. ☐ *The washer spun the water out of the load of clothing.* ☐ *The washer spun out all the water in the clothes.*

spiral down to descend in a spiral path. ☐ *The ancient trail spiraled down the mountain peak.* ☐ *A path spiraled down and at the bottom was a small refreshment stand.*

spiral up to ascend in a spiral path. ☐ *The smoke spiraled up to the sky.* ☐ *The trail spiraled up the slope to the top.*

The **spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.** *Prov.* People cannot always do what they know they ought to do.; People are not always physically capable of doing what they are willing to do. (Biblical.) ☐ *Alan: Have you started the diet your doctor recommended? Fred: The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

spirit someone or something **away**† **(**somewhere**)** to sneak someone or something away to another place. ☐ *The police spirited the prisoner away before the crowd assembled in front of the jail.* ☐ *They spirited away the celebrity.*

spirit someone or something **off**† **(to** some place**)** to hurry someone or something away, presumably unnoticed, to another place. ☐ *Aunt Jane spirited the children off to bed at half-past eight.* ☐ *She spirited off the leftover roast beef.*

***the spit and image of** someone and ***the spitting image of** someone the very likeness of someone; a very close resemblence to someone. (*The second version is a frequent error. *Typically: **be ~; look like ~**.) ☐ *John is the spit and image of his father.* ☐ *At first, I thought you were saying* spitting image.

spit and polish orderliness; ceremonial precision and orderliness. ☐ *I like spit and polish. It comes from being in the military.* ☐ *There is no such thing as too much spit and polish.*

spit at someone or something to expectorate on someone or something or in the direction of someone or something. ☐ *The angry crowd cursed and spit at the prisoner as he was being taken back to jail.* ☐ *Max actually spit at the police station door as he was dragged in.*

spit something **in(to)** something and **spit** something **in**† to expel something from the mouth into something. ☐ *He spit his gum into the toilet.* ☐ *He opened the toilet and spit in his gum.*

spit something **on(to)** something to expel something from the mouth onto something. ☐ *You shouldn't spit your gum onto the sidewalk!* ☐ *Don't spit your gum on the pavement.*

spit something **out**† **1.** *Lit.* to cast something from the mouth. ☐ *The food was so terrible that I spit it out.* ☐ *I spit out the sweet potatoes.* **2.** *Fig.* to manage to say something. ☐ *Come on! Say it! Spit it out!* ☐ *Spit it out! Get it said!* **3.** *Fig.* to say something scornfully. ☐ *He spit out his words in utter derision.* ☐ *She spit out the most unpleasant string of curse words I have ever heard from anyone.*

spit something **up**† *Euph.* to vomit something. ☐ *She almost spit her dinner up.* ☐ *Sally was afraid she was going to spit up her dinner.*

spit up *Euph.* to vomit. ☐ *The food was so bad, she was afraid she would spit up.* ☐ *Mommy, I have to spit up!*

spit (up)on someone or something **1.** to eject spit onto someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *The angry crowd spit on the convict.* ☐ *Don't spit on the sidewalk.* **2.** to spew spittle onto someone or something while talking. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *I always have a fear of accidentally spitting on someone in the first row while I am talking.* ☐ *I regret spitting on you, but it was an accident.*

the **spitting image of** someone Go to the **spit and image of** someone.

splash about and **splash around 1.** to move about in a volume of a liquid, splashing. ☐ *The children splashed about in the pool.* ☐ *They splashed around for an hour.* **2.** [for a liquid] to move about, splashing. ☐ *The water splashed about in the bucket.* ☐ *It splashed around as I carried the bucket.*

splash down [for a space capsule] to land in the water. ☐ *The capsule splashed down very close to the pickup ship.*

splash on someone or something to scatter [a liquid] on someone or something. ☐ *Try to keep from splashing on anybody.* ☐ *Don't splash on the wall!*

splash over [for a volume of liquid] to overflow its container. ☐ *A lot of the coffee splashed over before I got to the table with the cup.* ☐ *Don't fill it so full and it won't splash over.*

splash someone or something **up**† to scatter a liquid onto someone or something. ☐ *Don't get that stuff all over. Don't splash the place up!* ☐ *She splashed up the kitchen when she washed the dishes.*

splash someone or something **with** something to scatter or slosh someone or something with a liquid. ☐ *The whales at Sea World splashed everyone in the audience with water.* ☐ *I splashed the side of the stove with pancake batter when I dropped the bowl.*

splash something **about** to scatter or slosh a liquid about. ☐ *Please don't splash that about. It will stain anything you spill it on.* ☐ *Don't splash that stuff about!*

splash something **(all) over** someone or something to cause a liquid to overflow or engulf someone or something. ☐ *Tony splashed water all over Nick.* ☐ *Who splashed milk all over the table?*

splash something **on(to)** someone or something to make a liquid scatter onto someone or something. ☐ *Accidentally, the lab assistant splashed acid onto his arm.* ☐ *He splashed something on the counter.*

splatter someone or something **up**† to cover someone or something with drops of a liquid. ☐ *The painter splattered his coworker up with both red and blue.* ☐ *Don't splatter up the wall!*

splay out to spread out; to extend out at an angle. ☐ *His feet splayed out so much that it was hard to see how he could stand up.* ☐ *The legs of the table splayed out and gave it sturdy support.*

S

splice something **(in)to** something to connect something to something; to cut and join something into something to connect the two. ☐ *The workers spliced the small wires into the main cable.* ☐ *Let's splice this rope into the larger one at the halfway point.*

splice something **together**† to connect things together, usually by twisting or tying a joint between the two. ☐ *I spent over an hour splicing the two ends of the ropes together, and it didn't hold for even a minute.* ☐ *He carefully spliced together the two ropes.*

splinter off ((of) something**)** and **splinter off (from** something**)** [for a bit of something] to tear off or separate from something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *A piece of wood splintered off of the oar and dropped into the water.* ☐ *A tiny bit splintered off and stuck in my hand.*

split a gut and **bust a gut 1.** *Fig. Inf.* to laugh very hard. ☐ *He laughed until he nearly split a gut.* ☐ *The clown made me bust a gut laughing.* **2.** *Fig. Inf.* to work very hard. ☐ *I split a gut to get this place fixed up in a week.* ☐ *Don't bust a gut cleaning up for me. I love things that are a bit messy.*

split hairs *Fig.* to quibble; to try to make petty distinctions. ☐ *They don't have any serious differences. They are just splitting hairs.* ☐ *Don't waste time splitting hairs. Accept it the way it is.*

split in something to divide into a certain number of groups. (The *something* can be *half, thirds, two, quarters,* etc.) ☐ *Lightning struck the big tree and the trunk split in half.* ☐ *The vase dropped and split in quarters.*

split off (from something**)** to separate away from something; to sever connection with and separate from something. ☐ *A large iceberg split off from the glacier and made an enormous splash.* ☐ *A giant chunk of ice split off and floated away.*

split one's **sides (with laughter)** *Fig.* to laugh so hard that one's sides almost split. (Always an exaggeration.) ☐ *The members of the audience almost split their sides with laughter.* ☐ *When I heard what happened to Patricia, I almost split my sides.*

split people up† to separate two or more people (from one another). ☐ *If you two don't stop chattering, I'll have to split you up.* ☐ *I will have to split up that twosome in the corner.*

***a split second** an instant; a tiny period of time. (*Typically: **for ~; in ~**.) ☐ *The lightning struck, and in a split second the house burst into flames.* ☐ *For a split second, it looked like she would fall.*

split someone or something **up**† **(into** something**)** to divide people or things up into something, such as groups. ☐ *I had to split the group up into two sections—there were so many who showed up.* ☐ *I split up the class into two discussion sections.*

split someone or something **with** someone or something to divide someone or something with someone or a group of people. ☐ *I will split the campers with you. You lead your half on the hike, and I will lead my half.* ☐ *Will you split your candy bar with me?*

split something **between (**someone **and** someone else**)** and **split** something **between (**something **and** something else**)** to divide something between two people or things. ☐ *The cook split the last of the pie between Jane and Carla.* ☐ *We have to split the copies of the reports between the two committees.*

split something **fifty-fifty** Go to **divide** something **fifty-fifty.**

split something **into** something to divide or sever something into something. ☐ *Jeff split the log into four parts.* ☐ *Please split this log in half so it will burn better.*

split something **off (of)** something and **split** something **off**† to sever connection with something; to separate from something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Dave split a piece of wood off the log to use for kindling.* ☐ *He split off a stick of wood.*

split the difference to divide the difference evenly (with someone else). ☐ *You want to sell for $120, and I want to buy for $100. Let's split the difference and close the deal at $110.* ☐ *I don't want to split the difference. I want $120.*

split up (with someone**)** [for someone] to separate from someone; to break up a marriage or love affair. ☐ *Jeff split up with Judy.* ☐ *I had heard that they had split up with each other.*

a **splitting headache** *Fig.* a severe headache, as if one's head were splitting open. ☐ *I'm sorry, I can't. I have a splitting headache. Maybe Fred will play bridge with you.* ☐ *This splitting headache has been going on for hours.*

splurge on someone or something to spend a lot of money on someone or something. ☐ *I really splurged on my wife for her birthday.* ☐ *Mary really splurged on that dinner!*

spoiled rotten *Fig.* indulged in; greatly spoiled. ☐ *This kid is spoiled rotten!* ☐ *I was spoiled rotten when I was a child, so I'm used to this kind of wasteful luxury.*

spoiling for a fight argumentative; asking for a fight. ☐ *They were just spoiling for a fight, and they went outside to settle the matter.* ☐ *She was grouchy, and you could tell she had been spoiling for a fight all day.*

spoken for taken; reserved (for someone). ☐ *I'm sorry, but this piece of cake is already spoken for.* ☐ *Pardon me. Can I sit here, or is this seat spoken for?*

sponge someone or something **down**† to remove the [excess] moisture from someone or something; to wipe someone or something with a sponge. ☐ *The fight manager sponged his boxer down.* ☐ *I will sponge down the countertop.*

sponge something **away**† to absorb, wipe up, and wipe away something, as with a sponge. ☐ *Try sponging the stain away with some soda water.* ☐ *I will sponge away the mess.*

sponge something **from** someone to beg or borrow money or food from someone. ☐ *Gary tried to sponge a few bucks from me.* ☐ *I can't continue sponging food from my relatives.*

sponge something **from** something to remove moisture from something, as with a sponge. ☐ *Liz sponged the sauce from her blouse.* ☐ *We gently sponged the splattered paint from the carpet.*

sponge something **off of** someone or something and **sponge** something **off**† to beg or borrow money or food from someone or a group. ☐ *Please stop sponging food and money off your relatives!* ☐ *Stop sponging off food and money all the time!*

S

sponge something **up**† to absorb or take up moisture, as with a sponge. ☐ *I had to sponge the spilled milk up from the floor, the chair, the table, and the baby. What a mess!* ☐ *Liz sponged up the water.*

spook someone or something to startle or disorient someone or something. ☐ *A snake spooked my horse, and I nearly fell off.* ☐ *Your warning spooked me, and I was upset for the rest of the day.*

spoon something **out**† to serve something out, as with a spoon; to give something out, as with a spoon. ☐ *The cook spooned the beans out, giving plenty to each camper.* ☐ *The cook spooned out the beans.*

spoon something **up**† to serve something that requires finding and bringing up out of a pot with a spoon. ☐ *The cook spooned the hard-cooked eggs up one by one.* ☐ *The cook spooned up chunks of meat from the stew.*

spoon-feed someone *Fig.* to treat someone with too much care or help; to teach someone with methods that are too easy and do not stimulate the learner to independent thinking. ☐ *The teacher spoon-feeds the students by dictating notes on the novel instead of getting the children to read the books.* ☐ *You mustn't spoon-feed the new recruits by telling them what to do all the time. They must use their initiative.*

the **sport of kings** horse racing. ☐ *The sport of kings has sure impoverished a lot of commoners.*

sport with someone or something to tease or play with someone or something. ☐ *What a tease you are! You are just sporting with me!* ☐ *The dog was sporting with a turtle down by the stream.*

a **sporting chance** a reasonably good chance. ☐ *If you hurry, you have a sporting chance of catching the bus.* ☐ *The firm has only a sporting chance of getting the export order.*

spot someone **as** something to recognize someone to be something; to realize that someone is something. ☐ *I spotted you as a troublemaker from the very beginning.* ☐ *The guard spotted Max as a potential thief the moment he saw him.*

spot someone **(**something**) 1.** *Sl.* to give an advantage to someone. ☐ *I'll spot you twenty points.* ☐ *No need to spot me. I'm the greatest!* **2.** *Sl.* to lend someone something. ☐ *Can you spot me a few bucks?* ☐ *I can spot you a whole hundred!*

spout from something [for a liquid] to gush from something. ☐ *A plume of water vapor spouted from the blowhole of the whale.* ☐ *Water spouted from the top of the fountain and flowed down the sides.*

spout off (about someone or something**) 1.** to brag or boast about someone or something. ☐ *Stop spouting off about Tom. Nobody could be that good!* ☐ *Alice is spouting off about her new car.* **2.** to speak out publicly about someone or something; to reveal information publicly about someone or something. ☐ *I wish you wouldn't spout off about my family affairs in public.* ☐ *There is no point in spouting off about this problem.*

spout something **out**† **1.** *Lit.* to exude a liquid. ☐ *The hose spouted the cooling water out all over the children.* ☐ *It spouted out cooling water.* **2.** *Fig.* to blurt something out; to speak out suddenly, revealing some important piece of information. ☐ *She spouted the name of the secret agent out under the effects of the drug.* ☐ *She spouted out everything we wanted to know.*

sprain one's **ankle** to become pregnant. ☐ *She has, ah, sprained her ankle.* ☐ *From the looks of her, she must have sprained her ankle some months ago.*

sprawl about and **sprawl around** to slouch or lounge somewhere; to spread oneself out casually while lounging. (Usually refers to habitual action, perhaps in a number of places.) ☐ *He sprawled about, loafing the afternoon away.* ☐ *When I came into the room, four teenage boys were sprawled around the furniture, watching television.*

sprawl out to spread oneself out casually while lounging. (Usually done one time, not habitually. Compare this with **sprawl about**.) ☐ *He sprawled out and took up most of the space.* ☐ *I need more room so I can sprawl out.*

spray someone or something **with** something to coat someone or something with a mist or stream of liquid. ☐ *The elephant sprayed us with water.* ☐ *I sprayed the fence with white paint.* ☐ *He sprayed himself with some of the cologne.*

spray something **onto** someone or something and **spray** something **on**† to direct a mist or stream of a liquid onto someone or something. ☐ *Danny sprayed cold water onto the boys and cooled them off.* ☐ *Dan sprayed on some cold water.* ☐ *I sprayed the paint on and it dried almost immediately.*

spread all over (some place**)** Go to **all over (**some place**)**.

spread it on thick Go to **lay it on thick**.

spread like wildfire *Fig.* [for something] to spread rapidly. ☐ *Rumors spread like wildfire when people are excited.* ☐ *This disease will spread like wildfire when it gets going.*

spread oneself **too thin** *Fig.* to do so many things at one time that you can do none of them well. ☐ *It's a good idea to get involved in a lot of activities, but don't spread yourself too thin.* ☐ *I'm too busy these days. I'm afraid I've spread myself too thin.*

spread out to separate and distribute over a wide area. ☐ *The sheriff told the members of the posse to spread out and continue their search.* ☐ *The wine spread out and stained a large area of the carpet.*

spread over someone or something† [for something] to cover someone or something gradually. ☐ *The shade slowly spread over the picnickers.* ☐ *Dusk spread its final shadows over the land.*

spread someone or something **around**† to distribute people or things over an area. ☐ *Spread the good singers around so they can help the others in the choir.* ☐ *Liz spread around the seeds so they would dry.*

spread something **around**† to distribute news or gossip. ☐ *Please don't spread this around, but Don ran away from home!* ☐ *Don't spread around that story!*

spread something **on**† Go to **spread** something **onto** something.

spread something **on thick 1.** to distribute a thick layer of something. ☐ *This paint will cover well if you spread it on thick.* ☐ *If you spread the paint on thick, you will only need one coat.* **2.** Go to **lay it on thick**.

S

spread something **onto** something and **spread** something **on**† to distribute a coating of something onto something. ☐ *Spread the butter onto the bread evenly.* ☐ *Spread on the butter evenly.* ☐ *Donna spread the paint on with a roller.*

spread something **out**† to open, unfold, or lay something over a wider area. ☐ *Spread the wet papers out so they will dry.* ☐ *She spread out the papers to dry them.*

spread something **over** someone or something to cause something to cover or be distributed over someone or something. ☐ *The cloud spread its shadow over everyone at the picnic.* ☐ *We spread fertilizer over the prepared ground.* ☐ *He spread the work over a few weeks.*

spread something **under** someone or something to extend or unfold something, such as a tarpaulin, beneath someone or something. ☐ *Please spread some newspapers under Jimmy while he is working this clay.* ☐ *Would you spread some newspapers under your work, please?*

spread something **with** something to cover something with a coat of something. ☐ *Using the roller, Judy spread the wall with a thick coat of pink paint.* ☐ *Spread the lasagna with a layer of cheese mixture and cover that with another layer of lasagna.*

spread the word to tell many people some kind of information. ☐ *I need to spread the word that the meeting is canceled for this afternoon.*

spread to someone or something to expand or extend to reach someone or something. ☐ *The epidemic finally spread to me and my family.* ☐ *The business slowdown spread to the West Coast.*

spring at someone or something to jump at someone or something. ☐ *The cat sprang at me but could not sink in its claws.* ☐ *The spider sprang at the moth and captured it.*

spring back (to some place**)** to jump, bounce, or recoil back to a place. ☐ *The cat sprang back to its original place on the top of the table.* ☐ *The lid sprang back to a closed position.*

spring for something and **bounce for** something *Sl.* to treat someone by buying something. ☐ *I'm bouncing for pizza. Any takers?* ☐ *Ralph sprang for drinks, and we all had a great time.*

spring (forth) from someone or something to come forth from someone or something; to gush out of someone or something, as with a spring of water; to jump from or out of someone or something. ☐ *The best ideas spring forth from the mind of Mary!* ☐ *What new example of pure genius can we expect to spring from Mary today?*

spring into action *Fig.* to suddenly begin moving or doing something. ☐ *As soon as the boss came in the door, everyone sprang into action.* ☐ *Every morning, I jump out of bed and spring into action.*

spring out at someone to jump out at someone. ☐ *A grasshopper sprang out at me when I peered into the hollow log.* ☐ *I was afraid that something would spring out at me, so I opened the cellar door carefully.*

spring out of something to jump out of something. ☐ *The cat sprang out of the closet when I opened the door.* ☐ *The boys sprang out of the cold water as fast as they could.*

spring something **on** someone **1.** to surprise someone with something. ☐ *I hate to spring this on you at the last moment, but I will need some money to travel on.* ☐ *Please don't spring any other demands on me.* **2.** to pull a trick on someone. ☐ *Let me tell you about the trick I sprang on Sally.* ☐ *What are you going to spring on her this time?*

spring to attention to move quickly to assume the military posture of attention. ☐ *The recruit sprang to attention.*

spring to life *Fig.* to become suddenly alive or more alive. ☐ *The party sprang to life after midnight.* ☐ *The city sprang to life at dawn.*

spring to one's **feet** *Fig.* to stand up quickly. ☐ *He sprang to his feet and demanded that the chair recognize him.* ☐ *The audience sprang to its feet and cheered madly when the soprano finished.*

spring to someone's **defense** *Fig.* to go quickly to defend someone. (Can be against physical or verbal attack.) ☐ *Fred was attacked and Ralph sprang to his defense.* ☐ *We sprang to Mary's defense when she was accused of doing wrong.*

spring up to appear or develop suddenly; to sprout, as with a seedling. ☐ *We knew it was really spring when all the flowers sprang up.* ☐ *It seems as if the tulips sprang up overnight.* ☐ *The dog's ears sprang up when the refrigerator opened.*

spring (up)on someone, something, or an animal to jump on someone, something, or an animal; to pounce on someone, something, or an animal. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *The lion sprang upon him and knocked him down.* ☐ *The cat sprang on the mouse and captured it.*

sprinkle someone or something **with** something to lightly cover someone or something with something by scattering or sprinkling. ☐ *The storm sprinkled us with a few droplets of water and then blew over.* ☐ *Larry sprinkled his grapefruit with powdered sugar.*

sprinkle something **on(to)** someone or something and **sprinkle** something **on**† to scatter or dribble something onto someone or something. ☐ *The minister sprinkled the water onto the baby.* ☐ *The cook sprinkled on a dusting of powdered sugar.*

sprout up to grow upward quickly, as do newly sprouted seedlings. ☐ *The seeds sprouted up in the warm rains.* ☐ *Many of the newly planted seeds failed to sprout up on time.*

S

sprout wings *Fig.* to behave so well as to resemble an angel. ☐ *The kid is not about to sprout wings, but he probably won't get into jail again.* ☐ *He was so good and helpful, I thought he would sprout wings.*

spruce someone or something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to tidy up and groom someone or something. ☐ *Laura's mother took a few minutes to spruce her daughter up for the party.* ☐ *She spruced up her room each day.* **2.** *Fig.* to refurbish or renew someone or something. ☐ *Do you think we should spruce this room up a little?* ☐ *Yes, let's spruce up this room with new furniture and drapes.*

spur someone **on**† to urge someone onward; to egg someone on. (Fig. on applying spurs to a horse.) ☐ *The crowd spurred the runners on throughout the race.* ☐ *The cheering spurred on the runners.*

spurt out (of someone or something**)** and **spurt (out) (from** someone or something**)** to squirt out of someone or

something; to erupt in a stream out of someone or something. ☐ *Hot lava spurted out of the volcano.* ☐ *Hot lava spurted out from the volcano.* ☐ *The blood spurted out from Walter where he had been slashed.* ☐ *Blood spurted from the wound.* ☐ *The fountain had a carved fish with water spurting from its mouth.*

spurt something **out†** to eject something in a stream. ☐ *The octopus spurted its ink out as the scuba diver approached it.* ☐ *It spurted out all its ink.*

sputter out [for a flame] to go out in little puffs. ☐ *The candle flame flickered and sputtered out.* ☐ *The fire sputtered out after midnight and we all got very cold before down.*

sputter something **out†** to utter something while stuttering or faltering. (As when one is physically or mentally disoriented.) ☐ *She was so excited she could hardly sputter her name out.* ☐ *He could only sputter out a few words.*

spy (up)on someone or something to watch someone or something to learn secret or concealed information. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Are you spying upon me?* ☐ *I wasn't spying on you! I was just trying to see who you were.*

squabble about someone or something to quarrel and disagree about someone or something. ☐ *Please stop squabbling about Jeff, or I'll put him on my team so neither of you can have him.* ☐ *There is no need to squabble about the last piece of pie. There's more in the kitchen.*

squabble over someone or something to fight over someone or something. ☐ *Please don't squabble over me. I don't want to be chosen by any of you!* ☐ *Stop squabbling over money and go out and get a job.*

squabble with someone to argue with someone. ☐ *Please don't squabble with your sister!* ☐ *I wish that everyone would stop squabbling with me!*

squabble with something to argue about something. ☐ *I won't squabble with what you said, but you are wrong.* ☐ *One political party will squabble with any issue the other party brings up.*

squander something **away†** to waste something; to use up something valuable wastefully. ☐ *Where is all the money I gave you last month? Did you squander it all away?* ☐ *Frank squandered away all his assets.*

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squander something **on** someone or something to waste all of something on someone or something. ☐ *I am tired of squandering money on this rickety old house.* ☐ *I squandered a fortune on Roger and what did it get me?*

square accounts (with someone**) 1.** *Lit.* to settle one's financial accounts with someone. ☐ *I have to square accounts with the bank this week, or it'll take back my car.* ☐ *I called the bank and said I needed to come in and square accounts.* **2.** *Fig.* to get even with someone; to straighten out a misunderstanding with someone. ☐ *I'm going to square accounts with Tom. He insulted me in public, and he owes me an apology.* ☐ *Tom, you and I are going to have to square accounts.*

a **square deal** a fair and honest transaction; fair treatment. ☐ *All the workers want is a square deal, but their boss underpays them.* ☐ *You always get a square deal with that travel company.*

square (meal) a good and nutritious meal. (Always with quantifier when *square* is used without *meal*.) ☐ *I need three squares a day—at least.* ☐ *The old beggar looks like he could use a square meal.*

square off (for something**)** to get ready for an argument or a fight. ☐ *John was angry and appeared to be squaring off for a fight.* ☐ *When those two square off, everyone gets out of the way.*

a **square peg in a round hole** *Fig.* someone who is uncomfortable or who does not belong in a particular situation. (Also the cliché: **trying to fit a square peg into a round hole,** trying to combine two things that do not belong or fit together.) ☐ *I feel like a square peg in a round hole at my office. Everyone else there seems so ambitious, competitive, and dedicated to the work, but I just want to make a living.* ☐ *Trying to teach me math is like trying to fit a square peg into a round hole. I'm convinced my brain is not built right to understand algebra.*

square someone **away†** to get someone or something arranged or properly taken care of. ☐ *See if you can square Bob away in his new office.* ☐ *When you are squared away, come back and we'll talk.*

square something **off†** to make something square; to trim something until it is square. ☐ *You will have to square this corner off a bit so it will match the part it will be attached to.* ☐ *Please square off this corner.*

square something **up†** to cause something to have right angles. ☐ *Please square the door frames up better before you nail them in.* ☐ *Can you square up this box a little better?*

square something **with** someone to make certain that something is approved by a particular person. ☐ *I am sure I can square this matter with Sally.* ☐ *Sam intended to square everything with Henry when he had time.*

square up (for fighting**)** to get ready for an argument or a fight. ☐ *John was angry and appeared to be squaring up for a fight.* ☐ *When those two square up, everyone gets out of the way.*

square up to someone or something to face someone or something bravely; to tackle someone or something. ☐ *You'll have to square up to the bully or he'll make your life miserable.* ☐ *It's time to square up to your financial problems. You can't just ignore them.*

square up with someone to pay someone what one owes; to pay one's share of something to someone. ☐ *I'll square up with you later if you pay the whole bill now.* ☐ *Bob said he would square up with Tom for his share of the gas.*

square with someone **1.** *Lit.* to settle a disagreement with someone. ☐ *I will try to square with Fred before the end of the school year.* ☐ *Max refused to square with Lefty and they are still feuding.* **2.** *Fig.* to apologize to someone. ☐ *I will try to square with Harold. I really am sorry, you know.* ☐ *Finally, Mary squared with Alice and they forgave each other.*

square with something *Fig.* [for a statement] to agree, match, or correspond to something. ☐ *Your answer doesn't square with mine.* ☐ *The figures I have don't square with those the government has.*

squared away arranged or properly taken care of. ☐ *Is Ann squared away in her dorm room yet?* ☐ *I will talk to you when I am squared away.*

squash someone or something **up**† to grind someone or something up; to mash someone or something up. ☐ *You had better stay out of the traffic, or some big truck will squash you up!* ☐ *The truck squashed up the tiny car.*

squash something **down**† to crush something down; to pack something down. ☐ *Squash the ice cream down so the air will be pushed out.* ☐ *Who squashed down my hat?*

squash something **in**† to crush or make something concave by squashing or mashing. ☐ *The children squashed the Halloween jack-o'-lantern in and ruined it.* ☐ *Someone squashed in the lampshade.*

squash something **into** something and **squash** something **in**† to press or mash something into something. ☐ *She squashed the clay into the mold.* ☐ *She squashed in the clay and started to make a bowl.*

squash up against someone or something to press hard up against someone or something. (Usually said of something soft.) ☐ *The egg squashed up against the window and splattered all over.* ☐ *The pumpkin squashed up against the side of the truck.*

squawk about something to complain about something. ☐ *Stop squawking about how much money you lost. I lost twice as much.* ☐ *What are you squawking about now?*

squeak by (someone or something**) 1.** *Fig.* to manage just to squeeze past someone or something. ☐ *I squeaked by the fat man in the hallway only to find myself blocked by another.* ☐ *I just barely squeaked by.* **2.** *Fig.* to manage just to get past a barrier represented by a person or thing, such as a difficult teacher or an examination. ☐ *Judy just squeaked by Professor Smith, who has a reputation for flunking students.* ☐ *I took the test and just squeaked by.*

squeak something **through** *Fig.* to manage just to get something accepted or approved. ☐ *I just managed to squeak the proposal through.* ☐ *Tom squeaked the application through at the last minute.*

squeak through (something**) 1.** *Fig.* to manage just to squeeze through an opening. ☐ *The child squeaked through the opening and escaped.* ☐ *Sally squeaked through and got away.* **2.** *Fig.* to manage just to get past a barrier, such as an examination or interview. (Fig. on ①.) ☐ *Sally just barely squeaked through the interview, but she got the job.* ☐ *I wasn't too alert and I just squeaked through.*

The **squeaking wheel gets the oil.** and The **squeaky wheel gets the oil.** *Prov.* People who complain the most will get attention or what they want. ☐ *If you don't get good service at the hotel, make sure to tell the manager that you're dissatisfied. The squeaking wheel gets the oil.*

squeal (on someone**) (to** someone**)** *Fig.* to report someone to someone. ☐ *Max was afraid that the witness would squeal on him to the cops.* ☐ *Sally threatened to squeal to the boss.* ☐ *Please promise you won't squeal on me!*

squeal with something *Fig.* to shriek or squeak, exhibiting some characteristic emotion or experience, such as delight, pain, glee, etc. ☐ *The baby saw the bright picture and squealed with delight.* ☐ *Timmy squealed with excitement when he saw the presents and the birthday cake.*

squeeze by (someone or something**)** to manage just to press oneself past someone or something. ☐ *The hall was crowded and I had to squeeze by a number of rotund gentlemen.* ☐ *I squeezed by the crowd and ran on to my appointment.*

squeeze someone or something **into** something and **squeeze** someone or something **in**† to press or push someone or something into something small. ☐ *Let's see if we can squeeze everyone into the car.* ☐ *Let's squeeze in one more.*

squeeze someone or something **through (**something**)** to push and compress until someone or something passes through something. ☐ *John's cellmate managed to squeeze John through the window just before the guards walked by.* ☐ *I squeezed some food through the crack and the trapped miner was glad to get it.*

squeeze someone or something **together** to press people or things together. ☐ *The driver squeezed us together so he could get more people in the taxi.* ☐ *See if you can squeeze the vegetables together a little so we can get more in the basket.*

squeeze someone or something **up**† to press people or things close together. ☐ *The usher tried to squeeze us up so she could seat more people.* ☐ *Don't squeeze up the cars too tight in the parking area.*

squeeze something **from** something **1.** *Lit.* to press something out of something; to press on something until something comes out. ☐ *Betty squeezed some toothpaste from the tube.* ☐ *Don't squeeze so much mustard from the bottle.* **2.** *Fig.* to get a little more of something from something. ☐ *Let's see if we can squeeze a few more miles from this tank of gas before we fill up again.* ☐ *I think I can squeeze another few minutes from this candle before I have to light a new one.*

squeeze something **out of** something and **squeeze** something **out**† to press something until something is expelled from something. ☐ *Claire squeezed some toothpaste out of the tube.* ☐ *She squeezed out some toothpaste.*

squeeze (themselves) together [for creatures] to press close together. ☐ *The little pigs squeezed themselves together to get a better chance at some food.* ☐ *They squeezed together and gobbled their dinner.* ☐ *They squeezed themselves together to keep warm.*

squeeze (themselves) up [for people] to press themselves closely together. ☐ *Everyone squeezed themselves up in the tiny car so there would be room for one more.* ☐ *Let's squeeze up so Jamie can sit down.* ☐ *They squeezed themselves up so they would take less space.*

squeeze through something to manage to press oneself through an opening. ☐ *I think I can squeeze through the window and get out of this place.* ☐ *The cat squeezed through a hole in the fence and got away.*

squeeze up against someone or something to press close up against someone or something. ☐ *He squeezed up against me, trying to keep warm.* ☐ *The puppies squeezed up against their mother.*

squiff out *Sl.* to collapse from drink. ☐ *Hank squiffed out at midnight, right on the dot.* ☐ *She kept from squiffing out and barely made it home.*

squint at someone or something to look at someone or something with the eyes partly closed. (When squinting, the eyes are partly closed by pressing the upper and lower

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eyelids toward one another.) ☐ *Why are you squinting at me?* ☐ *I had to squint at the small print in order to read it.*

squint out of something **1.** to cast one's gaze from something, such as a place of concealment, with one's eyes partly closed. ☐ *The prisoner squinted out of the little hatch in the door to his cell.* ☐ *You could see that many people were squinting out of the windows, trying to get a good view of the movie star who was visiting.* **2.** to cast one's gaze through something, such as glasses, one eye, etc., with one's eyes partly closed. ☐ *She squinted out of one eye in the bright sun.* ☐ *Tony squinted out of his glasses and his mother decided that he needed to have his eyes checked again.*

squirm in(to something**)** to press into something that is tight; to crawl or wiggle into something tight. (For people, this is often clothing that is too tight. For other creatures, it is more variable.) ☐ *Dave squirmed into his jeans and pledged to himself that he would lose some weight.* ☐ *He squirmed in and knew he could never close the zipper.*

squirm out (of something**) 1.** *Lit.* to crawl or wiggle out of something. ☐ *The worm squirmed out of its hole and was gobbled up by a bird.* ☐ *The worm squirmed out.* **2.** *Fig.* to escape doing something; to escape the responsibility for having done something. ☐ *He agreed to go but squirmed out at the last minute.* ☐ *You did it and you can't squirm out of it by denying it!*

squirm with something to fidget or move around restlessly, showing irritation of some type. ☐ *The children squirmed with impatience, but they kept quiet.* ☐ *I squirmed with discomfort, hoping that the time on the aircraft would pass rapidly.*

squirrel something **away**† *Fig.* to hide something or store something in the way that a squirrel stores nuts for use in the winter. ☐ *I squirreled a little money away for an occasion such as this.* ☐ *Liz squirreled away a lot of money while she was working.*

squirt from something [for a liquid] to be ejected in a spurt from something. ☐ *The water squirted from the hose.* ☐ *Juice squirted from the orange when I squeezed it.*

squirt out (of someone or something**)** [for something, especially a liquid] to gush or spurt forth from someone or something. ☐ *In the horror movie, black stuff squirted out of this guy whenever he got angry.* ☐ *A lot of blood squirted out of the gash and I closed my eyes.*

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squirt something **at** someone or something **1.** to direct a narrow stream of liquid onto someone or something. ☐ *They squirted the water at the cat and it ran away.* ☐ *Who is squirting catsup at people?* **2.** to direct a device for squirting liquid at someone or something. ☐ *Tom squirted the hose at the cat.* ☐ *Who is squirting the firehose at the front of the house?*

squirt something **out of** something and **squirt** something **out**† to cause something to spurt out of something. ☐ *He squirted a bit of the vaccine out of the syringe, making sure the needle was not clogged.* ☐ *He squirted out a bit of the vaccine.*

a **stab at** someone Go to a **try at** someone.

stab at someone or something to thrust at someone or something with something sharp, such as a knife. ☐ *The horrid man stabbed at me and missed.* ☐ *The stork stabbed at the frog with its beak.*

a **stab at** something Go to a **try at** something.

stab someone **in** something to stab someone in a particular place. ☐ *Max stabbed a prison guard in the belly and left him to die.* ☐ *Tom stabbed himself in the thigh by accident.*

stab someone **in the back 1.** *Lit.* to thrust a knife into someone's back. ☐ *Max planned to stab his hostage in the back if he screamed.* ☐ *The murderer stabbed his victim in the back and fled.* **2.** *Fig.* to betray someone. ☐ *I wish you would not gossip about me. There is no need to stab me in the back.*

stab something **at** someone or something to thrust something at someone or something. ☐ *The hunter stabbed a stick at the bear to see if there was any life at all left in it.* ☐ *The stork tried to stab its beak at me as I held it, but I held tight while the vet examined it.*

stack something **against** someone or something to make a pile of something that leans against someone or something. (See also **stack the deck (against** someone or something**)**.) ☐ *Watch what you are doing! Why are you stacking the books against me? They will fall when I move.* ☐ *Stack the books against the wall.*

stack something **up**† to make a stack of things. (Also without the *up.*) ☐ *Where should I stack them up?* ☐ *Please stack up these boxes.*

stack the cards (against someone or something**)** Go to next.

stack the deck (against someone or something**)** and **stack the cards (against** someone or something**)** to arrange things against someone or something. (Originally from card playing; stacking the deck is to cheat by arranging the cards to be dealt out to one's advantage.) ☐ *I can't get ahead at my office. Someone has stacked the cards against me.* ☐ *Do you really think that someone has stacked the deck? Isn't it just fate?*

stack up [for something] to accumulate, as in stacks. ☐ *Your work is stacking up. You will have to work late to finish it.* ☐ *I hate to let my work stack up. I have to do it sooner or later.*

stack up to someone or something [for someone or something] to measure up favorably when compared to someone or something. ☐ *How do you think I stack up to Liz?* ☐ *My car stacks up pretty well to yours.*

stagger around to go about tottering or wobbling, especially as if drunk. ☐ *The wounded man staggered around and then fell.* ☐ *A lot of people came out of the party and staggered around.*

stagger from something to move out of a place, tottering. ☐ *The drunk staggered from the tavern and fell into the gutter.* ☐ *The wounded man staggered from the door and called for help.*

stagger in(to some place**)** to walk into some place, tottering. ☐ *The old man staggered into the room and collapsed.* ☐ *He staggered in and fell down.*

stagger out (of some place**)** to walk out of some place, tottering. ☐ *The drunk staggered out of the tavern and fell down.* ☐ *She staggered out and sat on the curb.*

stagger under something to struggle or totter under a serious burden, either a heavy object or a serious problem or responsibility. ☐ *The welfare budget is staggering under the burden of having to care for many people.* ☐ *Sam staggered under the heavy load and finally fell.*

stain something **with** something **1.** to cause a blemish or blotch on something with something. (Usually an accident.) ☐ *Judy stained the carpet with some grape juice.* ☐ *You will stain your clothing with that food if you drop any of it.* **2.** to affect the coloring of something through the use of a chemical stain. (A purposeful act, much the same as painting.) ☐ *Walter stained the house with a long-lasting reddish stain.* ☐ *We decided to stain the doors with a special varnish rather than paint them.* **3.** *Fig.* to injure or blemish someone's reputation. ☐ *They stained his reputation with their charges.* ☐ *I don't want to do anything that would stain my reputation.*

stake a claim to someone or something *Fig.* to state or record one's claim on someone or something. (Alludes to marking off an area by pounding in wooden stakes.) ☐ *She staked a claim to Jeff and told all her rivals to stay away.* ☐ *The prospector staked a claim to the gold-rich area.*

stake one's **reputation on** someone or something to risk harming one's reputation on someone or something. ☐ *Of course Denise is great. I will stake my reputation on her!* ☐ *It may be so, but I wouldn't stake my reputation on it.*

stake out a claim to something and **stake out a claim on** something to lay claim to something. ☐ *The prospector staked out a claim to the promising piece of land.* ☐ *We staked out a claim on two seats at the side of the auditorium.*

stake someone or something **out**† **1.** to position a person so that someone or something can be observed or followed. ☐ *The cops staked the car out and made the arrest.* ☐ *Barlowe staked out the apartment building and watched patiently for an hour.* **2.** to position a person to observe someone or something. ☐ *He staked his best operative out in front of the building.* ☐ *We staked out two men to keep watch.*

stake someone **to** something to make a loan of something to someone. ☐ *I will stake you to a hundred bucks if that will help.* ☐ *Jed refused to stake Tex to a loan.*

stake something **off**† to mark out the boundaries of an area of land with stakes. ☐ *The prospectors staked an area off for themselves.* ☐ *The prospectors staked off an area in which they would look for gold.*

stalk in(to some place**)** to stride into a place, perhaps indignantly. ☐ *Carl stalked into the manager's office and began his tirade.* ☐ *He stalked in and began to complain.*

stalk out of some place to stride out of a place indignantly. ☐ *Jeff stalked out of the store and went straight to the police.* ☐ *Mary got angry and stalked out of the meeting.*

stall for time to cause a delay intentionally. ☐ *You are just stalling for time. Please hurry.* ☐ *She is stalling for time, hoping someone will rescue her.*

stall someone or something **for** something to delay someone or something for a period of time. ☐ *I stalled him for as long as I could.* ☐ *I could not stall the proceedings for another second.*

stall someone or something **off**† to put off or delay someone or something. ☐ *The sheriff is at the door. I'll stall him off while you get out the back door.* ☐ *You can stall off the sheriff, but you can't stall off justice.*

stammer something **out**† to manage to say something, but only haltingly. ☐ *Fred stammered the words out haltingly.* ☐ *He stammered out the name of the winner.*

stamp a fire out† to extinguish a fire by stamping on it. ☐ *Quick, stamp that fire out before it spreads.* ☐ *Tom stamped out the sparks before they started a fire.*

stamp on someone or something to strike down hard on someone or something with the bottom of the foot. ☐ *The attacker stamped on his victim after he had knocked him down.* ☐ *Walter stamped on a spider.*

stamp someone or something **as** something to label someone or something as something; to mark someone or something as something. ☐ *His manner stamped him as a fool.* ☐ *The committee stamped the proposal as wasteful.*

stamp someone or something **with** something to affix a label onto someone or something with something; to apply a particular message or symbol onto someone or something, as with a rubber stamp. ☐ *Judy stamped everyone who went into the dance with a symbol that showed that each had paid admission.* ☐ *Mary stamped the bill with the* PAID *symbol.*

stamp someone **out**† *Sl.* to get rid of or kill someone. (Fig. on **stamp** something **out**.) ☐ *You just can't stamp somebody out on your own!* ☐ *The victim wanted to stamp out the robbers without a trial.*

stamp something **onto** something to affix an informative label onto something, as with a rubber stamp. ☐ *She stamped her name and address onto all her books.* ☐ *Tom stamped his identification onto all his papers and books.*

stamp something **out**† *Fig.* to eliminate something. ☐ *The doctors hope they can stamp cancer out.* ☐ *Many people think that they can stamp out evil.*

stamp something **out of** someone or something and **stamp** something **out**† *Fig.* to eliminate a characteristic of someone or something; to destroy a characteristic of someone or something. ☐ *I would really like to stamp that mean streak out of you.* ☐ *We were not able to stamp the excess costs out of the proposal and had to reject it.* ☐ *We couldn't stamp out their bad behavior.*

stamp something **(up)on** someone or something to affix an informative label onto someone or something, as with a rubber stamp. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *The attendant stamped a date upon each person who entered the dance hall.* ☐ *The person at the door stamped something on my hand when I came in.*

stampede in(to some place**)** [for a crowd of people or other creatures] to move rapidly into a place, as if in panic. ☐ *The shoppers stampeded into the store the minute the doors opened.* ☐ *The doors opened and the shoppers stampeded in.*

stampede out of some place [for a crowd of people or other creatures] to move rapidly out of a place, as if in panic. ☐ *The patrons stampeded out of the smoky theater.* ☐ *The cattle stampeded out of the corral.*

stampede someone or something **into** something to cause people or other creatures to move rapidly into a place, in panic or as if in panic. ☐ *The loud noises stampeded the crowd into the parking lot across from the stadium.* ☐ *The cowboys stampeded the cattle into the corral.*

stand a chance (of doing something**)** to have a chance of doing something. ☐ *Do you think I stand a chance of winning first place?* ☐ *Everyone stands a chance of catching the disease.*

stand against someone or something Go to **against** someone or something.

stand and deliver to give up something to someone who demands it. (Originally used by highway robbers asking for passengers' valuables.) ☐ *And when the tax agent says "Stand and deliver" you have to be prepared to pay what is demanded.* ☐ *The robber stopped the coach and demanded of Lady Ellen, "Stand and deliver!"*

stand apart (from someone or something**) 1.** *Lit.* to stand, separated from someone or something. ☐ *Please stand apart from the person next to you. We want to see the table between you.* ☐ *Stand apart. Leave some space between you.* **2.** *Fig.* to appear clearly different from other things or people. ☐ *Alice really stands apart from her peers.* ☐ *This book really stands apart. It is much better than the others.*

stand around to wait around, standing; to loiter. ☐ *Please don't stand around. Get busy!* ☐ *Why are all these people standing around doing nothing?*

stand aside 1. *Lit.* to step aside; to get out of the way. ☐ *Please stand aside while the bridal party passes by.* ☐ *The guests stood aside while the bride and groom left.* **2.** *Fig.* to withdraw and ignore something; to remain passive while something happens. ☐ *He just stood aside and let his kids behave as they pleased.* ☐ *She stood aside and did not try to come between them.*

stand at something **1.** to stand in front of something; to stand in the vicinity of something. ☐ *I stood at the window, watching the traffic.* ☐ *Tom stood at the door, counting people as they came in.* **2.** to stand or remain in a particular state, such as attention or readiness. ☐ *The troops stood at attention for a very long time.* ☐ *The entire platoon is standing at readiness, awaiting further orders.*

stand back (from someone or something**)** to stand or move well away and to the rear of someone or something. ☐ *Stand back from Sam. He is really angry.* ☐ *Would you please stand back from the edge?*

stand behind someone or something Go to **stand (in) back of** someone or something.

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stand between someone or something **and** someone or something else to position oneself between things and people, so as to act as a barrier. ☐ *I don't want to stand between you and your family.* ☐ *We won't stand between you and your goals.*

stand by to wait and remain ready. (Generally heard in communication, such as broadcasting, telephones, etc.) ☐ *Your transatlantic telephone call is almost ready. Please stand by.* ☐ *Is everyone ready for the telecast? Only ten seconds—stand by.*

stand by someone to support someone; to continue supporting someone even when things are bad. ☐ *Don't worry. I'll stand by you no matter what.* ☐ *I feel as though I have to stand by my brother even if he goes to jail.*

stand by someone or something to stand next to someone or something. ☐ *Jeff, please stand by Judy. I want to take your picture.* ☐ *Can I stand by the window and watch the birds?*

stand clear of something Go to **clear of** something.

stand close to someone or something Go to **close to** someone or something.

stand corrected to admit that one has been wrong. ☐ *I realize that I accused him wrongly. I stand corrected.* ☐ *We appreciate now that our conclusions were wrong. We stand corrected.*

stand down 1. to step down, particularly from the witness stand in a courtroom. ☐ *The bailiff told the witness to stand down.* ☐ *Please stand down and take your seat.* **2.** [for military forces] to move away from readiness for war. ☐ *After the peace treaty was signed, troops on both sides stood down.*

stand for something **1.** to permit something; to endure something. ☐ *The teacher won't stand for any whispering in class.* ☐ *We just can't stand for that kind of behavior.* **2.** to signify something. ☐ *In a traffic signal, the red light stands for "stop."* ☐ *The abbreviation* Dr. *stands for "doctor."* **3.** to endorse or support an ideal. ☐ *The mayor claims to stand for honesty in government and jobs for everyone.* ☐ *Every candidate for public office stands for all the good things in life.*

stand head and shoulders above someone or something *Fig.* [for someone or something] to be considerably superior to someone or something. ☐ *Alice stands head and shoulders above all the rest of the people we interviewed.* ☐ *Your proposal stands head and shoulders above the rest.*

stand idly by Go to **sit idly by.**

stand in awe (of someone or something**)** *Fig.* to be overwhelmed with respect for someone or something. ☐ *Many people stand in awe of the president.* ☐ *Bob says he stands in awe of a big juicy steak. I think he's exaggerating.*

stand (in) back of someone or something and **stand behind** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to place oneself at the rear of someone or something. ☐ *Please stand behind your friends.* ☐ *The police told them to stand behind the fence.* **2.** *Fig.* to guarantee someone or something; to guarantee the performance or worth of someone or something. ☐ *I will stand back of Elaine. I trust her totally.* ☐ *The manufacturer stands behind this product.*

stand in (for someone**)** to substitute for someone; to serve in someone's place. ☐ *The famous opera singer was ill, and an inexperienced singer had to stand in for her.* ☐ *The new singer was grateful for the opportunity to stand in.*

stand in someone's **way** Go to **in** someone's **way.**

stand knee-deep in something Go to **knee-deep in** something.

stand off from someone or something to be or remain at some distance from someone or something. ☐ *Charles stood off from the group.* ☐ *Mary stood off from the fireside, where all the excitement was taking place.*

stand off some place [for a ship] to wait some distance from a point on shore. ☐ *The ship stood off at some distance, waiting for its berth.* ☐ *We stood off about a mile from shore and went to land in small boats called tenders.*

stand on ceremony to hold rigidly to protocol or formal manners. (Often in the negative.) ☐ *Please help yourself to more. Don't stand on ceremony.* ☐ *We are very informal around here. Hardly anyone stands on ceremony.*

stand on one's **dignity** to remain dignified in spite of difficulties. ☐ *I will stand on my dignity to the very end.* ☐ *She stood on her dignity and ignored all the nonsense going on around her.*

stand on one's **head 1.** *Lit.* to stand or balance vertically with one's head and hands—rather than one's feet—touching the floor. ☐ *Can you stand on your head?* ☐ *Todd stood on his head as a form of exercise.* **2.** *Fig.* to attempt to impress someone by hard work or difficult feats. ☐ *You don't have to stand on your head to succeed in this office. Just do your assigned work on time.*

stand on one's **(own) two feet** to act in an independent and forthright manner. ☐ *I can stand on my own two feet without any help from you!* ☐ *Dave will be better off when he gets a job and can stand on his own feet.*

stand on something **1.** to step or tread on something, perhaps by accident. ☐ *I didn't mean to stand on the cat's tail.* ☐ *Please don't stand on the nice carpet with muddy shoes.* **2.** to elevate oneself by standing on something, such as a chair or stool. ☐ *Tony stood on a stool so he could reach the cookie jar.* ☐ *Don't stand on that box. It won't hold you and it's not tall enough.*

stand one's **ground** and **hold** one's **ground** to stand up for one's rights; to resist an attack. ☐ *The lawyer tried to confuse me when I was giving testimony, but I managed to stand my ground.* ☐ *Some people were trying to crowd us out of the line for tickets, but we held our ground.*

stand out (against someone or something**)** to be prominent or conspicuous against a background of someone or something. ☐ *Your red coat really stands out against all those dull brown ones.* ☐ *With that deep tan, you really stand out against the others.*

stand out (from someone or something**)** to be prominent when compared to someone or something. ☐ *As a programmer, she stands out from all the others.* ☐ *This entry stands out from all the rest in this show.*

stand out (from something**)** to protrude from something. ☐ *One very straight branch in particular stood out from the tree and looked suitable for a post.* ☐ *The branch stood out and made a perfect place to hang my shirt while I worked.*

stand outside ((of) something**)** to remain outside of a place, standing. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Judy stood outside the shop, waiting for it to open.* ☐ *How long have you been standing outside the door in this cold wind?*

stand over someone or something to hover over someone or something; to monitor or keep close watch on someone or something. ☐ *Please don't stand over me while I work!* ☐ *Dave stood over the machine, making sure it did what it was supposed to do.*

stand pat (on something**)** to stick firmly to one's position or opinions. ☐ *I am going to stand pat on this issue.* ☐ *I thought you would stand pat in the absence of new information.*

stand someone **in good stead** [for something] to be of great use and benefit to someone. ☐ *I know that my large vocabulary will always stand me in good stead at college.* ☐ *Any experience you can get in dealing with the public will stand you in good stead no matter what line of work you go into.*

stand someone or something **off** to repel the attack of someone or something; to defend against someone or something; to stave someone or something off. ☐ *It was all we could do to stand them off.* ☐ *The soldiers stood off the attackers as long as they could.*

stand someone **to a treat** to pay for a treat for someone. ☐ *Come on. Let's go out and eat. I'll stand you to a treat.* ☐ *It seems as if I am always standing someone to a treat.*

stand someone **up**† **1.** to place someone into a standing position. ☐ *I tried to stand him up, but he was just too tired.* ☐ *Let's try to stand up Timmy and get him awake.* **2.** to fail to show up for a meeting or a date. ☐ *He stood her up once too often, so she broke up with him.* ☐ *Tom stood up Mary once, and she never forgave him.*

stand something **on its head** *Fig.* to stir up, baffle, or surprise a group or organization. ☐ *The new owners came into the company and stood it on its head. Nothing will ever be the same.* ☐ *The mayor set out to stand the town on its head, but after one month, it was business as usual.*

stand still for something Go to **hold still for** something.

stand tall to be brave and proud. ☐ *I can still stand tall. I'm innocent.* ☐ *Our athletes stand tall in the knowledge that they did their best.*

stand the test of time *Prov.* to be well regarded; to last for a long time. ☐ *Bill and Nancy just celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary. Their marriage has stood the test of time.* ☐ *The singer's work was not popular while she was alive, but it has stood the test of time.*

stand there with one's **bare face hanging out** *Rur.* to stand some place looking helpless and stupid. ☐ *Say something. Don't just stand there with your bare face hanging out.* ☐ *She just stood there with her bare face hanging out while they took away everything she owned.*

stand to lose something to be likely to lose something or have it taken away. ☐ *I stand to lose hundreds of dollars if I am not there on time.*

stand to reason to seem reasonable. ☐ *It stands to reason that it'll be colder in January than it is in November.* ☐ *It stands to reason that Bill left in a hurry, although no one saw him go.*

stand together 1. to stand in a group. ☐ *All the members of the family stood together for a photograph.* ☐ *Please stand together so I can count you.* **2.** to remain united. ☐ *We must stand together if we want to defeat this enemy.* ☐ *If we don't stand together, we will be defeated one by one.*

stand trial to be the accused person in a trial before a judge; to be on trial. ☐ *He had to stand trial for perjury and obstruction of justice.*

stand up 1. to arise from a sitting or reclining position. ☐ *He stood up and looked across the valley.* ☐ *She had been sitting for so long that it was a pleasure to stand up.* **2.** to be in a standing position. ☐ *I've been standing up all day and I'm exhausted.* ☐ *I stood up throughout the whole trip because there were no more seats on the train.* **3.** to wear well; to remain sound and intact. ☐ *This material just doesn't stand up well when it's washed.* ☐ *Her work doesn't stand up under close scrutiny.* **4.** [for an assertion] to remain believable. ☐ *His testimony will not stand up in court.* ☐ *When the police checked the story, it did not stand up.*

S

stand up against someone or something to withstand or hold one's own against someone or something. ☐ *He's good, but he can't stand up against Jill.* ☐ *Can this tent stand up against the wind?*

stand up and be counted to state one's support (for someone or something). ☐ *If you believe in more government help for farmers, write your representative—stand up and be counted.* ☐ *I'm generally in favor of what you propose, but not enough to stand up and be counted.*

stand up before someone Go to **up before** someone.

stand up for someone or something to take the side of someone or something; to defend someone or something. ☐ *I hope you will stand up for me if the going gets rough.* ☐ *We will have to stand up for our rights someday.*

stand up in court [for a case] to survive a test in a court of law. ☐ *Do you think that this case will stand up in court?* ☐ *These charges will never stand up in court. They are too vague.*

stand up to someone or something to take a stand against someone or something; to hold one's ground or principles in the face of a challenge by someone or something. ☐ *He is a tough customer, and you have to learn to stand up to him.* ☐ *Can the witness stand up to questioning by the prosecution?*

stand up with someone to attend someone who is being married. (Usually refers to males.) ☐ *I agreed to stand up with my buddy at his wedding.* ☐ *Tom stood up with Harry when the latter got married.*

stand (up)on someone or something to be on someone or something, standing. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *To help his back pain, he lay down on his tummy and Jill stood upon him, digging her toes into his back.* ☐ *Please don't stand on the bed.*

stand well with someone to be acceptable or agreeable to someone. ☐ *That idea doesn't stand well with the management.* ☐ *I hope my suggestions stand well with you.*

stand with someone to unite with someone, as in defense. ☐ *Don't worry. I'll stand with you to the end.* ☐ *He stood with her and they faced the threat together.*

a **standing joke** a subject that regularly and over a period of time causes amusement whenever it is mentioned. ☐ *Uncle Jim's driving was a standing joke. He used to drive incredibly slowly.* ☐ *Their mother's inability to make a decision was a standing joke in the Smith family all their lives.*

S

star as someone or something [for someone] to be a featured performer, representing a particular person, or play in a particular role. ☐ *Judy starred as Evita in the broadway production of the same name.* ☐ *Mary starred as an aging countess.*

star in something to be a featured actor in a play, movie, opera, etc. ☐ *Roger starred in an off-Broadway play last season.* ☐ *Mary always wanted to star in her own movie, but it was not to be.*

star-crossed lovers ill-fated lovers. ☐ *I suppose that Romeo and Juliet are star-crossed lovers.*

stare at someone or something to look fixedly at someone or something. ☐ *Why are you staring at me?* ☐ *I was staring at the scenery behind you.*

stare into something to gaze fixedly into something. ☐ *She just sat there, staring into space.* ☐ *Tom stared into the water, hoping to see a fish or maybe a turtle.*

stare out at someone or something **1.** to be in a place staring outward at someone or something. ☐ *I stayed in my little room and stared out at the others having fun in the crisp fall air.* ☐ *We stared out at the deep snow.* **2.** [for a face or eyes visible in a place] to be seen staring outward from that place. ☐ *Two bright little cat eyes stared out at me from the basket.* ☐ *Her faced stared out of the tiny window.*

stare someone **down**† to pressure someone to capitulate, back down, or yield by staring. ☐ *Don't try to stare me down. I have nerves of steel.* ☐ *I tried to stare down my opponent, but it didn't work.*

stare someone **in the face 1.** Go to **look** someone **in the face. 2.** [for evidence] to confront someone directly. (Fig. on **stare** someone **in the face; look** someone **in the face.**) ☐ *Finally, the truth stared me in the face, and I had to admit to myself what had really happened.* ☐ *When the facts in the case stared the jury in the face, there was nothing they could do but acquit.*

stark raving mad *Cliché* totally insane; completely crazy; out of control. (Often an exaggeration.) ☐ *When she heard about what happened at the office, she went stark raving mad.* ☐ *You must be start raving mad if you think I would trust you with my car!*

***stars in** one's **eyes** *Fig.* an obsession with celebrities, movies, and the theater. (Alludes to movie stars. *Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** one **~**.) ☐ *Many young people have stars in their eyes at this age.* ☐ *Anne has stars in her eyes. She wants to go to Hollywood.*

*a **start 1.** and *a **jump(start)** battery power to help start someone's car, etc. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *My car is stalled. I need to get a start.* ☐ *I got my car going. I got a jump from John.* **2.** help in beginning one's career; a first opportunity in the beginning of one's career. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *She got a start in show business in Cincinnati.* ☐ *She had a start when she was only four.*

start a fire under someone Go to a **fire under** someone.

start an all-out effort Go to an **all-out effort**.

start as something to begin in some original condition or status. ☐ *Every forest fire starts as a small spark.* ☐ *The argument started as a small disagreement.*

start back (to some place**)** to begin the journey back to a place. ☐ *When do we start back to Chicago?* ☐ *It's time to start back.*

start for some place to begin a journey to some place. ☐ *When shall we start for Springfield?* ☐ *We will start for Detroit before dawn.*

start from scratch to start from the very beginning; to start from nothing. ☐ *Whenever I bake a cake, I start from scratch. I never use a cake mix in a box.* ☐ *I built every bit of my own house. I started from scratch and did everything with my own hands.*

start from some place **1.** [for someone] to begin a journey at some place. (The emphasis is on the location of the start of the journey.) ☐ *We started from California.* ☐ *Where will you start from?* **2.** [for a journey] to begin from

a particular point. ☐ *The journey started from Chicago.* ☐ *Our trip started from the airport in New York.*

start in on someone or something to begin dealing with, discussing, or chastising someone or something. ☐ *Please don't start in on me again! You said enough the previous three times.* ☐ *When will you be ready to start in on painting the house?*

start off to begin; to set out on a journey. ☐ *When do you want to start off?* ☐ *We will start off as soon as we can get everything packed.*

start off as someone or something to begin in a particular status, character, rank, etc. ☐ *I started off as a waiter and ended up as the owner of the restaurant.* ☐ *This tree started off as a tiny seedling only a few years ago.*

start off (by doing something**)** to begin a process by doing a particular thing first. ☐ *Can I start off by singing the school song?* ☐ *That's a good way to start off.*

start off from some place to begin a journey from some place. (The emphasis is on the inception of the journey.) ☐ *We will start off from Detroit and drive to Chicago.* ☐ *He started off from work rather than home.*

start off (on something**) 1.** to begin a series or sequence. ☐ *Today I start off on the first volume of my trilogy.* ☐ *I am ready to start off now.* **2.** to begin a journey. ☐ *When do we start off on our trip?* ☐ *I'm ready to start off. What about you?*

start off on the wrong foot and **step off on the wrong foot** *Fig.* to begin things incorrectly. (As if one were beginning to march and began on the right rather than the left foot.) ☐ *Give me some advice. I don't want to start off on the wrong foot.* ☐ *Tim stepped off on the wrong foot in his new job.*

start (off) with a bang *Fig.* to begin with considerable excitement. ☐ *The program started off with a bang and the whole show was great.* ☐ *The day started off with a bang and kept going that way.*

start (off) with a clean slate and **start (over) with a clean slate** *Fig.* to start out again afresh; to ignore the past and start over again. ☐ *I plowed under all last year's flowers so I could start with a clean slate next spring.* ☐ *If I start off with a clean slate, then I'll know exactly what each plant is.* ☐ *When Bob got out of jail, he started over with a clean slate.*

start (off) with someone or something to begin a task or a process with someone or something. ☐ *I will start off with one volunteer and then add others as we go along.* ☐ *I will start off with one hot dog and get another later if I want it.*

start on someone or something **1.** to begin dealing with someone or something. ☐ *We have finished talking about Gary, and now we will start on Bob.* ☐ *We will start on dessert after you have finished your broccoli.* **2.** to begin to castigate someone or something ☐ *Don't start on me! I didn't do anything wrong!* ☐ *The politician started on the opposing party, and everyone in the audience cheered.*

start out to begin. ☐ *Whenever you are ready, we will start out.* ☐ *We can't start out until Tom is here.*

start out as something to begin one's career as something. ☐ *I started out as a clerk and two years later I'm still a clerk!* ☐ *I wanted to start out as an assistant manager.*

start out (on something**)** to begin something, such as a trip, a career, an investigation, etc. ☐ *When we started out on this investigation, I never dreamed we would uncover so much.* ☐ *What time did you start out this morning?*

start out with someone or something to begin something in association with someone or something. ☐ *I started out the project with Jeff, but he had to be replaced.* ☐ *We started out with the Acme Corp., but they could not handle all our work.*

start over to begin again. ☐ *I have messed this up so much that there is nothing to do now but start over.* ☐ *When you start over, try to do it right this time.*

start (over) with a clean slate Go to start (off) with a clean slate.

start someone **in (as** something**)** and **start** someone **out (as** something**)** to start someone on a job as a certain kind of worker. ☐ *I got a job in a restaurant today. They started me in as a dishwasher.* ☐ *I now work for the telephone company. They started me out as a local operator.*

start someone **off† (on** something**)** to cause someone to begin on a task or job. ☐ *I have to start Jeff off on this task, then I will talk to you.* ☐ *I will start off my workers on the job tomorrow.*

start someone **out (as** something**)** Go to start someone in (as something).

start someone **out at** an amount of money to start someone working at a particular salary. ☐ *We will start you out at $30,000.* ☐ *I wanted to be started out at $35,000.*

start someone **over** to cause someone to begin again; to lead someone to begin again. ☐ *The orchestra messed up the first few bars, so the conductor started them over again.* ☐ *I hope the conductor doesn't start us over again. This is getting boring to play.*

start someone **up† (in** something**)** to help someone get a start in some enterprise. ☐ *My uncle started me up in business.* ☐ *I started up my niece in the candy business.*

start something to start a fight or an argument. (*Something* can be replaced by *anything* or *nothing* with the negative.) ☐ *Hey, you! Better be careful unless you want to start something.* ☐ *I don't want to start anything. I'm just leaving.*

start something **up†** to start something, such as a car or some procedure. (Also without *up*.) ☐ *It was cold, but I managed to start up the car without any difficulty.* ☐ *We can't start the project up until we have more money.*

S

start something **up† with** something to use something in the process of starting something else. ☐ *Do you have to start this old car up with a crank?* ☐ *Do you start up this car with a crank?*

start the ball rolling Go to get the ball rolling.

start up to begin; to begin running, as with an engine. ☐ *The car started up without a problem.* ☐ *The engines of the plane started up one by one.*

start up with someone or something to begin by using someone or something. ☐ *We will start up with two clerks and add more as we grow.* ☐ *We started up with one old cash register, and now we have six.*

startle someone **out of** something to frighten someone very badly. (The *something* that may be lost may be expressed as *wits, senses, ten years' growth,* etc.) ☐ *The explosion star-*

tled Polly out of her senses. ☐ *I frightened myself out of ten years' growth.*

starve for some food to be very hungry for something. ☐ *I am just starved for some fresh peaches.* ☐ *We were starved for dinner by the time we finally got to eat.*

starve for someone or something *Fig.* to have a strong desire or need for someone or something. (Based on **starved for some food.**) ☐ *I am starved for Jane. I miss her so!* ☐ *Claire was starved for affection.*

starve someone or an animal **into** something to force someone or an animal to do something by starvation. ☐ *The torturers finally starved the prisoner into telling the battle plans.* ☐ *They starved the water buffalo into a state of weakness.*

starve someone or an animal **out of** some place and **starve** someone or an animal **out†** to force a living creature to come out of a hiding place or a place of security by starvation. ☐ *The attackers tried to starve the people out of the walled city.* ☐ *We tried to starve out the mice.*

stash something **away†** to hide something; to set something aside for use at a later time. ☐ *Please stash this away somewhere. You may need it someday.* ☐ *You should stash away some money for later.*

stash something **in** something to put or shove something into something; to store or hide something in something. ☐ *You should stash your food in a place that is safe from bears when you go camping.* ☐ *I stashed my clothes in my suitcase and called a taxi.*

state of mind basic attitude or outlook at a point in time. ☐ *She was in a terrible state of mind when she was interviewed for a job.*

state of the art using the most recent technology. (Hyphenated before nouns.) ☐ *Our company's computer setup is strictly state of the art.* ☐ *This state-of-the-art radio is capable of filling the whole room with sound.*

station someone **at** something to position or place someone near something. ☐ *The manager stationed a receptionist at the door.* ☐ *Would you station a guard at the back door to keep people out?*

stave someone or something **off†** to hold someone or something off; to defend against the attack of someone or something. (See also **stave** something **off.**) ☐ *The citizen was not able to stave the mugger off.* ☐ *The army staved off the attackers for three hours without letup.*

stave something **in†** to crush something in. (The past tense is usually *stove* with ships, and otherwise, *staved.*) ☐ *The rocks on the reef staved the hull of the ship in.* ☐ *The angry sailor staved in the cask of rum.*

stave something **off†** to delay or postpone something unwanted, such as hunger, foreclosure, death, etc. (See also **stave** someone or something **off.**) ☐ *He could stave his thirst off no longer. Despite the enemy sentries, he made a dash for the stream.* ☐ *The lost hiker could not stave off her hunger any longer.*

stay abreast of someone or something Go to **abreast of** someone or something.

stay after someone **(about** something**)** Go to **keep after** someone **(about** something**).**

stay after (someone or something**)** to remain behind later than someone or something. ☐ *I will stay after the others and clean up.* ☐ *I would be happy to stay after school.*

stay ahead of something Go to **ahead of** something.

stay ahead of the game Go to **ahead of the game.**

stay aloof from someone or something Go to **aloof from** someone or something.

stay at some place **1.** to remain at a place. ☐ *Have you ever tried to make a cat stay at one place?* ☐ *Please stay at home until I call you.* **2.** to live at a place temporarily. ☐ *I am staying at the Statler Hotel.* ☐ *At what hotel are you staying while you are in town?*

stay at something to keep working at something. ☐ *You should stay at something until you finish it.* ☐ *She couldn't seem to stay at her place of work for a whole day.*

stay away (from someone or something**)** Go to **away (from** someone or something**).**

stay back (from something**)** to keep one's distance from someone or something. ☐ *Stay back from the lawn mower!* ☐ *This is dangerous. Stay back!*

stay behind [for someone] to remain in a place when others have left. ☐ *I will stay behind and tell the late arrivers where you have gone.* ☐ *Fred always stayed behind to clean up.*

stay behind someone or something Go to **behind** someone or something.

stay by someone or something to remain close to someone or something. ☐ *Please stay by me until we get through this crowd of rough-looking people.* ☐ *Stay by the wall and move along slowly.*

stay clear of someone or something to keep one's distance from something, usually something dangerous. ☐ *Please stay clear of me. I have the flu.* ☐ *Stay clear of that machine. It is dangerous.*

stay down to remain in a prone, squatting, or sitting position. ☐ *Stay down until the danger is over.* ☐ *Stay down so they won't see you.*

stay for something to remain in a place to participate in something. ☐ *Would you please stay for dinner?* ☐ *I am sorry, but we cannot stay for dinner.*

stay in limbo Go to **in limbo.**

stay in (something**)** to remain inside a place or thing; to stay indoors. ☐ *Please stay in the house. It's too cold to go outside.* ☐ *You should stay in when it's this cold.*

stay in the back of someone's **mind** Go to **in the back of** someone's **mind.**

stay in the boonies Go to **in the boondocks.**

stay in the dark (about someone or something**)** Go to **in the dark (about** someone or something**).**

stay in the fast lane Go to **in the fast lane.**

stay in touch (with someone or something**)** Go to **keep in touch (with** someone or something**).**

stay loose Go to **hang loose.**

stay off (something**)** to keep off of something. ☐ *Please stay off my lawn!* ☐ *Stay off!*

stay on a diet Go to **on a diet**.

stay on (after someone or something**)** Go to **linger on (after** someone or something**)**.

stay on course Go to **on course**.

stay on (one's**) guard (against** someone or something**)** Go to **on (**one's**) guard (against** someone or something**)**.

stay on one's **toes** Go to **on** one's **toes**.

stay on (some place**)** to remain at a place longer than had been planned. ☐ *I stayed on in Paris for nearly two years.* ☐ *Mary liked it there and decided to stay on.*

stay on something **1.** to remain on something, such as a horse, road, stool, etc. ☐ *The first time I rode, I could hardly stay on the horse.* ☐ *It was so slippery that I had trouble staying on the road.* **2.** to continue to pursue something. ☐ *I will stay on this problem until it is settled.* ☐ *She stayed on the matter for weeks until it had been dealt with.*

stay on the good side of someone Go to **keep on the right side of** someone.

stay on top of someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to remain positioned on the top of someone or something. ☐ *Please stay on top of the hill until we call you.* ☐ *The wind is blowing and this sheet of plastic will not stay on top of me, so I am getting soaked!* **2.** *Fig.* to keep well-informed about someone or something; to keep watch over someone or something. ☐ *You have to stay on top of her if you want her to do it right.* ☐ *I will stay on top of this project.*

stay one **step ahead of** someone or something Go to **keep** one **step ahead of** someone or something.

Stay out of my way. Go to **Keep out of my way.**

stay out of sight Go to **out of sight**.

stay out (of something**) 1.** *Lit.* to keep out of something or some place. ☐ *Stay out of here!* ☐ *Please stay out until we are ready.* **2.** *Fig.* to remain uninvolved in some piece of business. ☐ *I decided to stay out of it and let someone else handle it.* ☐ *My help wasn't needed there, so I just stayed out.*

Stay out of this! Go to **Keep out of this!**

stay over (somewhere**)** to stay overnight in a dwelling other than one's own. ☐ *Can I stay over at Jimmy's tonight?* ☐ *No, you can't stay over.*

stay put not to move; to stay where one is. ☐ *We've decided to stay put and not to move to Florida.* ☐ *If the children just stay put, their parents will come for them soon.*

stay to something to remain in a place for something, such as dinner. ☐ *I hope you will stay to dinner.* ☐ *I stayed to lunch because they were having fried shrimp.*

stay under (something**)** to remain concealed or protected beneath something. ☐ *You had better stay under the blankets until I get the fire started in the fireplace.* ☐ *Stay under and keep warm.*

stay up (for something**)** to remain awake and out of bed for some nighttime event. ☐ *I will stay up for her arrival.* ☐ *I can't stay up that late.*

stay up late to remain awake and out of bed later than usual. ☐ *I am in the practice of staying up late.* ☐ *I can't stay up late three nights in a row.*

stay up until a particular time to remain awake and out of bed until a particular time. ☐ *I stayed up until long past midnight last night.* ☐ *Do you think Susie should stay up until midnight?*

stay with someone or something to remain in the company of someone or something. ☐ *Please stay with me for a little while.* ☐ *How long did you stay with the company?*

stay within something to remain inside something. ☐ *You will have to stay within the immediate area until things return to normal in the town.* ☐ *Our dog just can't seem to stay within our yard.*

stay young at heart Go to **young at heart**.

***steady as a rock** *Cliché* very steady and unmovable; very stable. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *His hand was steady as a rock as he made each incision.* ☐ *You must remain as steady as a rock when you are arguing with your supervisor.*

steal a base *Fig.* to sneak from one base to another in baseball. ☐ *The runner stole second base, but he nearly got put out on the way.* ☐ *Tom runs so slowly that he never tries to steal a base.*

steal a glance at someone or something *Fig.* to sneak a peek at someone or something. ☐ *He stole a glance at his brother, who appeared to be as frightened as he was.* ☐ *Karen stole a glance at her watch and yawned.*

steal a march on someone or something to precede someone who has the same goal; to accomplish something before someone else does. ☐ *Jeff stole a march on all of us when he had his story published.* ☐ *Our competitor stole a march on us and got the big contract.*

steal away (from someone or something**)** to sneak away from someone or something. ☐ *The thief stole away from the policeman.* ☐ *We stole away from the boring lecture.*

steal from someone or something to rob someone or something. ☐ *You wouldn't steal from a poor man, would you?* ☐ *Max didn't feel bad about stealing from a bank.*

steal out of some place to sneak quietly out of some place. ☐ *The critic stole out of the theater, unable to endure any more of the abysmal play.* ☐ *I stole out of the lecture and went back to my room.*

steal over someone or something **1.** [for a covering of some sort] to move slowly over someone or something. (As with the sun or the shade of a cloud.) ☐ *The shade stole over the sunbathers and ended their day.* ☐ *Darkness stole over the land.* **2.** [for a feeling] to spread through someone gradually. ☐ *A feeling of gloom stole over the crowd.* ☐ *A sense of high excitement stole over the boys as they waited.*

steal someone's **heart** *Fig.* to capture someone's affections; to cause someone to fall in love with oneself. ☐ *When I first met him, I knew he would steal my heart away. And he did.*

steal someone's **thunder** *Fig.* to lessen someone's force or authority. ☐ *What do you mean by coming in here and stealing my thunder? I'm in charge here!* ☐ *Someone stole my thunder by leaking my announcement to the press.*

steal something **from** someone or something to take the property belonging to someone or something without permission; to commit the theft of something from someone or something. ☐ *Max stole $50 from Henry.* ☐ *Lefty stole an apple from the fruit stand.*

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steal something **off** someone to rob something from someone. ☐ *I think that guy who walked past me stole my wallet off me!* ☐ *Max stole a lot of money off tourists last season.*

steal the show Go to next.

steal the spotlight and **steal the show** *Fig.* to give the best performance in a show, play, or some other event; to get attention for oneself. ☐ *The lead in the play was very good, but the butler stole the show.* ☐ *Ann always tries to steal the spotlight when she and I make a presentation.*

steal up on someone or something to sneak up on someone or something. ☐ *We will steal up on Tony and give him a scare.* ☐ *The fox stole up on the hen and grabbed it.*

steam across something [for a ship] to cross a body of water under power. (Originally referred to steam engines, but now can be any sort of engine.) ☐ *How long does it take to steam across the Atlantic these days?* ☐ *We steamed across the bay in less than an hour.*

steam in((to) something**)** [for a vehicle, usually a ship] to enter something under power. (Originally referred to steam engines, but now can be any sort of engine.) ☐ *The ship steamed into the harbor and headed for the pier.* ☐ *Right on time, the ship steamed in.*

steam out (of some place**)** [for a conveyance, usually a ship] to exit something under power. (Originally referred to steam engines, but now can be any sort of engine.) ☐ *The huge diesel engines began to labor, and the ship steamed out of its berth.* ☐ *It shuddered a couple of times and steamed out.*

steam someone's **beam** *Sl.* to make someone angry. ☐ *Being stood up really steams my beam!* ☐ *Come on, don't steam your beam. Remember how hard times are now.*

steam someone **up**† **1.** *Sl.* to get someone excited. ☐ *Steam yourselves up and get in there and win this game!* ☐ *The coach can really steam up those guys.* **2.** *Sl.* to get someone angry. ☐ *This whole mess steamed me up but good.* ☐ *The long critical statement simply steamed up my opponent in the debate.*

steam something **off (of)** something and **steam** something† to loosen and remove something by an application of steam. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Toby steamed the old paper off the wall.* ☐ *Toby steamed off the old wallpaper.*

steam something **out of** something and **steam** something **out**† to remove something embedded, through an application of steam. ☐ *The cleaner was not able to steam the wrinkles out of my jacket.* ☐ *I tried to steam out the gum.*

steam something **up**† to cause something to be covered with water vapor due to the presence of steam. ☐ *Our breaths steamed the windows up.* ☐ *The hot shower steamed up the mirror.*

steam up 1. *Lit.* to become covered with a film of steam or water vapor. ☐ *The windows steamed up and we had to wipe them so we could see out.* ☐ *The window has steamed up, and I can't see.* **2.** to drink heavily; to get drunk. ☐ *Fred and Mike were steaming up in the back room.*

steamed (up) angry. ☐ *Now, now, don't get so steamed up!* ☐ *She is really massively steamed.* **2.** *Sl.* intoxicated and fighting. ☐ *He was really steamed—and could hardly stand up.* ☐ *By midnight, Larry was too steamed to drive home, and he had to spend the night.*

steaming (mad) *Fig.* very angry; very mad; very upset. ☐ *The steaming coach yelled at the clumsy players.* ☐ *The principal was steaming mad when he found that his office had been vandalized.*

steel oneself **for** someone or something to prepare oneself for someone or something difficult or unpleasant; to get ready to face someone or something. ☐ *Aunt Helen is coming for a visit. We should steel ourselves for her.* ☐ *I think something is going wrong. We had better steel ourselves for a shock.*

steel someone **against** someone or something to fortify someone against someone or something; to prepare someone to endure someone or something. ☐ *I tried to steel Liz against Carl, who was bringing her some very bad news.* ☐ *We steeled her against the bad news.*

a **steely gaze** *Cliché* an intense, staring gaze. ☐ *The principal turned a steely gaze toward the frightened student and suddenly smiled.*

steep someone **in** something *Fig.* to immerse someone in some kind of knowledge or other experience; to saturate someone with some kind of experience or training. (Fig. on **steep** something **in** something.) ☐ *Her parents steeped her in good literature and music.* ☐ *She steeped herself in the legends of her people.*

steep something **in** something to soak something in a liquid. ☐ *I steeped the shirt in red dye.* ☐ *You have to steep these herbs in steamy hot water for five minutes.*

steer away from someone or something to move or turn away from someone or something. ☐ *You had better steer away from Jeff. He is in a terrible mood.* ☐ *Try to steer away from the potholes. The road is full of them.*

steer clear (of someone or something**)** to avoid someone or something. ☐ *John is mad at me, so I've been steering clear of him.* ☐ *Steer clear of that book. It has many errors in it.*

steer into something to turn or drive into something. ☐ *Try to steer into the right parking space this time.* ☐ *Poor Wally steered into the curb.*

steer someone or something **through** something to guide someone or something through something that is confusing or treacherous. ☐ *I tried to steer Judy through the registration procedure, but I really didn't know what I was doing.* ☐ *Should I try to steer my car through all this foot traffic or take a different route?*

steer something **for** something to aim oneself or one's vehicle toward something. ☐ *Jeff steered the car for the entrance to the tunnel and stepped on the gas.* ☐ *The driver steered the bus for the center lane just in time.*

steer something **toward** someone or something to guide something in the direction of someone or something. ☐ *The farmer steered the tractor toward the sheriff, who had come to talk to the farmer.* ☐ *Please steer the car toward the right side.*

steer through something to maneuver through something that is confusing or treacherous. ☐ *Do you think you can steer through this flooded tunnel?* ☐ *I can't steer through this mess of leaves and mud on the road.*

steer toward someone or something to turn or drive toward someone or something. ☐ *He steered toward the empty*

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parking space, but someone got there before he did. ☐ *Steer toward the house with the red door.*

stem from something [for an event] to result from something. ☐ *These problems all stem from your mismanagement.* ☐ *Our difficulties stem from the bad weather we have been having.*

step aside (for someone**) 1.** *Lit.* to move out of someone's way. ☐ *Would you step aside for my uncle and his walker?* ☐ *We had to step aside for the people in wheelchairs to get by.* **2.** *Fig.* to retire from an office so someone else can take over. ☐ *The president retired and stepped aside for someone else.* ☐ *Walter stepped aside for a younger person to take over.*

step away from one's **desk** Go to away from one's desk.

step back (from someone or something**)** to move away from someone or something; to move back so as to provide space around someone or something. ☐ *Please step back from the injured woman. Give her some air.* ☐ *Step back and give her some air.*

step back on someone or something to move back and tread on someone or something in the process. ☐ *Jeff stepped back on Judy and made her yelp with pain.* ☐ *Jeff stepped back on the cat.*

step between someone or something **and** someone or something else to move between things or people. ☐ *Jeff stepped between Judy and the gunman.* ☐ *He stepped between Judy and the wall.*

step down (from something**) 1.** *Lit.* to come down from something; to alight from something. ☐ *Please step down from the platform.* ☐ *She stepped down and went back to her chair.* **2.** *Fig.* to resign a job or a responsibility. ☐ *The mayor stepped down from office last week.* ☐ *It's unusual for a mayor to step down.*

step forward 1. *Lit.* to move forward one step or several steps. ☐ *The volunteer stepped forward.* ☐ *I stepped forward and someone moved up behind me immediately.* **2.** *Fig.* to volunteer to present important information. ☐ *When I go into court, I will have to step forward and present evidence. It is my civic duty.* ☐ *If you have information to present, you should step forward and seek recognition to do so.*

step in something Go to step into something.

step inside (some place**)** to walk into a place. ☐ *Please step inside my office, and we will discuss this matter.* ☐ *Please step inside.*

step in(to some place**)** to walk into a place. ☐ *Tiffany stepped into the room and said hello to everyone.* ☐ *She stepped in to say hello.*

step into someone's **shoes** *Fig.* to take over a job or some role from someone. ☐ *I was prepared to step into the boss's shoes, so there was no disruption when he left for another job.* ☐ *There was no one who could step into Alice's shoes when she left, so everything came to a stop.*

step into something **1.** *Lit.* and **step in** something to step into something wet, messy, or dirty. ☐ *Don't step in the mud!* ☐ *What is that stinky stuff you stepped into?* **2.** *Fig.* to involve oneself in some matter; to intervene in an affair or dispute. ☐ *I will have to step into the business and settle the problem.* ☐ *Please don't step into something that does not concern you.*

step in(to the breach) *Fig.* [for someone] to assume a position or take on a responsibility when there is a need or an opportunity to do so. ☐ *The person who was supposed to help didn't show up, so I stepped into the breach.* ☐ *The manager stepped into the breach when Jane got sick.*

step off to come off something by taking a step. ☐ *She came to the bottom step and stepped off.* ☐ *Ed was afraid to dive in from the side of the pool, so he just stepped off.*

step off (of) something to leave something elevated with one's first step. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *She stepped off the bottom step and walked down the street.* ☐ *Tony stepped off of the bank and waded across the stream.*

step off on the wrong foot Go to start off on the wrong foot.

step off (to the side) with someone Go to off (to the side) with someone.

step on it Go to step on the gas.

step on someone or something to tread on someone or something. ☐ *Ouch! You stepped on me!* ☐ *Don't step on the flooring in that spot. It's weak.*

step on someone's **toes** and **tread on** someone's **toes 1.** *Lit.* to step down onto someone's toes, causing pain. ☐ *Please don't step on my toes as you walk by.* **2.** *Fig.* to offend or insult someone, as if causing physical pain. ☐ *You're sure I won't be stepping on her toes if I talk directly to her supervisor?* ☐ *I didn't mean to tread on your toes.*

step on the gas and **step on it** to hurry up; to make a vehicle go faster. (As if stepping on an automobile's accelerator. ☐ *Step on the gas. We are going to be late!* ☐ *Step on it! Let's go!*

step out into something to go out from a place into a different set of conditions. ☐ *Julie stepped out of her previous job into a whole new world.* ☐ *Wally stepped out into the bright sunlight.*

step out of line 1. *Lit.* to move out of a line of people. ☐ *If you step out of line, you will lose your place in it.* ☐ *I had to step out of line to sit down on the curb and rest for a minute.* **2.** *Fig.* to misbehave; to deviate from normal, expected, or demanded behavior. ☐ *If you step out of line again, I'll slap you.* ☐ *Tom stepped out of line once too often and got yelled at.*

step out (of something**) 1.** to go out of a place. ☐ *She stepped out of the house without a coat and nearly froze to death.* ☐ *Jamie stepped out and got wet in the rain.* **2.** to take one step to get out of pants of some type that have been dropped. ☐ *He stepped out of his pants and pulled off his shirt.* ☐ *He dropped his pants and stepped out.*

step out (on someone**)** to be unfaithful to a spouse or lover. ☐ *Jeff has been stepping out on Judy.* ☐ *I was not stepping out!*

step outside 1. to go outside, as if to get some fresh air. ☐ *I need to step outside for a minute to get a breath of air.* ☐ *Tom and Harry stepped outside for a moment.* **2.** to go outside to fight or settle an argument. ☐ *I find that insulting. Would you care to step outside?* ☐ *Max invited Lefty to step outside.*

step over someone or something to walk so as to avoid stepping on someone or something. ☐ *I stepped over Tom, who*

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was napping on the floor. □ *Please step over the things on the floor. We are doing the spring cleaning.*

step over (to) some place to move to a place a few steps away. □ *Please step over here and I'll show you some other merchandise.* □ *If you will step over to the display case, I will show you some earrings.*

step right up to come right to where the speaker is; to come forward to the person speaking. (Used by people selling things, as at carnival sideshows.) □ *Please step right up and buy a ticket to see the show.* □ *Don't be shy! Step right up and buy one of these.*

step something **down**† to reduce the intensity or amount of something by one step or grade. □ *See if you can step the lights down a little.* □ *Step down the lights just a little more.*

step something **off**† to measure a distance by counting the paces required to cover it. □ *She stepped the distance off and noted it on her pad.* □ *Liz stepped off the number of feet from the window to the opposite wall.*

step something **up**† **1.** to make something more active. □ *I hope we can step the pace of business up in the next few days.* □ *We can step up business considerably by putting out a larger sign.* **2.** to make something go or run faster. □ *The engineer stepped the motors up and the production line moved even faster.* □ *Please step up the speed of your activity.*

step up to increase. □ *Industrial production stepped up a large amount this last quarter.* □ *Traffic has stepped up since the road was paved.*

step up to something to walk to something, especially a counter or a bar. □ *Jake stepped up to the ticket counter and bought a single ticket for the balcony.* □ *When Wally stepped up to the ticket window, he learned that the show was sold out.*

step up to the plate 1. *Lit.* [for a batter in baseball] to move near home plate in preparation for striking the ball when it is pitched. □ *The batter stepped up to the plate and glared at the pitcher.* **2.** *Fig.* to move into a position where one is ready to do a task. □ *It's time for Tom to step up to the plate and take on his share of work.*

step-by-step 1. *Lit.* [walking] one step at a time. □ *The old man slowly moved across the lawn step-by-step.* **2.** *Fig.* little by little. □ *Just follow the instructions step-by-step, and everything will be fine.*

stew in one's **own juice** *Fig.* to be left alone to suffer one's anger or disappointment. □ *John has such a terrible temper. When he got mad at us, we just let him go away and stew in his own juice.* □ *After John stewed in his own juice for a while, he decided to come back and apologize to us.*

stick around [for a person] to remain in a place. □ *The kids stuck around for a time after the party was over.* □ *Oh, Ann. Please stick around for a while. I want to talk to you later.*

stick at something to keep trying to do something; to stay on a task or job. □ *I hope he can stick at this job.* □ *He doesn't seem to be able to stick at anything for very long.*

stick by someone or something and **stick with** someone or something to support someone or something; to continue supporting or committing to someone or something when things are bad. □ *Don't worry. I'll stick by you no matter what.* □ *I feel as if I have to stick by my brother even if he goes to jail.*

Stick 'em up! Go to Hands up!

stick in someone's **mind** to remain in someone's thinking. □ *The events of that day stuck in my mind for a very long time.* □ *The image of her smiling face stuck in Henry's mind for a long time.*

stick in something to remain embedded in something; to remain held in something. □ *Do you think this will stick in the hole, or is it too small?* □ *A fish bone stuck in his throat for a while.*

stick it to someone *Inf.* to give someone a problem; to confront someone. □ *They stuck it to me about the stopped-up drain.* □ *He was late, and the boss really stuck it to him.*

stick man *Sl.* a police patrol officer (who carries a stick). □ *The stick man is due here in about three minutes. Hurry.* □ *I was a stick man for a few years till my feet went bad.*

stick one's **foot in** one's **mouth** Go to put one's foot in one's mouth.

stick one's **neck out (for** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to take a risk. □ *Why should I stick my neck out to do something for her? What's she ever done for me?* □ *He made a risky investment. He stuck his neck out for the deal because he thought he could make some big money.*

stick one's **nose in (where it's not wanted)** Go to put one's nose in (where it's not wanted).

stick one's **nose in(to** something**)** Go to poke one's nose in(to something).

stick one's **nose up in the air** *Fig.* to behave in a haughty manner. □ *Jeff stuck his nose up in the air and walked out.* □ *Don't stick your nose up in the air. Come down to earth with the rest of us.*

stick one's **oar in**† Go to put one's oar in†.

stick one's **tongue out**† *Fig.* to cause one's tongue to project outward. (A gesture of contempt.) □ *Don't stick your tongue out at me!* □ *She stuck out her tongue at me!*

stick out to project outward. □ *You can't lock your suitcase because there is a bit of cloth sticking out.* □ *Some cloth stuck out of the top of the drawer.*

stick out a mile *Fig.* to project outward very obviously. □ *My nose sticks out a mile! I hate it!* □ *His stomach sticks out a mile. What do you suppose is in there?*

stick out against something to be highly visible against a background of something. □ *Your cold, red nose sticks out against your white, frozen face.* □ *The red vase sticks out against the pale blue wallpaper.*

stick out (from someone or something**)** to project outward from someone or something. □ *His right arm, which was in a cast, stuck out from him like a crane.* □ *His arm stuck out.*

stick out like a sore thumb *Fig.* to be very obvious. □ *That pimple really sticks out like a sore thumb.* □ *Do you think I would stick out like a sore thumb at the party if I wear this coat?*

stick out (of someone or something**)** to protrude from someone or something. □ *The arrow stuck out of him, wobbling as he staggered.* □ *A dollar bill stuck out of the book. What a strange bookmark.*

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stick shift 1. having to do with a nonautomatic transmission or a car that has one. ☐ *I prefer a stick shift car—I don't know why.* ☐ *The stick shift models are cheaper—that's why.* **2.** a nonautomatic transmission. ☐ *I can't drive a stick shift!* ☐ *My husband took the other car and stuck me with the stick shift.*

stick someone or something **up**† to rob someone or a business establishment. (Presumably with the aid of a gun.) ☐ *Max tried to stick the drugstore up.* ☐ *Max stuck up the store.*

stick someone **with** someone or something to burden someone with someone or something. ☐ *The dishonest merchant stuck me with a faulty television set.* ☐ *John stuck me with his talkative uncle and went off with his friends.*

stick something **down**† to fasten something down, as with glue or paste. ☐ *Get some glue and stick down this wallpaper, please.* ☐ *Stick this wallpaper down, would you?*

stick something **into** someone or something and **stick** something **in**† to insert something into someone or something. ☐ *The technician stuck a needle into my arm and took some blood out.* ☐ *She stuck in the needle.*

stick something **on(to)** someone or something and **stick** something **on**† to affix something onto someone or something. ☐ *The baggage clerk stuck a label onto Jimmy as a joke.* ☐ *Jimmy stuck on the label.*

stick something **out**† to endure something; to stay with something. (The *something* can be vaguely expressed using *it*.) ☐ *I will stick it out as long as I can.* ☐ *She stuck out the abuse as long as she could; then she started looking for another job.*

stick something **out**† **to** someone to hold something, such as one's hand, out where someone can grasp it. ☐ *She stuck her hand out to him, intending that he shake it.* ☐ *Ted stuck out his hand to Bill, but withdrew it suddenly.*

stick something **through** someone or something to push something so that it penetrates someone or something. ☐ *The good knight stuck his lance through the bad knight.* ☐ *I stuck my fist through the flimsy wall.*

stick something **together 1.** to glue or paste something together. ☐ *Use glue to stick these pieces together.* ☐ *Please stick the pieces of the broken vase together with glue.* **2.** to assemble something, perhaps in haste. ☐ *He just stuck the model plane together, making a mess of it.* ☐ *Don't stick the parts together so fast. It won't look good.*

stick something **up**† **1.** to fasten something to a place where it can be seen; to put something on display, especially by gluing, tacking, or stapling. ☐ *Stick this notice up. Put a copy on every bulletin board.* ☐ *Please stick up this notice.* **2.** to raise something; to hold something up. ☐ *She stuck her hand up because she knew the answer.* ☐ *The elephant stuck up its trunk and trumpeted.*

stick to one's **guns** *Fig.* to remain firm in one's convictions; to stand up for one's rights. (Fig. on a soldier remaining in place to fire a gun even when all appears to be lost.) ☐ *I'll stick to my guns on this matter. I'm sure I'm right.* ☐ *Bob can be persuaded to do it our way. He probably won't stick to his guns on this point.*

stick to one's **ribs** *Fig.* [for food] to last long and fortify one well; [for food] to sustain one even in the coldest weather. ☐ *This oatmeal ought to stick to your ribs. You need something hearty on a cold day like this.* ☐ *I don't want just a salad! I want something that will stick to my ribs.*

stick to someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to adhere to someone or something; to remain affixed to someone or something. ☐ *The tape stuck to me and I couldn't get it off.* ☐ *This stamp won't stick to the envelope.* **2.** *Fig.* to continue to accompany someone or something. ☐ *Stick to me and I'll lead you out of here.* ☐ *Stick to the group of us, and you'll be okay.* **3.** *Fig.* to continue to use or employ someone or something. ☐ *I'll stick to Jill. She does a good job and she's my friend.* ☐ *We decided to stick to our present supplier.*

stick to someone's **fingers** *Fig.* to remain in someone's possession; to be stolen by someone. ☐ *Other people's watches tend to stick to Max's fingers.* ☐ *Watch that clerk. Your change tends to stick to his fingers.*

stick together 1. *Lit.* to adhere to one another. ☐ *The noodles are sticking together. What shall I do?* ☐ *You need to keep the pieces separate while you fry them or else they will stick together.* **2.** *Fig.* to remain in one another's company. ☐ *Let us stick together so we don't get lost.* ☐ *They stuck together through thick and thin.*

stick up to stand upright or on end; to thrust upward. ☐ *The ugly red flower stuck up from the bouquet.* ☐ *Why is the worst-looking flower sticking up above all the rest?*

stick up for someone or something to support someone or something; to speak in favor of someone or something. ☐ *Everyone was making unpleasant remarks about John, but I stuck up for him.* ☐ *Our team was losing, but I stuck up for it anyway.*

Stick with it. Do not give up. Stay with your task. ☐ *Bill: I'm really tired of calculus. Father: Stick with it. You'll be a better person for it.* ☐ *Bill: This job is getting to be such a pain. Sue: True, but it pays well, doesn't it? Stick with it.*

stick with someone or something Go to **stick by** someone or something.

stick-in-the-mud *Fig.* a dull and old-fashioned person. ☐ *Don't be such an old stick-in-the-mud.* ☐ *Some stick-in-the-mud objected to the kind of music we wanted to play in church.*

Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me. *Prov.* You do not hurt me by calling me names. (A reply to someone who has called you names. Primarily used by children; sounds childish when used by adults.) ☐ *Brother: You're stupid and mean, and everybody hates you! Sister: Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.*

***stiff as a poker** rigid and inflexible; stiff and awkward. (Usually used to describe people. *Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *This guy's dead. He's cold and as stiff as a poker.* ☐ *John is not a very good dancer; he's stiff as a poker.*

stiffen something **up**† to make something rigid or tense. ☐ *He added a little starch to the rinse water to stiffen his collars up a bit.* ☐ *The cold draft has stiffened up my neck.*

stiffen up to become stiff. ☐ *The bread dough stiffened up as it got cold.* ☐ *My knees began to stiffen up after I sat still for an hour.*

stigmatize someone **as** something to brand or label someone as something. ☐ *The opposition will try to stigmatize you as a spendthrift.* ☐ *Tony was stigmatized as a poor loser.*

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***still as death** *Cliché* immobile; completely still. (The reference to death gives this expression ominous connotations. *Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *George sat as still as death all afternoon.* ☐ *When the storm was over, everything was suddenly still as death.*

A **still tongue makes a wise head.** *Prov.* If you are wise, you do not talk very much.; You should only speak when you have judged that it is appropriate to do so. ☐ *Don't chatter about whatever comes to your mind. A still tongue makes a wise head.* ☐ *Kathy really offended Mr. Parker by talking so much about his ex-wife. She needs to learn that a still tongue makes a wise head.*

Still waters run deep. *Prov.* Quiet people are often very thoughtful. ☐ *Jill: I get the impression that Nathan is not very smart. He never says anything. Jane: Don't be so sure. Still waters run deep, you know.*

stimulate someone or an animal **into** something to excite or cause someone or an animal to do something. ☐ *The promises of bonuses stimulated the workers into higher productivity for the week.* ☐ *The morning light stimulates the birds into singing.*

sting someone **for** something *Sl.* to cheat someone of a particular amount; to make someone pay for something. ☐ *That guy stung me for twenty bucks!* ☐ *Toby was stung for the lunch bill.*

sting someone **with** something to use something to sting someone. ☐ *The bee stung me with its stinger.* ☐ *The wasp can sting you with its poisonous barb.*

stink on ice *Sl.* to be really rotten. (So rotten as to reek even when frozen.) ☐ *This show stinks on ice.* ☐ *The whole idea stank on ice.*

stink something **up†** to make something or some place smell very bad. ☐ *Your cooking really stunk the place up!* ☐ *The rotten eggs will stink up the whole house.*

stink to high heaven and **smell to high heaven** *Fig.* to smell very bad. ☐ *What happened? This place stinks to high heaven.* ☐ *This meat smells to high heaven. Throw it away!*

stink with something to smell very bad with the smell of something. ☐ *The room stinks with a garlicky smell.* ☐ *Our garden stinks with the smell of something rotting.*

stinking rich *Fig.* very rich. ☐ *I'd like to be stinking rich for the rest of my life.* ☐ *Tiffany is stinking rich, and she acts like it.*

stinking with something *Fig.* having lots of something. ☐ *Mr. Wilson is just stinking with cash.* ☐ *Those guys are stinking with jewelry.*

stir someone **(in)to** something to excite someone into doing something. ☐ *The events of the day stirred everyone into action.* ☐ *The danger stirred them to action.*

stir someone **up†** *Fig.* to get someone excited; to get someone angry. (Fig. on **stir** something **up**.) ☐ *The march music really stirred the audience up.* ☐ *The march stirred up the audience.*

stir something **around** to agitate or mix a liquid substance by moving it in a circular motion. ☐ *Stir the mixture around to mix it up.* ☐ *You should stir the dressing around a bit before you serve it.*

stir something **in†** Go to next.

stir something **into** something and **stir** something **in†** to mix something into something. ☐ *The painter stirred too much red pigment into the paint.* ☐ *The painter stirred in the pigment.*

stir something **up† 1.** *Lit.* to mix something by stirring. ☐ *Please stir the pancake batter up before you use it.* ☐ *Please stir up the batter.* **2.** *Fig.* to cause trouble. ☐ *Why are you always trying to stir trouble up?* ☐ *Are you stirring up trouble again?*

stir up a hornet's nest *Fig.* to create a lot of trouble. (Fig. on **stir** something **up** ②.) ☐ *If you say that to her, you will be stirring up a hornet's nest.* ☐ *There is no need to stir up a hornet's nest.*

***stir-crazy** crazy from being confined. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~; go ~; get ~; make** someone **~**. *Stir* is a slang word for prison.) ☐ *I am going to go stir-crazy if I don't get out of this office.*

A **stitch in time saves nine.** *Prov.* If you fix a small problem right away, it will not become a bigger problem later. ☐ *Let's patch the roof before that hole gets bigger. A stitch in time saves nine.*

stitch something **onto** something and **stitch** something **on†** to sew something onto the surface of something else. ☐ *Fred stitched the badge onto his jacket.* ☐ *Fred stitched on the badge.*

stitch something **up†** to sew something together; to mend a tear or ripped seam. ☐ *I tore my shirt. Would you stitch it up, please?* ☐ *Please stitch up my shirt.*

stock in trade whatever goods, skills, etc., are necessary to undertake an activity of some kind. ☐ *Of course I am glad to help. Packing household goods is my stock in trade.*

stock something **(up†) with** something to load something with a supply of something. ☐ *Let's stock the wine cellar with good vintages this year.* ☐ *We will stock up our wine cellar with whatever is on sale.*

stock up (on something**)** to build up a supply of something in particular. ☐ *I need to stock up on food for the party.* ☐ *We need fresh vegetables. We will have to stock up before the weekend.*

stock up (with something**)** to build up a supply of something. ☐ *You had better stock up with firewood before the first snowstorm.* ☐ *Yes, I will stock up today.*

stoke something **up† 1.** to poke or add fuel to a fire to make it burn hotter. ☐ *Grandpa had to go down each winter morning to stoke the fire up.* ☐ *He stoked up the furnace every morning during the winter.* **2.** *Sl.* to start something, such as an engine. ☐ *Stoke this old car up so we can leave.* ☐ *Stoke up your motorcycle and let's get going.*

***stoked on** someone or something *Sl.* excited by someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I am really stoked on that movie.* ☐ *She was really stoked on Tom.*

stoked out *Sl.* exhausted. ☐ *I ran all the way and got stoked out.* ☐ *Alex is totally stoked out from working in the hot sun.*

Stolen fruit is sweetest. and **Stolen pleasures are sweetest.** *Prov.* People often enjoy illicit things just because they are illicit. ☐ *To judge from the number of his extramarital affairs, John must believe that stolen pleasures are sweetest.*

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Stolen pleasures are sweetest. Go to previous.

stomp on someone **1.** *Lit.* to stamp someone down. ☐ *The angry crowd knocked him down and stomped on him.* ☐ *The crowd stomped on the mugger.* **2.** *Fig.* to repress someone. ☐ *Every time I get a good idea, the boss stomps on me.* ☐ *Don't stomp on her every time she says something.*

stone dead *Rur.* dead; unquestionably dead; long dead. ☐ *The cat was stone dead and stiff as a board by the time we got to him.* ☐ *Old Tom is stone dead and in the ground.*

stone(-cold) sober and **cold sober** absolutely sober. ☐ *I am stone-cold sober, or I will be by morning anyway.* ☐ *I found the secret to waking up cold sober. Don't drink.*

a **stone's throw away** *Fig.* a short distance; a relatively short distance. ☐ *John saw Mary across the street, just a stone's throw away.* ☐ *Philadelphia is just a stone's throw away from Camden, New Jersey.*

stool (on someone**)** *Sl.* to inform (on someone). ☐ *Jane would stool on anybody, even her own mother.* ☐ *Somebody stooled and ruined the whole layout.*

stool (pigeon) and **stoolie** an informer. (Originally underworld.) ☐ *Some stool pigeon spilled the works to the boys in blue.* ☐ *There's nothing I hate worse than a stoolie.*

stoop down to dip, duck, or squat down. ☐ *I had to stoop down to enter the tiny door.* ☐ *Stoop down so you don't bump your head.*

stoop over to bend over. ☐ *Carl stooped over to pick up his napkin and lost his balance.* ☐ *As he stooped over, he lost his balance and fell.*

stoop to doing something to degrade oneself or condescend to doing something; to do something that is beneath one. ☐ *Whoever thought that the manager of the department would stoop to sweeping up?* ☐ *I never dreamed that Bill would stoop to stealing.*

stop at something **1.** to go as far as something and then stop. ☐ *I will stop at the end of the road.* ☐ *The road stopped at the base of a mountain.* **2.** to stop briefly at something and then continue. ☐ *I have to stop at the store for a minute.* ☐ *Do you mind if I stop at a drug store?* **3.** to spend the night at some place. (Typically with *motel, inn, bed and breakfast,* and *hotel.*) ☐ *We stopped at a nice little inn for the night.* ☐ *When we travel, we like to stop at hotels that are run by one of the national chains.*

stop behind someone or something to bring oneself or one's vehicle to a stop behind someone or something. ☐ *I stopped behind Fred at the red light.* ☐ *Fred stopped behind a minivan.*

stop by (some place**)** and **stop in (**some place**)** to visit some place, usually briefly. ☐ *I was coming home, but I decided to stop by my aunt's on the way.* ☐ *She was very glad that I stopped in.*

stop dead in one's **tracks** *Fig.* to stop completely still suddenly because of fear, a noise, etc. ☐ *I stopped dead in my tracks when I heard the scream.* ☐ *The deer stopped dead in its tracks when it heard the hunter step on a fallen branch.*

stop for someone to halt one's vehicle to allow someone to get in. ☐ *I stopped for Jeff, but he didn't want a ride.* ☐ *I didn't have time to stop for you. I hope you will forgive me.*

stop for something to halt one's vehicle because of something or the need of something. ☐ *I had to stop for a red light.* ☐ *We stopped for some gas.*

stop in (some place**)** Go to **stop by (**some place**)**.

stop, look, and listen to exercise caution, especially at street corners and railroad crossings, by stopping, looking to the left and to the right, and listening for approaching vehicles or a train. ☐ *Sally's mother trained her to stop, look, and listen at every street corner.* ☐ *It is a good practice to stop, look, and listen at a railroad crossing.*

stop off (some place**) (for** a period of time**)** to halt or pause for a certain period of time. ☐ *I need to stop off for a rest.* ☐ *Let's find a little town and stop off.* ☐ *I have to stop off at the store for a minute.* ☐ *We stopped off for a while at the park.*

stop on a dime *Fig.* to come to a stop in a very short distance. ☐ *This thing will stop on a dime.* ☐ *Imagine a bus that could stop on a dime.*

stop on something to go as far as something [on the floor or the ground] and then stop. ☐ *Please stop on the line.* ☐ *You are supposed to stop on the white line or behind it.*

stop one or something **dead in** one's or something's **tracks** *Fig.* to stop someone or something suddenly and completely. ☐ *The gunshot stopped the killer dead in her tracks.* ☐ *The arrow stopped the deer dead in its tracks.*

stop over (some place**)** to break one's journey, usually overnight or even longer. ☐ *On our way to New York, we stopped over in Philadelphia for the night.* ☐ *That's a good place to stop over. There are some nice hotels in Philadelphia.*

stop short of a place not to go as far as something. ☐ *The bus stopped short of the end of the road.* ☐ *The speeding car stopped short of the sidewalk where children were playing.*

stop short of doing something not to go as far as doing something. ☐ *Fortunately Bob stopped short of hitting Tom.* ☐ *The boss criticized Jane's work but stopped short of firing her.* ☐ *Jack was furious but stopped short of hitting Tom.*

stop someone **cold** to halt someone immediately. ☐ *When you told us the bad news, it stopped me cold.*

stop someone **from** doing something to prevent someone from doing something. ☐ *I can't stop her from running away.* ☐ *They couldn't stop themselves from eating.*

stop something **up**† **(with** something**)** to plug or clog something with something. ☐ *Gary stopped the sink up with bacon grease.* ☐ *He stopped up the sink with bacon grease.* ☐ *Try not to stop the sink up.*

Stop the music! and **Stop the presses!** *Inf.* Stop everything!; **Hold it!** (*Presses* refers to the printing presses used to print newspapers. This means that there is recent news of such magnitude that the presses must be stopped so a new edition can be printed immediately.) ☐ *John (entering the room): Stop the music! There's a fire in the kitchen! Mary: Good grief! Let's get out of here!* ☐ *"Stop the presses!" shouted Jane. "I have an announcement."*

Stop the presses! Go to previous.

stop up [for something] to become clogged. ☐ *The sink stopped up again!*

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store something **away**† to put something away for future use; to set something aside. ☐ *Store the extra rice away for use next week.* ☐ *Please store away the extra food.*

store something **in** something to set something aside in something. ☐ *Can I store my bicycle in your garage?* ☐ *Do you mind if I store my coat in your locker?*

store something **up**† to build up and lay away a supply of something. ☐ *The bears will store fat up for the long winter.* ☐ *They store up fat for the winter.*

storm around *Fig.* to go about in a fury. ☐ *What is he storming around about?* ☐ *Martin was storming around all morning because he lost his car keys.*

storm at someone or something *Fig.* to direct one's anger at someone or something. ☐ *She stormed at him because he was late again.* ☐ *Richard was storming at the cat again.*

storm in(to some place**)** *Fig.* to burst into something or some place angrily. ☐ *The army stormed into the town and took many of the citizens as prisoners.* ☐ *Leonard stormed in, shouting at everyone.*

A **storm is brewing. 1.** There is going to be a storm. ☐ *Look at the clouds. A storm is brewing.* ☐ *A storm is brewing in the west.* **2.** There is going to be trouble or emotional upset. ☐ *He looks angry. A storm is brewing.*

storm out (of some place**)** *Fig.* to burst out of some place angrily. ☐ *Carol stormed out of the office in a rage.* ☐ *She got mad and stormed out.*

stow away to conceal oneself in a vehicle, originally a ship, in order to travel without paying. ☐ *Don got to this country by stowing away on a cargo ship.*

stow something **away**† to pack something away. ☐ *I have to stow my clothes away before I go to bed.* ☐ *Please stow away your things and get right to work.*

straddle the fence *Fig.* to support both sides of an issue. (As if one were partly on either side of a fence.) ☐ *The mayor is straddling the fence on this issue, hoping the public will forget it.* ☐ *The legislator wanted to straddle the fence until the last minute, and that alone cost her a lot of votes.*

the **straight and narrow** *Fig.* a straight and law-abiding route through life. (Referring to a morally rigid and correct course of behavior. Fixed order.) ☐ *You should have no trouble with the police if you stick to the straight and narrow.* ☐ *Roger was the kind who followed the straight and narrow every day of his life.*

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***straight as an arrow 1.** *Cliché* [of something] very straight. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *The road to my house is as straight as an arrow, so it should be very easy to follow.* **2.** *Cliché* [of someone] honest or forthright. (*Straight* here means honest. *Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *Tom is straight as an arrow. I'd trust him with anything.*

straightaway and **straight off** right away; immediately, without thinking or considering. ☐ *We'll have to depart straight off.* ☐ *Straightaway I knew something was wrong.*

the **straight dope** the true information; the full story. ☐ *He gave us the straight dope.* ☐ *I want the straight dope. I can take it.*

*a **straight face** *Fig.* a face free from smiles or laughter. (*Typically: **have** ~; **keep** ~.) ☐ *It's hard to keep a straight face when someone tells a funny joke.*

(straight) from the horse's mouth *Fig.* from an authoritative or dependable source. (See also **get** something **straight from the horse's mouth.**) ☐ *I know it's true! I heard it straight from the horse's mouth!* ☐ *This comes straight from the horse's mouth, so it has to be believed.*

straight from the shoulder *Fig.* very direct, without attenuation or embellishment. ☐ *Okay, I'll give it to you straight from the shoulder.* ☐ *Right straight from the shoulder: clean out your desk; you're through.*

straight low *Sl.* the absolute truth. (From *lowdown* = the story; the truth.) ☐ *Can you give me the straight low on this mess?* ☐ *Nobody ain't gonna tell no warden the straight low; you can be sure of that.*

straight man someone who sets up jokes or gags so that someone else can say the punch line. ☐ *I need a straight man to set up all my jokes.* ☐ *I'm tired of being a straight man for a has-been comic.*

straight off Go to **straightaway.**

straight off the bat Go to **right off the bat.**

straight out frankly; directly. ☐ *Bob told Pam straight out that he didn't want to marry her.* ☐ *Jim was told straight out to start working harder.*

straight shooter *Fig.* an honest person. ☐ *I trust Mike; he's a straight shooter.* ☐ *We need a straight shooter in office who will work for the people rather than some lobbyists.*

straight talk direct and honest talk. ☐ *It's about time for a little straight talk around here.* ☐ *If they want straight talk and can handle straight talk, give 'em straight talk.*

straight up 1. *Sl.* upright. ☐ *A fine guy—really straight up.* ☐ *She is one of the most straight up brokers in town.* **2.** *Sl.* [of a drink] served without ice; neat. ☐ *I'll have a bourbon, straight up, please.* ☐ *No, not straight up. Just a little ice.* **3.** *Sl.* [of eggs] cooked sunny-side up; having to do with eggs cooked with the yolks facing up. ☐ *Two eggs, straight up, and a cup of coffee.* ☐ *I like my eggs straight up, but the white part has to be cooked solid.*

straighten out 1. to become straight. ☐ *The road finally straightened out.* ☐ *The train tracks straightened out on the plain.* **2.** to improve one's behavior or attitude. ☐ *I hope he straightens out before he gets himself into real trouble.* ☐ *Fred had better straighten out soon if he wants to get a job.*

straighten someone or something **up**† **1.** to put someone or something into an upright position. ☐ *The fence is tilted. Please straighten that post up when you get a chance.* ☐ *Bill, you're slouching again. Straighten up your back.* **2.** to tidy up someone or something. ☐ *John straightened himself up a little before going out for dinner.* ☐ *This room is a mess. Let's straighten up this place, right now!*

straighten someone **out**† **1.** to make someone's body straight or orderly. ☐ *The undertaker straightened Sam out in his coffin.* ☐ *Straighten out your body so I can massage your back.* **2.** to cause someone to behave better or to have a better attitude; to reform someone. ☐ *You are terrible. Someone is going to have to straighten you out!* ☐ *The principal straightened out the troublesome boys.* **3.** to help someone become less confused about something. ☐ *Can you straighten me out on this matter?* ☐ *I will do what I can to straighten out the office staff on this question.*

straighten something **out**† **1.** to make something straighter. ☐ *I can't straighten these heavy boxes out.* ☐ *Please straighten out this line of people.* **2.** to bring order to something that is disorderly. ☐ *See if you can straighten this mess out.* ☐ *Will you straighten out your room, please?*

straighten up 1. to sit or stand more straight. ☐ *Billy's mother told him to straighten up or he'd fall out of his chair.* ☐ *John straightened up so he'd look taller.* **2.** to behave better. ☐ *Bill was acting badly for a while; then he straightened up.* ☐ *Sally, straighten up, or I will punish you!*

straighten up and fly right *Fig.* to improve one's behavior or attitude and perform better. (Originally referred to an airplane.) ☐ *If you want to keep out of trouble, you had better straighten up and fly right.* ☐ *Straighten up and fly right or I will send you to the principal.*

strain after something [for a singer] to work very hard to reach a very high or a very low note. ☐ *Don't strain after the note. Let it come naturally, like a cooling breeze.* ☐ *She was straining after each note as if it hurt her to sing, which it probably did.*

strain at gnats and swallow camels *Prov.* to criticize other people for minor offenses while ignoring major offenses. (Biblical.) ☐ *Jill: Look at that. Edward is combing his hair at his desk. How unprofessional. Jane: Don't strain at gnats and swallow camels. There are worse problems than that around here.*

strain at the leash 1. *Lit.* [for a dog] to pull very hard on its leash. ☐ *It's hard to walk Fido, because he is always straining at the leash.* ☐ *I wish that this dog would not strain at the leash. It's very hard on me.* **2.** *Fig.* [for a person] to want to move ahead with things, aggressively and independently. ☐ *She wants to fix things right away. She is straining at the leash to get started.* ☐ *Paul is straining at the leash to get on the job.*

strain away (at something**)** to work very hard, continuously, at doing something. ☐ *She strained away at her weights, getting stronger every day.* ☐ *She was straining away on the rowing machine when we came in.*

strain for an effect to work very hard to try to achieve some effect. ☐ *The actors were straining so hard for an effect that they forgot their lines.* ☐ *Don't strain for effect so much. The authors of this drama knew what they were doing, and it's in the lines already.*

strain something **off of** something and **strain** something **off**† to remove the excess or unwanted liquid from something. ☐ *The cook strained the grease off the cooking juices.* ☐ *The cook strained off the grease.*

strain something **through** something to filter a liquid or a watery substance by pouring it through something. ☐ *Tony strained the strawberry jelly through cheesecloth.* ☐ *We will have to strain the clabber to take out the curds.*

strand someone **on** something to abandon someone on something from which there is no escape. ☐ *The shipwreck stranded our little group on a deserted beach.* ☐ *We were stranded on the little island by a storm.*

stranger to something or some place someone who is new to an area or place. ☐ *Although John was a stranger to big cities, he enjoyed visiting New York.* ☐ *You are a stranger to our town, and I hope you feel welcome.*

strap someone or something **down**† to tie or bind someone or something down to something. ☐ *The nurses strapped Gary down in preparation for the operation.* ☐ *They strapped down the patient and gave him a sedative.*

strap someone or something **in(to)** something and **strap** someone or something **in**† to tie or bind someone or something into something. ☐ *Mother strapped little Jimmy into his seat.* ☐ *She strapped in Jimmy.*

strap something **onto** someone or something and **strap** something **on**† to tie or bind something onto someone or something. ☐ *The hiker strapped the load onto her partner.* ☐ *She strapped on the backpack.*

***strapped for** something needing something, usually money. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I am really strapped for cash. Can you lend me some?* ☐ *Ted is strapped for money and cannot pay his bills.*

a **straw man** a weak proposition posited only to be demolished by a simple countering argument. ☐ *So you can knock down your own straw man! Big deal. The question is how can you deal with real problems.*

the **straw that broke the camel's back** Go to the last straw.

stray (away) (from something**)** to drift away from or wander away from a particular topic or location. (The option elements cannot be transposed.) ☐ *Please don't stray from the general area of discussion.* ☐ *Sally strayed away from her topic a number of times.*

stray in(to something**)** to wander into something. ☐ *The deer strayed into the town and ruined almost everyone's garden.* ☐ *We left the gate open, and the cows strayed in and drank from the pond.*

stray onto something to wander onto an area, such as a parcel of land. ☐ *Your cows strayed onto my land and ate my marigolds!* ☐ *If your horse strays onto my land one more time, it's my horse!*

streak across something to move across something very fast. ☐ *A comet streaked across the night sky.* ☐ *Tom streaked across the street to get a cup of coffee.*

a **streak of bad luck** and a **string of bad luck** a series of events that are only bad luck. ☐ *After a long string of bad luck, we finally got a lucky break.*

a **streak of good luck** and a **string of good luck** a series of fortunate events. ☐ *After a series of failures, we started out on a streak of good luck.*

a **streak of luck** Go to a lucky streak.

stream down (on someone or something**)** [for a liquid or light] to flow downward onto someone or something. ☐ *The water streamed down on all of them.* ☐ *The light broke through the clouds and streamed down on all of them.* ☐ *The waterfall streamed down and soaked them all.*

stream in(to something**)** to flow or rush into something. ☐ *The people streamed into the hall, each seeking the best possible seat.* ☐ *Water streamed into the room from the broken pipe.* ☐ *Complaints about the bawdy performance streamed in.*

stretch a point and **stretch the point** *Fig.* to interpret a point flexibly and with great latitude. ☐ *Would it be stretching a point to suggest that everyone is invited to your*

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picnic? ☐ *To say that everyone is invited is stretching the point.*

stretch away (from something**)** to extend away from something. ☐ *A vast plain stretched away from the riverbank.* ☐ *The plain stretched away as far as we could see.*

stretch away to some place to extend as far as some place. ☐ *The forest stretched away to the horizon.* ☐ *The river stretched away to the sea.*

stretch forth (from something**)** to extend out or forth from something. ☐ *A path stretched forth from the cabin, leading deep into the woods.* ☐ *Outside the cabin door, a path stretched forth.*

stretch it Go to **stretch the truth.**

stretch one's **legs** *Fig.* to walk around and loosen one's leg muscles after sitting down or lying down for a time. ☐ *We wanted to stretch our legs during intermission.* ☐ *After sitting in the car all day, the travelers decided to stretch their legs.*

stretch one's **money** and **make** one's **money stretch** *Fig.* to economize so that one's money lasts longer. ☐ *We have to stretch our money in order to be able to buy groceries at the end of the month.*

stretch out [for one] to extend and stretch one's body to its full length. ☐ *She lay down, stretched out, and relaxed for the first time in days.* ☐ *I need a bigger bed. I can't stretch out in this one.*

stretch out to someone or something to extend as far as someone or something. ☐ *His arm stretched out to the guy next to him and established the correct amount of separation in the ranks.* ☐ *The beach stretched out to the horizon.*

stretch someone or something **out**† to extend or draw out someone or something. ☐ *Molly stretched the baby out to change his clothes.* ☐ *She stretched out the baby, who had rolled into a ball.*

stretch something **out**† **(to** someone or something**)** to reach something out to someone or something. ☐ *Jeff stretched his hand out to Tiffany.* ☐ *He stretched out his hand to the visitor.*

stretch the point Go to next.

stretch the truth and **stretch the point; stretch it** *Fig.* to exaggerate. ☐ *When he claimed to have a Ph.D., he was stretching the truth.* ☐ *Sally tends to stretch the point when telling tales about her wild teenage years.*

Stretch your arm no further than your sleeve will reach. *Prov.* Do not spend more money than you have. ☐ *Sue: I can get enough money for college if I take out several loans. Bill: I'd advise against it. Stretch your arm no further than your sleeve will reach.*

strew something **(all) over** something to sow or spread something over an area. ☐ *Clean this place up! You have strewn your clothing all over the place.* ☐ *The wind strewed the leaves over the lawns.*

strew something **on** someone or something to sow or spread something on someone or something. ☐ *The wind strewed the dandelion seeds on Fred and his friends.* ☐ *A child went down the aisle, strewing flowers on the white walkway ahead of the bride.*

strew something **over** someone or something to spread or scatter something over someone or something. ☐ *The silo explosion strewed the grain over everyone in the vicinity.* ☐ *The explosion strewed wreckage over a two-block area.*

strew something **with** something to cover something with bits of something. ☐ *Who strewed the sidewalk with rice and confetti?* ☐ *The yards were strewn with leaves and branches after the storm.*

***stricken with** something afflicted or overwhelmed with something. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~; get ~.**) ☐ *Albert was stricken with a strange disease.* ☐ *Fred was stricken with remorse because of his rude remarks.* ☐ *Tom was stricken with the flu after his trip to Russia.*

strictly business 1. a matter or issue that is all business and no pleasure. ☐ *This meeting is strictly business. We don't have time for any leisure activity.* **2.** a person who is very businesslike and does not waste time with nonbusiness matters. ☐ *Joe is strictly business. I don't think he has a sense of humor. At least I have never seen it.*

(strictly) from hunger *Sl.* very mediocre; acceptable only when nothing else is available. ☐ *This kind of entertainment is from hunger.* ☐ *The singer was strictly from hunger.*

(strictly) on the level honest; dependably open and fair. ☐ *How can I be sure you're on the level?* ☐ *You can trust Sally. She's strictly on the level.*

(strictly) on the up-and-up honest; fair and straight. ☐ *Do you think that the mayor is on the up-and-up?* ☐ *Yes, the mayor is strictly on the up-and-up.*

stride in(to some place**)** to walk with long steps into some place. ☐ *Jeff strode into the restaurant and demanded the best table.* ☐ *He strode in and ordered roast chicken.*

stride out of some place to walk with long steps out of some place. ☐ *The angry customer strode out of the shop without purchasing anything.* ☐ *We strode out of the restaurant, pledging never to go there again.*

strike a balance (between two things**)** to find a satisfactory compromise between two extremes. ☐ *The political party must strike a balance between the right wing and the left wing.* ☐ *Jane is overdressed for the party and Sally is underdressed. What a pity they didn't strike a balance between them.*

strike a bargain and **strike a deal** to reach an agreement on a price or negotiation (for something). ☐ *They argued for a while and finally struck a bargain.* ☐ *They were unable to strike a bargain, so they ended their meeting.*

strike a chord (with someone**)** *Fig.* to cause someone to remember something; to remind someone of something; to be familiar. ☐ *The woman in the portrait struck a chord with me, and I realized that it was my grandmother.* ☐ *His name strikes a chord, but I don't know why.*

strike a deal Go to **strike a bargain.**

strike a happy medium and **hit a happy medium; find a happy medium** to find a compromise position; to arrive at a position halfway between two unacceptable extremes. ☐ *Ann likes very spicy food, but Bob doesn't care for spicy food at all. We are trying to find a restaurant that strikes a happy medium.* ☐ *Tom is either very happy or very sad. He can't seem to hit a happy medium.*

strike a match to light a match by rubbing it on a rough surface. ☐ *Mary struck a match and lit a candle.* ☐ *When*

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Sally struck a match to light a cigarette, Jane said quickly, "No smoking, please."

strike a pose to position oneself in a certain posture. ☐ *Bob struck a pose in front of the mirror to see how much he had bulked up.* ☐ *Lisa walked into the room and struck a pose, hoping she would be noticed.*

strike a sour note and **hit a sour note** *Fig.* to signify something unpleasant. ☐ *Jane's sad announcement struck a sour note at the annual banquet.* ☐ *News of the accident hit a sour note in our holiday celebration.*

strike at someone or something to hit at or toward someone or something. ☐ *She struck at him, but he parried the blows.* ☐ *The bear struck at the branch, hoping to break it and get at the honey.*

strike back (at someone or something**)** to return the blows of someone or something; to return the attack of someone or something. ☐ *The victim struck back at the mugger and scared him away.* ☐ *The victim struck back in the courts.*

strike for something to conduct a work stoppage in order to gain something. ☐ *The workers were striking for longer vacations.* ☐ *We are striking for higher pay.*

strike home Go to hit home.

strike home with someone [for something] to awaken recognition and acceptance in a person. ☐ *What you said really strikes home with me.* ☐ *Her comments struck home with her audience.*

strike it rich to acquire wealth suddenly. ☐ *If I could strike it rich, I wouldn't have to work anymore.* ☐ *Sally ordered a dozen oysters and found a huge pearl in one of them. She struck it rich!*

strike out 1. *Lit.* [for a baseball batter] to be declared out after making three strikes. (Baseball.) ☐ *And so Drew Wilson strikes out for his second time in this game!* ☐ *He struck out in the second inning, and the manager took him out then.* **2.** *Fig.* to fail. ☐ *Well, we struck out again, but we'll keep trying.* ☐ *I hear you struck out on that Acme proposal. Better luck next time.*

strike out (at someone or something**)** to hit at someone or something with the intention of threatening or harming. ☐ *Dave would strike out at anyone who came near him, but it was all bluff.* ☐ *He was mad, and when anyone came close, he struck out.*

strike out for some place to begin a journey to some place; to set out on a journey for some place. ☐ *We struck out for Denver, hoping to get there in a few hours.* ☐ *The hikers struck out for the cabin but were delayed by a sudden storm.*

strike out on one's **own** and **set out on** one's **own** to start out to live, work, or travel by oneself. ☐ *I couldn't get along with my business partner, so I decided to strike out on my own.*

strike over something to mark out printed words by putting x's over them or a line through them. ☐ *Please don't strike over your errors. Erase them altogether.* ☐ *Betty struck over most of the misspellings.*

strike someone **as** something **1.** [for a thought or behavior] to affect someone a certain way. ☐ *John's rude behavior struck me as surprising.* ☐ *Mary's attitude struck me as childish.* **2.** [for a person] to impress someone as something or a particular type of person. ☐ *You strike me as thoughtful.* ☐ *You don't strike me as the type of person to do something like that.*

strike someone **funny** *Fig.* to seem funny to someone. ☐ *Sally has a great sense of humor. Everything she says strikes me funny.* ☐ *Why are you laughing? Did something I said strike you funny?*

strike someone or something **down†** to knock someone or something down by striking. ☐ *Max struck Lefty down with one blow.* ☐ *He struck down the weeds with a scythe.*

strike someone or something **from** something to remove someone or something from something, such as a list. ☐ *I will have to strike David from our rolls. He never shows up.* ☐ *We struck the red car from the list of eligible racers.*

strike someone or something **on** something to hit someone or something on a particular place or part. ☐ *The ball struck me on my elbow, causing a great deal of pain.* ☐ *I struck the bear on the paw, and that only made it madder.*

strike someone or something **with** something to hit someone or something with something. ☐ *Max struck Lefty with his fist.* ☐ *The mayor struck the table with his fist.*

strike someone's **fancy** to appeal to someone. ☐ *I'll have some ice cream, please. Chocolate strikes my fancy right now.* ☐ *Why don't you go to the store and buy a CD that strikes your fancy?*

strike something **down†** [for a court] to invalidate a ruling or law. ☐ *The higher court struck the ruling of the lower court down.* ☐ *The court struck down the ruling.*

strike something **into** something to knock something, such as a ball, into something. ☐ *Johnny struck the ball into the vacant lot.* ☐ *Ted struck golf ball after golf ball into the water.*

strike something **off (of)** someone or something and **strike** something **off†** to knock something off someone or something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *She accidentally struck John's hat off of him.* ☐ *She struck off a chunk of ice.*

strike something **out†** to cross something out of a section of printing or writing. ☐ *This is wrong. Please strike it out.* ☐ *Strike out this sentence.*

strike something **up†** to begin something; to cause something to begin. (Typically, the playing of a band, a conversation, or a friendship.) ☐ *We tried to strike a conversation up—to no avail.* ☐ *I struck up a conversation with Molly.*

strike something **(up)on** something to hit or bang something on something else. ☐ *She struck her head upon the side of the bed.* ☐ *Mary struck her elbow on the doorjamb.*

strike the right note *Fig.* to achieve the desired effect; to do something suitable or pleasing. ☐ *Meg struck the right note when she wore a dark suit to the interview.* ☐ *The politician's speech failed to strike the right note with the crowd.*

strike up a conversation to start a conversation (with someone). ☐ *I struck up an interesting conversation with someone on the bus yesterday.* ☐ *It's easy to strike up a conversation with someone when you're traveling.*

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strike up a friendship to become friends (with someone). ☐ *I struck up a friendship with John while we were on a business trip together.* ☐ *If you're lonely, you should go out and try to strike up a friendship with someone you like.*

strike up the band 1. *Lit.* to cause a (dance) band to start playing. ☐ *Strike up the band, maestro, so we all can dance the night away.* **2.** *Fig.* to cause something to start. ☐ *Strike up the band! Let's get this show on the road.*

Strike while the iron is hot. *Prov.* When you have an opportunity to do something, do it before you lose your chance. ☐ *This is the best time in the last ten years to buy a house. Strike while the iron is hot.* ☐ *Ask Lisa for a favor now, while she's in a good mood. Strike while the iron is hot.*

string along (with someone**) 1.** to follow with someone. ☐ *Do you mind if I string along with you?* ☐ *I don't mind if you string along.* **2.** to agree with someone's policies and actions. ☐ *Okay. I will string along with you this time, but I don't know about the future.* ☐ *I would appreciate it if you would string along just this one time.*

a **string of bad luck** Go to a streak of bad luck.

a **string of good luck** Go to a streak of good luck.

string someone **along** to maintain someone's attention or interest, probably insincerely. ☐ *You are just stringing me along because you like to borrow my car. You are not a real friend.* ☐ *Rachel strung her along for the sake of old times.*

string someone **up**† to hang someone. ☐ *The sheriff swore he would string Tex up whenever he caught him.* ☐ *He never strung up Tex.*

string something **out**† **1.** *Lit.* to unwind, stretch, or straighten something, such as wire, and extend it. ☐ *The workers strung the wires out before installing them.* ☐ *They strung out the wires first.* **2.** *Fig.* to cause something to take more time than it ought to. ☐ *Is there any good reason to string this meeting out any longer?* ☐ *Don't string out the meetings so long.*

string something **together** to connect things, such as beads, together, as with string. ☐ *I spent all afternoon stringing beads together.* ☐ *My pearls broke and I had to take them to a jeweler to have them strung together again.*

strip down to remove one's clothing. ☐ *The doctor told Joe to strip down for his examination.* ☐ *Joe stripped down for the examination.*

strip for something to take off one's clothing for something. ☐ *Todd went into the locker room and stripped for his shower.* ☐ *All the recruits stripped for their medical examination.*

strip someone or something **down to** something and **strip** someone or something **down**† to remove the covering of someone or something down to the lowest level. ☐ *The emergency room nurse stripped the unconscious patient down to his shorts.* ☐ *He stripped down the patient to his underwear.* ☐ *He stripped the patient down.*

strip someone or something **of** something to take something, such as status or property, away from someone or something. ☐ *The court stripped him of all his property.* ☐ *We stripped him of his rights when we put him in jail.*

strip something **away**† **(from** someone or something**)** to remove or peel something from someone or something. ☐ *The emergency room nurse stripped the clothing away from the burn victim.* ☐ *He stripped away the victim's clothing.* ☐ *Jamie stripped away the old paint from the bathroom wall.*

strip something **in**† to insert something into a line of print by gluing or a strip of paper. ☐ *You will have to strip the accent in.* ☐ *Strip in a grave accent right here.*

strip something **off (of)** someone or something and **strip** something **off**† to tear something from someone or something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *The paramedic stripped the shirt off the burn victim and began to treat her burns.* ☐ *The medic stripped off the patient's shirt.*

strip to something to take off one's clothing down to a particular level, usually to one's skin, the waist, or some euphemistic way of expressing nudity or near nudity. ☐ *Tom stripped to the waist and continued to labor in the hot sun.* ☐ *Tom stripped to the bare essentials and got ready to be examined by the doctor.*

strive after something to try very hard to obtain something. ☐ *I am always striving after perfection.* ☐ *Ted was striving after a promotion and finally got it.*

strive against something to work against something. ☐ *He worked hard, striving against failure at every turn.* ☐ *Things were difficult. I had to strive against quitting almost every day.*

strive for something to try to obtain or bring about something. ☐ *I am striving for the best possible result.* ☐ *Mary strives for perfection in everything she does.*

strive to do something to try hard to do something. ☐ *She strove very hard to do what she had set out to do.* ☐ *Please strive to do it as best you can.*

strive toward something to work toward a goal. ☐ *I always strive toward perfection.* ☐ *Mary strove toward doing her best at all times.*

a **stroke of genius** an act of genius; a very clever and innovative idea or task. ☐ *Your idea of painting the rock wall red was a stroke of genius.*

a **stroke of luck** *Fig.* a bit of luck; a lucky happening. ☐ *I had a stroke of luck and found Tom at home when I called. He's not usually there.* ☐ *Unless I have a stroke of luck, I'm not going to finish this report by tomorrow.*

stroke someone's **ego** *Fig.* to flatter and praise someone. ☐ *If you have trouble with him, just take a few minutes and stroke his ego. You'll soon have him eating out of your hand.*

stroll arm in arm Go to arm in arm.

stroll around to walk around casually. ☐ *I think I will stroll around a bit this evening.* ☐ *Would you like to stroll around a little and see the sights?*

stroll through something to walk casually through something or some place. ☐ *Would you like to stroll through the park with me?* ☐ *Let's stroll through a few shops and see what the prices are like here.*

***strong as a horse** and ***strong as an ox; *strong as a lion** *Cliché* [of a living creature] very strong. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *Jill: My car broke down; it's sitting out on the street. Jane: Get Linda to help you push it; she's as strong as a horse.* ☐ *The athlete was strong as an ox; he could lift his own weight with just one hand.* ☐ *The football player was strong as a lion.*

strong as a lion Go to previous.

strong as an ox Go to strong as a horse.

the **strong, silent type** a strong, quiet man. ☐ *Clark looks like the strong, silent type. Actually he is slightly deaf and that's fat, not muscle.*

strong-arm tactics force; the use of force. ☐ *No more strong-arm tactics. You need to be more subtle.* ☐ *Strong-arm tactics are out. The boss says be gentle and don't hurt anybody.*

struggle against someone or something to strive or battle against someone or something. ☐ *There is no point in struggling against me. I will win out.* ☐ *He struggled against the disease for a year before he died.*

struggle along under something to make do as well as one can under a particular burden. ☐ *I will have to struggle along under these poor conditions for quite a while.* ☐ *I am sorry you have to struggle along under such burdens.*

struggle along (with someone or something**)** to make do as well as one can with someone or something. ☐ *I really need someone who can work faster, but I'll struggle along with Walter.* ☐ *We struggled along the best we could.*

struggle for something to strive to obtain something. ☐ *I was struggling for a law degree when I won the lottery.* ☐ *I had to struggle for everything that came my way.*

struggle on with something to make do as well as one can with something. ☐ *I will have to struggle on with the car that I have.* ☐ *We will struggle on with what we have, hoping for better someday.*

struggle through (something**)** to get through something in the best way possible. ☐ *I am going to struggle through this dull book to the very end.* ☐ *The course was dull, but I struggled through.*

struggle to do something to strive or battle to do something. ☐ *She struggled hard to meet her deadlines.* ☐ *We had to struggle to make ends meet.*

struggle to the death 1. *Lit.* a bitter struggle ending in death. ☐ *The wolf and the elk fought in a struggle to the death.* **2.** *Fig.* a serious problem with someone or something; a difficult challenge. ☐ *I had a terrible time getting my car started. It was a struggle to the death, but it finally started.*

struggle with someone **for** something to fight with someone to obtain something. ☐ *Max struggled with Lefty for the gun, and it went off.* ☐ *Timmy struggled with Bobby for the bicycle, and finally David took it away from both of them.*

struggle with someone or something to fight or battle with someone or something. ☐ *Fred struggled with Tom for a while and finally gave in.* ☐ *Tom struggled with the disease for a while and finally succumbed to it.*

strum something **on** something to brush or play with the fingers some stringed instrument, such as a guitar. ☐ *She strummed a nice little melody on her guitar.* ☐ *He strummed the accompaniment on the guitar.*

strung out 1. extended in time; overly long. ☐ *Why was that lecture so strung out? She talked and talked.* ☐ *It was strung out because there was very little to be said.* **2.** *Sl.* doped or drugged. ☐ *Bob acted very strangely—as if he were strung out or something.* ☐ *I've never seen Bob or any of his friends strung out.*

strut around to stride around pompously. ☐ *Stop strutting around in your new jeans and get to work!* ☐ *Tex was strutting around, showing off his new boots.*

strut in(to some place**)** to stride pompously into a place. ☐ *He strutted into the house as if he owned the place.* ☐ *Betty strutted in and sat down.*

strut one's **stuff** *Sl.* to walk proudly and show off one's best features or talents. ☐ *Get out there on that stage and strut your stuff!* ☐ *I'm going to strut my stuff and become a star.*

strut out of some place to stride pompously or showily out of some place. ☐ *The clowns strutted out of the tent and joined the parade through the big top.* ☐ *Tex strutted out of the saloon and got on his horse.*

stub one's **toe against** something and **stub** one's **toe on** something to ram one's toe accidentally against some hard object. ☐ *Don't stub your toe against that brick in the path.* ☐ *Claire stubbed her toe against one of the legs of the sofa.* ☐ *I stubbed my toe on the bottom step.*

stub something **out**† to put out something, such as a cigarette or cigar, by crushing the burning end against a hard object. ☐ *Max stubbed his cigar out and tossed it into the street.* ☐ *He stubbed out his cigar.*

***stubborn as a mule** and ***obstinate as a mule** *Cliché* very stubborn. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *I tried to convince Jake to go to the doctor, but he's as stubborn as a mule.* ☐ *For four years, Henry pestered his parents to let him learn the trumpet. They tried to talk him into some other, quieter instrument, but he was stubborn as a mule, and now he has a trumpet.*

(stuck) in a rut *Fig.* kept in an established way of living or working that never changes. ☐ *David felt like he was stuck in a rut, so he went back to school.* ☐ *Anne was tired of being in a rut, so she moved to Los Angeles.*

stuck in traffic to be caught in a traffic jam. ☐ *I am sorry I am late. I was stuck in traffic.* ☐ *Our taxi was stuck in traffic and I thought I would never get to the airport on time.*

***stuck on** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* attached, as if by glue, to someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~; get ~**.) ☐ *The gum is stuck on me. How do I get it off?* ☐ *The gum is stuck on the floor.* **2.** *Fig.* in love with someone or something; entranced with someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Judy is really stuck on Jeff.* ☐ *She is stuck on herself.*

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stuck on something **1.** *Fig.* to be locked into an idea, cause, or purpose. ☐ *Mary is really stuck on the idea of going to France this spring.* ☐ *You've proposed a good plan, Jane, but you're stuck on it. We may have to make some changes.* **3.** *Fig.* to be confused by something, such as a puzzle or a task. (Typically: **be ~; become ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I'm stuck on this question about the tax rates.*

stuck with someone or something burdened with someone or something; left having to care for or deal with someone or something. ☐ *Please don't leave me stuck with your aunt. She talks too much.* ☐ *My roommate quit school and left me stuck with the telephone bill.*

study for something to try to learn in preparation for an examination. ☐ *I have to study for my calculus exam.* ☐ *Have you studied for your exam yet?*

study up on someone or something to learn all one can about someone or something. ☐ *I have to study up on Abraham Lincoln in preparation for my speech.* ☐ *John studied up on seashells.*

Stuff a sock in it! and **Put a sock in it!** *Inf.* Shut up! ☐ *I've heard enough. Stuff a sock in it!* ☐ *Stuff a sock in it! You are a pain.*

stuff and nonsense foolishness; foolish talk. ☐ *Come on! Don't give me all that stuff and nonsense!* ☐ *I don't understand this book. It's all stuff and nonsense as far as I am concerned.*

stuff one's **face** Go to **fill** one's **face.**

stuff someone or something **into** someone or something and **stuff** someone or something **in**† to force someone or something into someone or something. ☐ *The sheriff stuffed Tex into the tiny cell.* ☐ *He stuffed in some other prisoners, too.* ☐ *Donna got down her suitcase and stuffed her clothes in.* ☐ *The nurse stuffed the oatmeal into the old man faster than he could swallow it.*

stuff someone or something **with** something to fill up someone or something with something. ☐ *She stuffed the kids with pancakes and sent them to school.* ☐ *Dale stuffed the doll with fluffy material and gave it back to Timmy.* ☐ *He was afraid he would stuff himself with food as he usually did.*

stuff someone's **head with** something to fill someone's brain with certain kinds of thoughts. ☐ *Who has been stuffing your head with that nonsense?* ☐ *Tex thought that the government was stuffing peoples' heads with all sorts of propaganda.*

stuff something **down** someone's **throat** *Fig.* to force someone to hear, learn, endure, etc., some kind of information. ☐ *I don't like the nonsense they are stuffing down our throats.* ☐ *Please don't try to stuff those lies down our throats.*

stuff something **down** something to force something down inside of something. ☐ *Don stuffed the cauliflower leaves down the garbage disposal and turned it on.* ☐ *Timmy stuffed the leaves down the hole and covered them with dirt.*

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stuff something **up**† to plug something by stuffing something in its opening. ☐ *He stuffed the hole up with old newspapers.* ☐ *Liz stuffed up the hole with paper.*

stuff something **up** something to force something upward or up into something. ☐ *He tried to hide the book by stuffing it up the chimney.* ☐ *Sam stuffed the money he found up the downspout, where he thought no one would find it.*

stuff the ballot box to fill a ballot box with illegal votes or with more votes than the number of actual voters. ☐ *The politician was charged with stuffing the ballot box.* ☐ *The ballot box was stuffed with lots of votes for the crooked politician.*

stumble across someone or something and **stumble (up)on** someone or something**; stumble into** someone or something to find someone or something, usually by accident. (See also **stumble into** someone or something.) ☐ *I stumbled across an interesting book yesterday when I was shopping.* ☐ *Guess who I stumbled into at the library yesterday?* ☐ *I got lucky and stumbled on the right answer.*

stumble into someone or something to trip and lurch into someone or something. **1.** ☐ *Not seeing the brick in the path, Carl tripped and stumbled into Alice.* ☐ *Jamie stumbled into the wall.* **2.** Go to **stumble across** someone or something.

stumble on someone or something **1.** Go to **stumble across** someone or something. **2.** to trip over someone or something. ☐ *There were three of us sleeping in the small tent. Each of us would stumble on the others whenever we went out or came in.* ☐ *I stumbled on the curb and twisted my ankle.*

stumble over someone or something to trip over someone or something. ☐ *Tom stumbled over Bill, who was napping on the floor.* ☐ *Don't stumble over the laundry basket.*

stumble through something to get through a sequence of something awkwardly and falteringly. ☐ *The cast stumbled through the first act and barely finished the second.* ☐ *Mary stumbled through her speech and fled from the stage.*

stumble (up)on someone or something Go to **stumble across** someone or something.

a **stumbling block** *Fig.* something that prevents or obstructs progress. ☐ *We'd like to buy that house, but the high price is a stumbling block.* ☐ *Jim's age is a stumbling block to getting another job. He's over sixty.*

stump for someone to go about making political speeches in support of someone. ☐ *The vice president was out stumping for members of Congress who were running this term.* ☐ *Since all the politicians were out stumping for one another, there was no one in the capital to vote on important legislation.*

stump someone to confuse or puzzle someone. ☐ *I have a question that will really stump you. When was the Achaean League established?*

sub for someone or something to substitute for someone or something. ☐ *I have to sub for Roger at work this weekend.* ☐ *Will pliers sub for the wrench you wanted?*

sub someone **for** someone else and **sub** something **for** something else to substitute someone for someone else or something for something else. ☐ *I will sub Chuck for Roger for this next play only.* ☐ *We will sub the red ones for the blue ones.*

subdivide something **into** something to divide something into parts. ☐ *They subdivided the land into several valuable parcels.* ☐ *Sam tried to subdivide his large lot into three smaller lots, but the zoning commission wouldn't let him do it.*

subject someone or something **to** something to cause someone to endure someone or something. ☐ *I didn't mean to subject you to Uncle Harry.* ☐ *I am sorry I have to subject you to all this questioning.*

subject to something likely to have something, such as a physical disorder. ☐ *The sick man was subject to dizzy spells.* ☐ *I am subject to frequent headaches.*

subjugate someone **to** someone to suppress someone in someone else's favor. ☐ *The army sought to subjugate everyone to the king.*

submerge someone or something **in** something to immerse someone or something in a liquid. ☐ *The preacher submerged Jeff in the water of the river as part of the baptism ceremony.* ☐ *Submerge the fish in the marinade for at least two hours.*

submerge someone or something **under** something to put someone or something below the surface of a liquid. ☐ *The maid submerged her mistress under the surface of the water for a moment and brought her up and dried her off.* ☐ *They submerged themselves under the surface of the water and had a look around.*

submit someone or something **to** something to allow someone or something to undergo the effects of something. ☐ *I hate to submit you to all this questioning, but that is the way we do things here.* ☐ *Don't submit your car to a lot of misuse.*

submit to something to surrender to something; to agree to something. ☐ *He submitted to the cross-examination.* ☐ *She will probably refuse to submit to surgery.*

subordinate someone or something **to** someone or something else to put someone in an inferior position to someone else; to put something in an inferior position to something else. ☐ *I am going to have to subordinate you to the other manager, because she has more experience.* ☐ *The first thing you learn is that you must subordinate yourself to your boss.*

subpoena someone **to** do something to formally deliver a document forcing someone to do something for a legal process. ☐ *The attorney subpoenaed a number of witnesses to testify.* ☐ *I subpoenaed four witnesses to appear but none of them showed up.*

subscribe to something **1.** to agree with a policy. ☐ *I don't subscribe to the scheme you have just described.* ☐ *You don't have to subscribe to the policy to accept it.* **2.** to hold a standing order for a magazine or other periodical, or for a computer service. ☐ *I subscribe to three magazines, and I enjoy them all.* ☐ *I don't subscribe to any of them anymore.*

subsist on something to exist on something; to stay alive on something. ☐ *We can barely subsist on this amount of money. We need more!* ☐ *They are able to do no more than subsist on what Mrs. Harris is paid.*

substitute for someone or something to serve as a replacement for someone or something. ☐ *I have to substitute for Roger at work this weekend.* ☐ *Do you think that this will substitute for the one you wanted?*

substitute someone **for** someone else and **substitute** something **for** something else to exchange someone or something for someone or something else; to replace someone or something with someone or something else. ☐ *Shall I substitute Fred for Mary in the front office?* ☐ *Please substitute fish for beef on my dinner order.*

subtract something **from** something else to deduct or take away something from something else. ☐ *Please subtract the cost of the meal from my fee.* ☐ *I demanded that they subtract the extra charge from my bill.*

succeed as something to flourish or prosper as a type of person. ☐ *I hope I succeed as a bank teller.* ☐ *Jamie succeeded as an investigator.*

succeed at something to prosper or flourish in some task. ☐ *I hope I can succeed at the task you have assigned me.* ☐ *I am sure you will succeed at it.*

succeed in something to prosper or flourish in some position or office. ☐ *I hope you succeed in your new job.* ☐ *We knew you would succeed in doing what you wanted to do.*

succeed someone **as** something to take the place of someone as something; to supplant someone in something. ☐ *Jeff will succeed Claude as president of the organization.* ☐ *You are not allowed to succeed yourself as president.*

succeed to something to fall heir to something; to take something over. ☐ *Carl will succeed to the throne when he is of age.* ☐ *Mary succeeded to the throne at the age of three months.*

succumb to something to yield to something, especially a temptation, fatal disease, a human weakness, etc. ☐ *He finally succumbed to his pneumonia.* ☐ *She did not succumb to the disease until she was very old.*

such and such someone or something whose name has been forgotten or should not be said. ☐ *Mary said that such and such was coming to her party, but I forgot their names.* ☐ *If you walk into a store and ask for such and such and they don't have it, you go to a different store.*

such as... for example. ☐ *Bill enjoys many kinds of fruit, such as apples, pears, and plums.* ☐ *Mary has many hobbies, such as swimming, bowling, and running.*

such as it is *Cliché* in the imperfect state that one sees it; in the less-than-perfect condition in which one sees it. ☐ *This is where I live. This is my glorious home—such as it is.* ☐ *I've worked for days on this report, and I've done the best that I can do. It's my supreme effort—such as it is.*

Such is life! That is the way things happen! (Usually in reference to an unfortunate outcome.) ☐ *Oh, well. Everything can't be perfect. Such is life!* ☐ *So I failed my test. Such is life! I can take it again some time.*

suck (some) brew and **suck (some) suds** *Sl.* to drink beer. ☐ *Wanna go suck some brew?* ☐ *I'm tired of sucking suds. Got any whisky?*

suck (some) suds Go to previous.

suck someone **in†** and **take** someone **in†** to deceive someone. ☐ *I try to shop carefully so that no one can take me in.* ☐ *I think that someone sucked in both of them. I don't know why they bought this car.*

suck someone or something **down†** [for a vacuum or water currents] to pull someone or something downward. ☐ *The savage currents sucked the swimmers down to their death.* ☐ *The current sucked down the floating trees.*

suck someone or something **into** something and **suck** someone or something **in†** [for a vacuum] to draw someone or something into something. ☐ *The whirlpool sucked the swimmers into the depths of the river.* ☐ *The whirlpool sucked in a swimmer.* ☐ *A whirlpool nearly sucked our canoe in.*

suck someone or something **under** [for a current or waves] to pull someone or something beneath the surface of the water. ☐ *The strong rip tide almost sucked me under!* ☐ *It almost sucked our boat under.*

suck someone's **hind tit** *Sl.* to be forced to do someone's bidding no matter how unpleasant or impossible. (Fig. on

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the idea of the last of a litter of animals to get its mother's milk. Potentially offensive. Use only with discretion.) ☐ *What am I supposed to do—suck his hind tit?* ☐ *She acts like everybody has to suck her hind tit to keep their jobs.*

suck something **from** something to draw something out of something by the application of a vacuum. ☐ *Freddie used his straw to suck the last of the cola from the can.* ☐ *The machine sucked the water from the bottom of the barrel.*

suck something **in**† **1.** *Lit.* to draw something into one's mouth by sucking. ☐ *She sucked the milk shake in so hard she nearly collapsed the straw.* ☐ *Liz sucked in the fresh air.* **2.** *Fig.* to draw in one's belly, gut, or stomach. ☐ *Suck that belly in!* ☐ *Suck in that gut!*

suck something **up**† to pick something up by suction, as with a vacuum cleaner, or through a straw. ☐ *Will this vacuum suck all this dirt up?* ☐ *The vacuum cleaner sucked up all the dirt.*

suck up to someone *Sl.* to attempt to gain influence with or favor from someone. ☐ *In school, Richard was always sucking up to the teacher.* ☐ *Don't suck up to me. It won't do any good.*

a **sucker for** someone or something someone who is prejudiced in favor of someone or something; someone who is drawn to someone or something. ☐ *I'm a sucker for a pretty face.* ☐ *Ted is a sucker for any dessert with whipped cream on it.* ☐ *I don't know why I volunteered for this job. I'm a sucker for punishment I guess.*

sucker list *Fig.* a list of potential dupes; a list of people who might be taken in by deception. ☐ *I'm sure on their sucker list. They are trying to get me to give a lecture and receive a free clock or something.* ☐ *Here's the sucker list. Call them all and try to get them interested.*

sucker someone **into** something and **sucker** someone **in**† *Sl.* to deceive someone into some sort of scam or confidence game; to play someone for a fool. ☐ *Surely you don't think you can sucker me into doing something as stupid as that, do you?* ☐ *The con artist suckered in an unsuspecting tourist.*

suddenly the fat hit the fire Go to the **fat hit the fire**.

sue for something to file a lawsuit in order to get something. ☐ *If you so much as harm a hair on my head, I will sue for damages.* ☐ *Ted sued for back pay in his dispute with a former employer.*

sue someone **for** something to file a lawsuit against someone in order to get something. ☐ *I will sue you for damages if you do anything else to my car!* ☐ *She sued her employer for failure to provide a safe workplace.*

sue the pants off (of) someone *Sl.* to sue someone for a lot of money. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *If they harm me in any way, I'll sue the pants off of them.* ☐ *He sued the pants off his landlord.*

suffer a setback to have a minor or temporary failure. ☐ *We suffered a setback when much of our vineyard was damaged by a fungus.*

suffer an attack (of an illness**)** Go to an **attack (of** an illness**)**.

suffer from something to endure or experience unpleasantness, a disease, or a health condition. ☐ *Jeff is suffering from the flu.* ☐ *I'm afraid that you must suffer from the disease until it has run its course.* ☐ *Toby is really suffering from the cold.*

suffer under someone to endure the punishments or bad treatment of someone. ☐ *The citizens suffered badly under the rule of the cruel king.* ☐ *We suffered under Carlos and we will suffer under his successor.*

suffice for someone or something to be sufficient for someone or something. ☐ *This serving will suffice for me. Did you get enough?* ☐ *Will this suffice for you?*

Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. *Prov.* You should not worry about things that might happen in the future.; It is enough to worry about things that are happening today. (Biblical.) ☐ *Jane: I can't get to sleep; I keep thinking about the interview I have to do tomorrow. Alan: If the interview is tomorrow, worry about it tomorrow. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*

suffix something **onto** something to add an inflection or other part of a word onto another word. ☐ *The students were told to suffix the correct plural marker onto all the nouns in the list.* ☐ *What do you get when you suffix* -ed *onto a verb like* talk?

suffuse something **with** something to saturate something with something, usually a color. ☐ *The sun suffused the afternoon sky with orange and yellow.* ☐ *The bright light suffused the leaves with a golden glow.*

suggest itself to someone [for an idea] to seem to present itself to someone. ☐ *A new scheme suggested itself to Alice as she looked at the records of the last attempt.* ☐ *As you read this, does anything suggest itself to you?*

suggest something **to** someone to make a suggestion of something to someone. ☐ *The waiter suggested the roast beef to all his customers.* ☐ *What did you suggest to the people at the other table? They look quite pleased with their meal.*

***suggestive of** something reminiscent of something; suggesting something. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *Bill's homemade soup is suggestive of his mother's.* ☐ *The new movie was suggestive of an old one I had seen on TV.*

suit one's **actions to** one's **words** to behave in accordance with what one has said; to do what one has promised or threatened to do. ☐ *Mr. Smith suited his actions to his words and punished the children.* ☐ *John threatened to quit, and when he didn't get his way, he suited his actions to his words.*

suit oneself to do something one's own way; to do something to please oneself. ☐ *If he doesn't want to do it my way, he can suit himself.*

suit (oneself**) up** to get into one's uniform, especially an athletic uniform. ☐ *The coach told the team to suit up for the game by three o'clock.* ☐ *It's time to suit up!* ☐ *She suited herself up and went out on the court.*

suit someone or something **to** something to match someone or something to something. ☐ *I am sorry, but we don't suit the worker to the job. We find a job that suits the worker.* ☐ *Let's try to suit a new sports jacket to the slacks you have on.*

suit someone's **fancy** to appeal to someone's imagination, fantasy, or preferences. ☐ *Does this handbag suit your fancy, or would you prefer something larger?* ☐ *I think a big bowl of ice cream would suit my fancy quite nicely.*

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suit someone **to a T** and **fit** someone **to a T** to be very appropriate for someone. ☐ *This kind of job suits me to a T.* ☐ *This is Sally's kind of house. It fits her to a T.*

Suit yourself. *Inf.* You decide the way you want it.; Have it your way. ☐ *Mary: I think I want the red one. Tom: Suit yourself.* ☐ *John (reading the menu): The steak sounds good, but it's hard to pass up the fried chicken. Sally: Suit yourself. I'll have the steak.*

***suited for** something appropriate for something. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *Do you think I am suited for this kind of work?* ☐ *Those clothes are not suited for outdoor work.*

sulk about someone or something and **sulk over** someone or something to pout or be sullen about someone or something. ☐ *What are you sulking about now?* ☐ *There is no need to sulk over Mary.*

sum and substance a summary; the gist. ☐ *Can you quickly tell me the sum and substance of your proposal?* ☐ *In trying to explain the sum and substance of the essay, Thomas failed to mention the middle name of the hero.*

sum (something**) up†** to give a summary of something. ☐ *I would like to sum this lecture up by listing the main points I have covered.* ☐ *It is time for me to sum up.* ☐ *She summed up the president's speech in three sentences.*

summon someone **before** someone or something to request or order someone to appear before someone or a group. ☐ *The president summoned the committee before her.* ☐ *The judge summoned Donna before the court.*

summon someone **to** someone or something to order or request someone to come to someone or something. ☐ *Uncle Fred summoned the waitress to him.* ☐ *He summoned her to our table.*

summon something **up†** to call forth particular qualities, such as strength, courage, wisdom, etc. ☐ *She summoned her courage up and went into the room.* ☐ *Liz summoned up all her courage.*

the **sun belt** *Fig.* the southern U.S. states, where it is generally warm and sunny. ☐ *I want to retire to the sun belt.* ☐ *The population of the sun belt is exploding.*

Sunday best one's best clothing, which one would wear to church. (See also Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes.) ☐ *We are in our Sunday best, ready to go.* ☐ *I got mud on my Sunday best.*

Sunday driver a slow and leisurely driver who appears to be sightseeing and enjoying the view, holding up traffic in the process. (Also a term of address.) ☐ *I'm a Sunday driver, and I'm sorry. I just can't bear to go faster.* ☐ *Move over, you Sunday driver!*

Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes *Rur.* one's best clothes. (See also Sunday best.) ☐ *John was all dressed up in his Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes.* ☐ *I hate to be wearing my Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes when everyone else is casually dressed.*

sunny-side up *Fig.* [of eggs] with yolks facing up and not turned over or cooked through; straight up. ☐ *I'll have my eggs sunny-side up, with toast and coffee.* ☐ *People who like sunny-side up eggs wouldn't dream of eating a whole raw egg.*

superimpose something **on(to)** someone or something to cover an image of someone or something with an image of something. ☐ *We superimposed a mustache onto Toby's face, and he looked just like the suspect.* ☐ *When we superimposed the mustache on him, we knew he was guilty.*

supply and demand the availability of things or people as compared to the need to utilize the things or people; the availability of goods compared to the number of willing customers for the goods. ☐ *Sometimes you can find what you want by shopping around and other times almost no store carries the items you are looking for. It depends entirely on supply and demand. (Alludes to a principle of market economics.)* ☐ *Sometimes customers ask for things we do not carry in stock and other times we have things in abundance that no one wants to buy. Whether or not we can make money off of a product depends entirely on supply and demand.*

supply someone or something **with** something to provide something to someone or something. ☐ *We will supply you with all the pencils you need.* ☐ *We supplied the committee with ice water.*

supply something **(to** someone or something**) (from** something**)** to provide someone or something with something from some source. ☐ *I supplied ice cream to the new restaurant from a very expensive source.* ☐ *We supplied nuts from a pushcart.* ☐ *Frank supplied nothing at all to them.*

Suppose I do? and **Supposing I do?** *Inf.* And what does it matter if I do? What are you going to do about it? ☐ *Alice: Do you really think it's right to do something like that? Sue: Suppose I do?* ☐ *Fred: Are you going to drive up into the mountains as you said you would? Sally: Supposing I do? Fred: I'm just asking.*

Suppose I don't? and **Supposing I don't?** *Inf.* And what will happen if I don't? (Said as a sort of threat. Not usually with question intonation.) ☐ *Bill: You'd better get yourself over to the main office. Tom: Suppose I don't?* ☐ *Father: You simply must do better in school. Tom: Supposing I don't? Father: Your clothing and personal belongings will be placed on the curb for the garbage pickup, and we will have the locks changed. Next question.*

Supposed to. and Someone or something **is supposed to.** Someone or something is meant to do something. (Frequently, in speech, *supposed* is reduced to *s'posed*. The words *someone* or *something* can be replaced with nouns or pronouns, or used themselves.) ☐ *Mary: They didn't deliver the flowers we ordered. Sue: Supposed to. Give them a call.* ☐ *Sally: This screw doesn't fit into hole number seven in the way the instructions say it should. Bill: It's supposed to. Something's wrong.*

supposed to do something expected or intended to do something; obliged or allowed to do something. ☐ *You're supposed to say "excuse me" when you burp.* ☐ *Mom says you're supposed to come inside for dinner now.*

Supposing I do? Go to Suppose I do?

Supposing I don't? Go to Suppose I don't?

sure as eggs is eggs Go to sure as God made little green apples.

sure as fate Go to next.

***sure as God made little green apples** and ***sure as eggs is eggs; *sure as fate; *sure as I'm stand-**

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ing here; *sure as you live *Rur.* absolutely certain. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *I'm as sure as God made little green apples that he's the one.* ☐ *I'm right, as sure as you live!*

***sure as hell** *Inf.* very sure. (Use discretion with *hell.* *Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *As sure as hell, Ill be there on time.* ☐ *As sure as hell he did it!*

sure as I'm standing here Go to sure as God made little green apples.

Sure as shooting! *Inf.* Absolutely yes! (An elaboration of *Sure.*) ☐ *Bill: Are you going to be there Monday night? Bob: Sure as shooting!* ☐ *Bob: Will you take this over to the main office? Bill: Sure as shooting!*

sure as you live Go to sure as God made little green apples.

a **sure bet** and a **sure thing** a certainty; something that is sure to take place. ☐ *Of course, this land will become valuable in a few years. It's a sure thing!*

Sure thing. *Inf.* I certainly will. ☐ *Sue: Will you be at the reception? Bob: Sure thing.* ☐ *Bill: You remember my cousin, Tom, don't you? Bob: Sure thing. Hi, Tom.*

surf and turf fish and beef; lobster and beef. (A dinner serving incorporating both expensive seafood and an expensive cut of beef. Alludes to the sea and to the pasture. Fixed order.) ☐ *Walter ordered the surf and turf, but Alice ordered only a tiny salad.* ☐ *No surf and turf for me. I want fish and fish alone.*

surf the Net to browse around in the contents of the Internet. ☐ *I spend an hour a day or more surfing the Net.*

surge in(to something**)** to burst or gush into something or some place. ☐ *The water surged into the valley after the dam broke.* ☐ *The doors opened and the people surged in.*

surge out (of something**)** to burst forth or gush out of something or some place. ☐ *The water surged out of the huge crack in the dam.* ☐ *We saw the crack where the water surged out.*

surge up to rush or gush upwards. ☐ *A spring of fresh water surged up under the stone and flowed out on the ground.* ☐ *The oil surged up and blew out into the open air in a tall black column.*

surpass someone or something **in** something to exceed someone or something in some deed or quality. ☐ *I will never be able to surpass Jill in speed or agility.* ☐ *My car surpasses yours in almost every respect.*

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surprise someone **by** something to astonish someone by doing or being something. ☐ *You surprised me by your forthrightness.* ☐ *No one was surprised by the way it happened.*

surprise someone **with** something to astonish someone by presenting or showing something. ☐ *I surprised her with a bouquet of roses.* ☐ *He surprised Roger with a new car.*

surrender someone or something **to** someone or something to give up someone or something to someone or something. ☐ *You must surrender your child to the nurse for the child's own good. She will give her right back.* ☐ *He surrendered his car to the bank.*

surrender to someone or something to give in to someone or something; to yield to someone or something. ☐ *The robber surrendered to the cops.* ☐ *I will never surrender to my baser passions.*

surround someone or something **with** someone or something to encircle or enclose someone or something with people, something, or things. ☐ *We surrounded him with his friends as he lay in the hospital bed.* ☐ *We surrounded the tree with wire netting to protect it against rabbits.* ☐ *They surrounded the display of jewels with guards.*

the **survival of the fittest** the idea that the most able or fit will survive (while the less able and less fit will perish). (This is used literally as a principle of the theory of evolution.) ☐ *In college, it's the survival of the fittest. You have to keep working in order to survive and graduate.* ☐ *I don't give my houseplants very good care, but the ones I have are really flourishing. It's the survival of the fittest, I guess.*

susceptible to something **1.** easily persuaded; easily influenced. ☐ *The students were susceptible to the allure of drugs.* ☐ *The young revolutionaries were susceptible to propaganda.* **2.** likely to contract a sickness; likely to become sick. ☐ *People with AIDS are susceptible to pneumonia.* ☐ *Infants and the elderly are more susceptible to illness than other people.*

suspect someone **of** something to think or believe that someone has done something. ☐ *I suspect the clerk of stealing.* ☐ *Ted was suspected of leaving the door unlocked when he left last Friday.*

suspend someone **from** something to prevent someone from participating in something. (Usually as a form of discipline.) ☐ *The principal suspended the student from classes for a week.* ☐ *Ted was suspended from school for three days.*

suspend someone or something **from** something to hang someone or something from something. ☐ *The hangman suspended the thief from a gibbet as a warning to others.* ☐ *Jill suspended each decoration from a different branch.*

suspend something **by** something to hang something by something. ☐ *The workers carefully positioned the stone that was suspended by a steel cable.* ☐ *Will suspended the decoration by a fine thread.*

a **suspicious character** Go to a shady character.

suss someone **out**† *Sl.* to try to figure someone out. ☐ *I can't seem to suss Tom out. What a strange guy.* ☐ *I don't have any luck sussing out people I don't know well.*

sustain someone **in** something to stand by or support someone through some problem. ☐ *She knew she could count on her friends to sustain her in times of trouble.* ☐ *We will sustain you in the difficult times the best we can.*

swab something **down**† to wash or scrub something, such as the deck of a ship. ☐ *The sailors were told to swab the deck down each day.* ☐ *Swab down the deck!*

swab something **out**† to wash or wipe something out in order to make it clean. ☐ *The doctor swabbed my ear out carefully.* ☐ *The doctor swabbed out my ear carefully.*

swab something **out of** something and **swab** something **out**† to wipe or mop something out of something. ☐ *The doctor swabbed the wax out of my ear.* ☐ *I swabbed out the last of the mud on the floor.*

SWAK Go to sealed with a kiss.

swallow one's **pride** *Fig.* to forget one's pride and accept something humiliating. ☐ *I had to swallow my pride and admit that I was wrong.* ☐ *When you're trying to master a*

new skill, you find yourself swallowing your pride quite often.

swallow someone or something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to eat or gobble up someone or something. ☐ *The fairy-tale wolf threatened to swallow the pig up in one bite.* ☐ *The wolf swallowed up the meat in one bite.* **2.** *Fig.* to engulf or contain something. ☐ *The vast garage seemed to swallow the cars up.* ☐ *The huge sweater swallowed up the tiny child.*

swallow something **down**† to swallow something. ☐ *Here, take this pill and swallow it down.* ☐ *Liz swallowed down the pill.*

swallow something **hook, line, and sinker** *Fig.* to believe something completely. (These terms refer to fishing and fooling a fish into being caught.) ☐ *I made up a story about why I was so late. The boss swallowed it hook, line, and sinker.* ☐ *I feel like a fool. I swallowed her lies hook, line, and sinker.*

swamp someone or something **with** something to cover or deluge someone or something with something. ☐ *The flood swamped our property with river water.* ☐ *The many orders for their product swamped the small business with too much to do.*

swan song *Fig.* the last work or performance of a playwright, musician, actor, etc., before death or retirement. ☐ *His portrayal of Lear was the actor's swan song.* ☐ *We didn't know that her performance last night was the singer's swan song.*

swap notes (on someone or something**)** to share information on someone or something. ☐ *The two girls sat around swapping notes on guys they knew.* ☐ *The mechanics were swapping notes on rude customers they had dealt with in the last month.*

swap someone or something **for** someone or something else to trade someone or something for someone or something else. ☐ *I will swap my shortstop for your second baseman.* ☐ *There are times when I would gladly swap you for a new car—even an old car!*

swap someone or something **with** someone to exchange a person or thing for someone else's person or thing. ☐ *The representatives of the two countries swapped spies with each other.* ☐ *Can I swap jackets with you?*

swap with someone to exchange someone or something with someone. ☐ *I like yours better. I'll swap with you.* ☐ *If you don't want the sandwich you have, I will swap with you.*

swarm (all) over someone or something to gather and move all about on someone or throughout something or some place. ☐ *The ants swarmed all over our picnic table.* ☐ *The children swarmed over the furniture.*

swarm around someone or something to gather or crowd around someone or something, in the manner of a swarm of bees. ☐ *The little children swarmed around the lady with the candy.* ☐ *The bees swarmed around the flowers.*

swarm in(to something**)** [for a throng] to crowd into something or some place. ☐ *People were swarming into the auditorium to hear the guitarist.* ☐ *They swarmed in and ran for the best seats.*

swarm out of something to move out of something in great numbers. ☐ *The bees swarmed out of the hive.* ☐ *People swarmed out of the park at the end of the game.*

swarm through something to gather in a crowd and move through something or some place. ☐ *The shoppers swarmed through the store, buying everything in sight.* ☐ *The locusts swarmed through the field, eating the entire harvest.*

swarm with someone or something to be abundant or crowded with moving people or things. ☐ *The playground was swarming with children, and I couldn't find my own.* ☐ *The picnic blanket swarmed with ants.*

swathe someone or something **in** something to wrap or drape someone or something in something. ☐ *Molly swathed her children in sheets to turn them into ghosts on Halloween.* ☐ *She swathed the statue in black velvet for the unveiling ceremony.*

swathe someone or something **with** something to wrap or drape someone or something with something. ☐ *The sculptor swathed his unfinished pieces with heavy drapes.* ☐ *The designer swathed the window with billows of taffeta.*

sway back and forth to swing or bend from one direction to another. ☐ *The pendulum swayed back and forth, counting off the seconds.* ☐ *Mary was swaying back and forth, keeping time to the music.*

sway from side to side to swing or bend from one side to the other. ☐ *The car swayed from side to side as we started out, indicating that something was seriously wrong.* ☐ *He swayed from side to side with the rhythm of the music.*

sway someone **to** something to convince someone to do something. ☐ *I think I can sway her to join our side.* ☐ *We could not sway Ted to our position.*

swear at someone or something to curse someone or something. ☐ *Please don't swear at the children.* ☐ *Scott swore at the police station as he drove by.*

swear by someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to utter an oath on someone or something. ☐ *I swear by Jupiter that I will be there on time.* ☐ *She swore by her sainted mother that she would never do it again.* ☐ *The sheriff swore by his badge that he would lock her up if she ever did it again.* **2.** *Fig.* to announce one's full faith and trust in someone or something. ☐ *I would swear by Roger any time. He is a great guy, and he tells the truth.* ☐ *I swear by this computer. It has always served me well.*

swear like a trooper to curse and swear with great facility. (The trooper here refers to a soldier.) ☐ *Mrs. Wilson was known to swear like a trooper on occasion.* ☐ *The clerk started swearing like a trooper, and the customer started crying.*

swear off (something**)** to pledge to avoid or abstain from something. ☐ *I've sworn off desserts. I am on a diet.* ☐ *No dessert for me. I've sworn off.*

swear on a stack of Bibles and **swear on** one's **mother's grave** to state something very earnestly, pledging to tell the truth. (**~ a stack of Bibles** refers in an exaggerated way to swearing to tell the truth in court by placing one's hand on a Bible.) ☐ *I swear on a stack of Bibles that I am telling the truth.* ☐ *Of course, I'm telling the truth. I swear on my mother's grave!*

swear on one's **mother's grave** Go to previous.

swear someone **in**† **(as** something**)** to administer an oath to someone who then officially begins in office. ☐ *The*

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judge swore Alice in as street commissioner. ☐ *The judge swore in Alice as the new director.*

swear someone **to** something to cause someone to take an oath pledging something, such as silence or secrecy, about something. ☐ *I swore Larry to secrecy, but he told anyway.* ☐ *We were sworn to silence about the new product.*

swear something **out**† **against** someone to file a criminal complaint against someone. ☐ *Walter swore a warrant out against Jeff.* ☐ *He swore out a warrant against Tony.*

swear something **to** someone to pledge or promise something to someone. ☐ *I had to swear my allegiance to the general before I could become one of his bodyguards.* ☐ *We swore our loyalty to our country.*

swear to something to claim that what one says is absolutely true. ☐ *It is true. I swear to it.* ☐ *I think I have remembered it all, but I couldn't swear to it.*

swear (up)on someone or something to take an oath on someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on.*) ☐ *He swore upon the Bible to tell the truth.* ☐ *I swear on the memory of my sainted mother that I am telling the truth.*

sweat blood and **sweat bullets** *Fig.* to be very anxious and tense. ☐ *What a terrible test! I was really sweating blood at the last.* ☐ *Bob is such a bad driver. I sweat bullets every time I ride with him.*

sweat bullets Go to previous.

sweat for something *Fig.* to work very hard for something. ☐ *I sweat for every dollar I bring in.* ☐ *Ted really sweats for his salary.*

sweat something **off**† *Fig.* to get rid of excess fat or weight by exercising or taking a steam bath to produce sweat. ☐ *I think I can sweat a lot of this fat off.* ☐ *Tony tried to sweat off some of his excess weight.*

sweat something **out**† **1.** *Lit.* to get rid of something in one's body by sweating. ☐ *I have a bit of a cold, and I am going to try to sweat it out.* ☐ *I took a steamy shower, trying to sweat out my cold.* **2.** *Fig.* to endure something unpleasant. ☐ *It was an ordeal, but I sweated it out.* ☐ *I managed to sweat out the exam.* **3.** *Fig.* to endure suspense about something. ☐ *She sweated the two-hour wait out until she heard the results of her bar exams.* ☐ *Karen sweated out the long wait peacefully.*

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sweat something **out of** someone and **sweat** something **out**† **1.** *Lit.* to apply enough heat to cause someone to sweat, with the goal of removing bodily poisons or the cause of a disease. ☐ *They used the ancient treatment of sweating the disease out of me. It worked!* ☐ *They used steam to sweat out the flu.* **2.** *Fig.* to force someone to reveal information under pressure. ☐ *The cops couldn't sweat the information out of Max.* ☐ *They couldn't sweat out the information.*

sweep along to glide along smoothly, as if flying. ☐ *The sailboat swept along, pushed by the strong wind.* ☐ *The fallen leaves blew up against the fence, swept along by a strong wind.*

sweep down on someone or something to flow or rush down onto someone or something. ☐ *The storm swept down on the campers.* ☐ *A flash flood swept down on the streambed.*

sweep in (from some place**)** and **breeze in (from** some place**)** to arrive suddenly from some place. ☐ *Tom just swept in from his vacation to face a pile of work on his desk.* ☐ *Max breezed in from Vegas and asked about Lefty.*

sweep in(to some place**)** to dash or run into some place. ☐ *The kids swept into the candy store and bought little bits of things.* ☐ *They swept in and spent all of a dollar before they left.*

sweep off to exit quickly. ☐ *He stopped only briefly, then swept off again.* ☐ *Mary swept off, leaving Ted standing there confused.*

sweep one **off** one's **feet** and **knock** one **off** one's **feet** **1.** *Lit.* to knock someone down. ☐ *The wind swept me off my feet.* ☐ *Bill punched Bob playfully, and knocked him off his feet.* **2.** *Fig.* to overwhelm someone (figuratively). ☐ *Mary is madly in love with Bill. He swept her off her feet.* ☐ *The news was so exciting that it knocked me off my feet.*

sweep out of some place to exit from some place quickly with style or grace. ☐ *The famous actress swept out of the room in a grand fashion.* ☐ *She swept out of her dressing room and walked on stage just as her cue was uttered.*

sweep over someone **1.** *Lit.* to pass over and cover someone. ☐ *The waves swept over us and nearly drowned us.* ☐ *The flood swept over the farmers who would not leave their homes.* **2.** *Fig.* [for something] to overwhelm someone. ☐ *A wave of nausea swept over me and I guess I slumped to the floor.* ☐ *The need for fresh air swept over all of us trapped in that room.*

sweep someone **into** something and **sweep** someone **in**† to place someone into an elective position decisively. ☐ *The decisive victory swept all the candidates of the reform party into office.* ☐ *The victory swept in the candidates.*

sweep someone or something **aside**† to push or brush someone or something aside. ☐ *The guards swept the spectators aside as the king's coach approached.* ☐ *They swept aside the spectators.*

sweep someone or something **away**† to dispose of someone or something by pushing or brushing away. ☐ *The waves nearly swept us away.* ☐ *The waves caused by the storm swept away all the debris on the beach.*

sweep someone or something **out of** something and **sweep** someone or something **out**† to remove or brush someone or something from something or some place. ☐ *The voters swept the crooks out of office.* ☐ *We swept out the dirt.*

sweep something **back**† to push or move something backward in the shape of a curve. ☐ *He took the brush and swept his hair back in a huge wave.* ☐ *She swept back her hair in a striking arrangement.*

sweep something **down**† to clean something by sweeping. ☐ *Please sweep this floor down whenever you make a mess here.* ☐ *Jeff will sweep down the floor before he goes home.*

sweep something **into** something and **sweep** something **in**† to move something into something or some place by sweeping. ☐ *Liz swept the crumbs into the dish.* ☐ *Liz held the dish and swept in the crumbs.*

sweep something **off (of)** something and **sweep** something **off**† to remove something by sweeping. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *The waiter swept the crumbs off the tablecloth.* ☐ *He swept off the crumbs.*

sweep something **out**† to clean something out by sweeping. ☐ *Someone has to sweep the garage out.* ☐ *Don't sweep out this room. I'll do it.*

sweep something **under the carpet 1.** *Lit.* to hide dirt by brushing it away under the edge of a carpet. ☐ *He was in such a hurry with the cleaning that he just swept the dirt under the carpet.* ☐ *She swept the dirt under the carpet, hoping no one would find it.* **2.** *Fig.* to hide or ignore something. ☐ *You made a mistake that you can't sweep under the carpet.* ☐ *Don't try to sweep it under the carpet. You are wrong!*

sweep something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to clean up and remove something, such as dirt, by sweeping. ☐ *Please sweep these crumbs up.* ☐ *Can you sweep up these crumbs?* **2.** *Lit.* to clean up some place by sweeping. ☐ *Please sweep this room up.* ☐ *Can you sweep up this room, please?* **3.** *Fig.* to arrange something, such as hair, into a curve or wave. ☐ *The hairstylist swept her hair up over the top. No one liked it.* ☐ *Sweep up my hair the way it looks in this picture.*

sweep through (something**) 1.** *Lit.* to move through something or some place quickly and with grand flourishes. ☐ *She swept through the room, speaking to no one.* ☐ *She swept through in a great hurry.* **2.** *Fig.* to perform some task quickly. ☐ *She swept through the musical number and ran offstage.* ☐ *It required a slower tempo, but she just swept through.*

sweep up to clean up by sweeping. ☐ *Would you sweep up this time?* ☐ *Please give me a few minutes to sweep up before you come to visit.*

sweep up after someone to clean up the dirt left on the floor by someone. ☐ *Do you mind sweeping up after the kids?* ☐ *I had to sweep up after your party and I am not happy about it!*

sweet and sour a combination of fruity sweet and sour, but not necessarily salty, flavors. (Typically referring to certain Chinese-American foods.) ☐ *I prefer sweet-and-sour pork to anything else on the menu.* ☐ *Alice does not care for sweet-and-sour dishes, but she will usually eat whatever we serve her.*

***sweet as honey** and **sweeter than honey; sweet as sugar** very sweet; charming. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Larry's words were sweeter than honey as he tried to convince Alice to forgive him.* ☐ *Jill: Is Mary Ann nice? Jane: Yes, indeed. She's as sweet as honey.* ☐ *Your little girl is darling! Just as sweet as sugar.*

sweet nothings affectionate but unimportant or meaningless words spoken to a loved one. ☐ *Jack was whispering sweet nothings in Joan's ear when they were dancing.* ☐ *The two lovers sat in the cinema exchanging sweet nothings.*

***sweet on** someone *Rur.* fond of someone. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *Tom is sweet on Mary. He may ask her to marry him.* ☐ *Mary's sweet on him, too.*

sweeten someone **up**† to make someone more pleasant. ☐ *I had hoped that a week in the Caribbean would sweeten him up.* ☐ *The trip sweetened him up, but not for long.*

sweeten something **up**† to make something taste sweeter. ☐ *Where is the sugar? I need to sweeten this up a little.* ☐ *A little sugar will sweeten up the coffee.*

sweeten the pot *Fig.* to increase the amount of money bet in a card game with hopes of encouraging other players to bet more enthusiastically. ☐ *John sweetened the pot hoping others would follow.*

sweeten (up) the deal *Fig.* to make a bargain or a business transaction more appealing by adding value to the transaction. ☐ *The dealer sweetened the deal by throwing in free car washes.* ☐ *He wasn't willing to do anything to sweeten the deal, so I left.* ☐ *She sweetened up the deal with a little extra money.*

sweeter than honey Go to sweet as honey.

sweetheart agreement and **sweetheart deal** a private agreement reached between a public agency or government official and a private company that includes illicit payments or special favors. ☐ *They found that the mayor was involved in a number of sweetheart agreements.* ☐ *Most of the building contractors in town would be out of business if they didn't have sweetheart deals with the local politicians.*

sweetheart deal Go to previous.

sweet-talk someone *Rur.* to talk convincingly to someone with much flattery. ☐ *I didn't want to help her, but she sweet-talked me into it.* ☐ *He sweet-talked her for a while, and she finally agreed to go to the dance with him.*

swell out to bulge outward; to expand outward. ☐ *The sides of the box swelled out because it was too full.* ☐ *The west wall of the garage swelled out just before the building collapsed.*

swell up to enlarge; to inflate; to bulge out. ☐ *I struck my thumb with a hammer and it swelled up something awful.*

swell with something **1.** *Lit.* to expand from a particular cause. ☐ *My knee joints swelled with arthritis.* ☐ *His nose swelled after it was struck by the door.* **2.** *Fig.* to seem to swell with a feeling such as pride. ☐ *His chest swelled with pride at the thought of his good performance.* ☐ *Ted swelled with pride at the announcement.*

*a **swelled head** *Fig.* a state of being conceited. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *John got a swelled head after he won the prize.* ☐ *Don't get a swelled head from all this success.*

swerve (away) (from someone or something**)** to turn sharply away from someone or something. ☐ *The car swerved away from Carla just in time.* ☐ *It swerved away just in time.*

swerve into someone or something to turn sharply and directly into someone or something. (Usually an accident.) ☐ *The car almost swerved into a pedestrian.* ☐ *The bus swerved into a truck.*

swift and sure fast and certain. (As with the flight of a well-aimed arrow.) ☐ *The response of the governor to the criticism by the opposing party was swift and sure.* ☐ *The boxer's punch was swift and sure and resulted in a quick knockout and a very short match.*

***swift as an arrow** and ***swift as the wind; *swift as thought** very fast. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *The new intercity train is swift as an arrow.* ☐ *You won't have to wait for me long; I'll be there, swift as thought.*

swift as lightning Go to quick as a wink.

swift as the wind Go to swift as an arrow.

swift as thought Go to swift as an arrow.

S

swill something **down†** to drink something, especially an alcoholic drink, in great gulps. ☐ *The guy took a quart of beer and swilled it down in a few seconds.* ☐ *He swilled down a quart of beer.*

swim against the current Go to next.

swim against the tide and **swim against the current 1.** *Lit.* to swim in a direction opposite to the flow of the water. ☐ *She became exhausted, swimming against the tide.* ☐ *If you really want strenuous exercise, go out in the stream and swim against the current.* **2.** *Fig.* to do something that is in opposition to the general movement of things. ☐ *Why can't you cooperate? Do you always have to swim against the tide?* ☐ *You always seem to waste your energy swimming against the current.*

swim around to swim here and there. ☐ *I just like to get into the pool and swim around.* ☐ *I saw only one fish swimming around in your aquarium.*

swim before someone's **eyes** *Fig.* [for something, such as spots or visions] to appear in one's field of vision. ☐ *I was getting feverish and spots swam before my eyes.* ☐ *Visions of total destruction swam before my eyes as the bus skidded in the snow.*

swim for it to escape by swimming. (See also **run for it**.) ☐ *I escaped from the guard, dived into the river, and swam for it.* ☐ *Max swam for it, but he didn't get away.*

swim for someone or something to travel toward someone or something by swimming. ☐ *I swam for George, who was farther out, holding onto a float.* ☐ *I am going to swim for the island.*

swim in something **1.** *Lit.* to swim in a body of water. ☐ *Is it safe to swim in this water?* ☐ *Can we swim in your pool?* **2.** *Fig.* to experience an overabundance of something. (Not directly related to ①.) ☐ *We are just swimming in orders right now. Business is good.* ☐ *Mr. Wilson is swimming in money.*

swim into something to enter something swimming. ☐ *They swam into a lovely grotto.* ☐ *Ted swam into the cove and got out on the beach.*

swim like stink Go to **like stink**.

swim toward someone or something to swim in the direction of someone or something. ☐ *Jeff swam toward the drowning man and helped him.* ☐ *I swam toward the boat.*

swim with something to swim in the same direction as the movement of water. ☐ *Fred had no trouble swimming with the current.* ☐ *Please swim with the current and not against it.*

swimming in something *Fig.* having lots of something. ☐ *Right now we are swimming in merchandise. In a month it will be gone.* ☐ *The Wilmington-Thorpes are just swimming in money.*

swimming with someone or something *Fig.* engulfed with someone or something. ☐ *The scene of the crime was swimming with cops and reporters.* ☐ *The hotel was swimming with out-of-town visitors.*

swindle someone **out of** something and **swindle** something **out of** someone to cheat someone out of something. ☐ *The crooks tried to swindle her out of her inheritance.* ☐ *The crooks swindled $3,000 out of the old woman.*

swing around (to something**)** to move one's body or view around to another position. ☐ *She swung around to the left, where she could see better.* ☐ *The bear suddenly swung around and charged.*

swing at someone or something to strike at someone or something. ☐ *Max swung at the cop—a serious mistake.* ☐ *The batter swung at the ball and missed.*

swing for something *Fig.* [for someone] to die by hanging for committing a crime. ☐ *The sheriff swore that Tex would swing for the killing.* ☐ *Max said he would not swing for something that Lefty had done.*

swing from something to hang or dangle from something. ☐ *The child was swinging from an exercise bar on her swing set.* ☐ *Ted was swinging from the edge of the cliff, waiting to be rescued.*

swing into action Go to **go into action**.

swing into high gear to begin operating at a fast pace; to increase the rate of activity. ☐ *During the winter season we swing into high gear around here.* ☐ *The chef swings into high gear around six o'clock in preparation for the theater crowd.*

swing into something to enter something by swinging. ☐ *The monkey swung into its cage, and I quickly locked the cage door.* ☐ *I grabbed a rope and swung into the cave, where my pursuer couldn't see me.*

swing something *Fig.* to make something happen. ☐ *I hope I can swing a deal that will make us all a lot of money.* ☐ *We all hope you can swing it.*

swing to something to change to a different position or attitude. ☐ *The mood of the country is swinging to conservatism.* ☐ *Soon the attitudes of the people will swing to the opposite side.*

swing with someone or something *Sl.* to appreciate someone or something. ☐ *Man, I can really swing with that color. Glorious!* ☐ *I can really swing with John. He and I are real close.*

swirl about someone or something [for something, such as dust or a fluid] to circle and wind about someone or something. ☐ *The snow swirled about me as I walked along.* ☐ *The smoke swirled about the tiny campfire.*

swirl around [for dust or a fluid] to circle around. ☐ *The liquid swirled around in the flask as Toby shook it up.* ☐ *Dust swirled around the room in the sunlight.*

swish around [for a fluid] to slosh or rush around. ☐ *All that water I drank is swishing around in my stomach.* ☐ *I can hear the water swishing around in the pipes.*

swish something **off (of)** someone or something and **swish** something **off†** to brush something off someone or something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *The barber swished the loose hairs off of Paul's collar.* ☐ *The barber swished off the loose hairs.*

switch around to change, swing, or turn around. ☐ *The horse switched around and ran the other way.* ☐ *I switched around and sat looking the other way for a while.*

switch (around) (with someone or something**)** to exchange or trade with someone or something. (The optional elements cannot be transposed.) ☐ *I liked Jill's lunch, and she liked mine, so I switched around with her.*

☐ *I liked Jill's, and she liked mine, so we switched around with each other.*

switch back (to something**) 1.** to return to using or doing something. ☐ *I decided to switch back to my old shampoo.* ☐ *I switched back and was glad I did.* **2.** [for a road] to reverse upon itself. ☐ *The mountain road switched back twenty times in three miles.* ☐ *It switched back every now and then.*

switch from someone **to** someone else to change one's choice from one person to another. ☐ *I had chosen Jeff, but I will switch from him to Judy.* ☐ *Tom wanted to try a new barber, so he switched from Nick to Bruno.*

switch from something **to** something else to change one's choice from one thing to another. ☐ *We switched from oil to gas heat in our house.* ☐ *I don't like to switch from one brand to another.*

switch into something to change [one's clothes] into something else. ☐ *Let me switch into something a little more dressy if we are going to a nice restaurant.* ☐ *I have to switch into something more comfortable.*

switch off 1. *Lit.* [for something] to turn itself off. ☐ *At midnight, all the lights switched off automatically.* ☐ *The television switched off after I went to sleep.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to stop paying attention; to become oblivious to everything. ☐ *I got tired of listening and switched off.* ☐ *You could see that the audience was switching off.*

switch on 1. [for something] to turn itself on. ☐ *Exactly at midnight, the lights switched on.* ☐ *The radio switched on early in the morning to wake us up.* **2.** *Sl.* [for someone] to become alert or excited. ☐ *The wild music made all the kids switch on and start to dance.* ☐ *About midnight, Ed switches on and becomes a real devil.*

switch over (to someone or something**)** to change to or choose someone or something else. ☐ *That newscaster is too contentious. Switch over to another station.* ☐ *Okay, I'll switch over.*

switch someone or something **around†** to change, swing, or turn someone or something. ☐ *I was prepared for a late flight out of Miami, but they switched me around at the last minute.* ☐ *They switched around my flights.*

switch someone or something **off†** to cause someone or something to be quiet or stop doing something. ☐ *I got tired of listening to her, so I punched the button and switched her off.* ☐ *I switched off the television set.*

switch someone or something **over to** something to reassign, change, or convert someone or something to something. ☐ *They switched me over to a later flight.* ☐ *I want to switch my furnace over to gas.*

switch someone or something **over to** someone or something to transfer electronically a signal from someone or something to someone or something else. ☐ *Tom is on the line. Shall I switch him over to Jeff?* ☐ *Please switch the call over to my other line.*

switch someone or something **through** to connect someone or something with something else. ☐ *I will switch you through the priority network.* ☐ *The operator switched the call through.*

switch something **back† (to** something**)** to return something to the way it was. ☐ *I switched the television back to the previous channel.* ☐ *I switched back the channel to what I was watching before.*

switch something **(from** something**) (in)to** something to change something from one thing into another. ☐ *The magician switched the silk scarf from red into green.* ☐ *I would love to be able to switch lead into gold.*

switch something **on†** to close an electrical circuit that causes something to start functioning or operating. ☐ *Please switch the fan on.* ☐ *I switched on the fan.*

switch something **out†** to remove something from an electrical circuit to turn it off. ☐ *Please switch the light out.* ☐ *I switched out the light.*

switch something **over† (to** something**)** to convert something to something else. ☐ *We are switching our furnace over to gas.* ☐ *We switched over our furnace to gas.*

switch something **to** something else to change something to something else. ☐ *It was hot so I switched the thermostat from heating to cooling.* ☐ *Mary switched the controls to automatic so she wouldn't have to worry about them constantly.*

switch to something to change to something. ☐ *I am going to switch to a cheaper brand of tissues.* ☐ *We switched to a different long-distance telephone company to save some money.*

switched on 1. *Sl.* alert and up-to-date; with it. ☐ *My brother is switched on and has lots of friends.* ☐ *I'm not switched on. In fact, I am pretty dull.* **2.** *Sl.* excited. ☐ *I get switched on by that kind of music.* ☐ *I am never switched on by raucous music.*

swoon over someone or something to seem to faint or pass out about someone or something. ☐ *The kids swooned over the rock star like the kids of thirty years ago.* ☐ *Evangeline swooned over the frightful news.*

swoop down (up)on someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to dive or plunge downward on someone or something. ☐ *The eagle swooped down upon the lamb.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to pounce on and consume something. ☐ *The children swooped down on the ice cream and cake.*

sympathize with someone **(about** someone or something**)** to share someone else's sorrow or anger about someone or something; to comfort someone who is sad or angry (about someone or something). ☐ *I sympathize with you about what you are going through.* ☐ *I really sympathize with you.*

synchronize something **with** something else to set or adjust something to coordinate its timing with something else. ☐ *Would you please synchronize your watch with mine?* ☐ *We could never synchronize our schedules so that we could get together.*

Tt

tab someone **for** something to choose someone for something. ☐ *The director tabbed Sam for a walk-on part.* ☐ *I wanted her to tab me for a part.*

table a motion to postpone the discussion of something during a meeting. ☐ *Mary suggested that they should table the motion.* ☐ *The motion for a new policy was tabled until the next meeting.*

tack something **down**† to fasten something down with small nails. ☐ *Someone had better tack this carpet down.* ☐ *Please tack down this carpet.*

tack something **onto** something and **tack** something **on**† to add something onto something. ☐ *The waiter kept tacking charges onto my bill.* ☐ *He tacked on charge after charge.*

tack something **up**† to fasten something onto something with tacks. ☐ *The drapes started to fall, so we tacked them up again.* ☐ *Please tack up these posters.*

tag along (after someone**)** and **tag along (behind** someone**)** to follow along after someone; to go along with someone. ☐ *The family dog tagged along after the children wherever they went.* ☐ *Can I tag along?* ☐ *Do you mind if I tag along behind you?*

tag someone **out**† [in baseball] to touch with the ball, and thereby put someone out. ☐ *The shortstop tagged the runner out and retired the side.* ☐ *He tagged out the runner.*

tail after someone *Fig.* to follow after someone. ☐ *Why do you always have to tail after me?* ☐ *There is someone tailing after you.*

tail off to dwindle to nothing. ☐ *The number of people filing for unemployment insurance is beginning to tail off.* ☐ *As the storms tailed off, we began to realize how much damage had been done.*

the **tail wagging the dog** a situation where a small part is controlling the whole of something. ☐ *John was just hired yesterday, and today he's bossing everyone around. It's a case of the tail wagging the dog.* ☐ *Why is this small matter taking so much time? Now it's the tail wagging the dog!*

tailor someone or something **to** someone or something to fit or revise someone or something to fit someone or something. ☐ *The coach tailored his defensive team to the opposition.* ☐ *We can tailor service to your company very easily.* ☐ *I will tailor this suit to your specifications for no extra charge.*

taint something **with** something to spoil or debase something with something. ☐ *The flood tainted the drinking water with disease germs.* ☐ *The food had been tainted with germs.*

take a backseat (to someone or something**)** *Fig.* to become less important than someone or something else. ☐ *My homework had to take a backseat to football during the playoffs.* ☐ *Jimmy always took a backseat to his older brother, Bill, until Bill went away to college.*

take a bath Go to **take a shower.**

take a bath (on something**)** *Sl.* to accumulate large losses on a business transaction or an investment. (Alludes to *getting soaked*, a slang expression meaning "being heavily charged for something.") ☐ *Sally took a bath on that stock that she bought. Its price went down to nothing.* ☐ *I'm afraid that I will take a bath on any investment I make.*

take a beating to be beaten, bested, or defeated. ☐ *The candidate took a beating in the primaries.* ☐ *The team took quite a beating.*

take a bow to bow and acknowledge credit for a good performance. ☐ *At the end of the concerto, the pianist rose and took a bow.* ☐ *The audience applauded wildly and demanded that the conductor come out and take a bow again.*

take a break and **take** one's **break** to have a short rest period in one's work. ☐ *It's ten o'clock—time to take a break.* ☐ *I don't usually take my break until 10:30.*

take a chance and **take a risk** to try something where failure or bad fortune is likely. ☐ *Come on, take a chance. You may lose, but it's worth trying.* ☐ *I'm not reckless, but I don't mind taking a risk now and then.*

take a chance on someone or something to gamble that something good might happen or that someone might do well; to take a risk that something would go wrong or that someone would do badly. ☐ *I just couldn't take a chance on Walter, so I picked David.* ☐ *I would never take a chance on that horse!*

take a collection up† **(from** someone**) (for** someone or something**)** to collect money from people for someone or something. ☐ *Karen took a collection up from everyone in the office for Bill.* ☐ *Karen took up a collection for Bill from everyone in the office.*

take a course (in something**)** to enroll in a course and do the required work. ☐ *I decided to take a course in history.* ☐ *Bob drives into the city where he is taking a course.*

take a crack at someone Go to a **crack at** someone.

take a crack at something Go to a **try at** something.

take a dig at someone and **take a jab at** someone**; take digs at** someone *Fig.* to insult or pester someone. ☐ *Why did you take a jab at Sam?* ☐ *You're always taking digs at people who think they're your friends.* ☐ *Jane is always taking digs at Bob, but she never really means any harm.*

take a dim view of someone or something to disapprove of someone or something. ☐ *Of all the boys, the teacher likes Dave the least. She takes a dim view of him.* ☐ *I take a dim view of that law.*

take a dirt nap *Sl.* to die and be buried. ☐ *I don't want to end up taking a dirt nap during this operation.* ☐ *Isn't Tom a little young to take a dirt nap?*

take a dive Go to **take a fall.**

take a drag (on something**)** Go to a **drag (on** something**)**.

take a fall and **take a dive** to fake being knocked out in a boxing match. ☐ *Wilbur wouldn't take a fall. He doesn't have it in him.* ☐ *The boxer took a dive in the second round and made everyone suspicious.*

take a fancy to someone or something and **take a liking to** someone or something; **take a shine to** someone or something to develop a fondness or a preference for someone or something. ☐ *John began to take a fancy to Sally late last August at the picnic.* ☐ *I've never taken a liking to cooked carrots.* ☐ *I think my teacher has taken a shine to me.*

take a firm grip on someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to grasp someone or something tightly. ☐ *The police officer took a firm grip on Fred and led him to the squad car.* ☐ *Mary took a firm grip on the handle and pulled hard.* **2.** *Fig.* to gain control of someone or something. ☐ *You will have to take a firm grip on Andrew. He has a mind of his own.* ☐ *Someone needs to take a firm grip on this department and get it organized.*

take a (firm) stand on something to express and maintain a strong opinion of something. ☐ *I hope you take a firm stand on the need for more office security.* ☐ *Yes, I will take a stand on it.*

take a gander (at someone or something**)** to look at someone or something. ☐ *Wow, take a gander at that new car!* ☐ *I wanted to take a gander at the new computer before they started using it.*

take a go at someone Go to a **go at** someone.

take a go at something Go to a **try at** something.

take a guess and **hazard a guess; make a guess** to guess. ☐ *Even if you don't know, please take a guess.* ☐ *If you don't know the answer, hazard a guess.*

take a hand in something to help with something; to participate in something. ☐ *Would you take a hand in this work? We need your efforts.* ☐ *Ted refused to take a hand in the preparations for the evening meal.*

take a hard line (with someone**)** *Fig.* to be firm with someone; to have a firm policy for dealing with someone. ☐ *The manager takes a hard line with people who show up late.* ☐ *This is a serious matter. The police are likely to take a hard line.*

take a hike and **take a walk 1.** *Fig. to go on a hike; to do hiking.* ☐ *It's a beautiful day. Let's take a hike in the woods.* ☐ *We took a hike through the forest to visit John's cabin.* **2.** *Fig.* to leave; to beat it. ☐ *Okay, I've had it with you. Take a hike! Beat it!* ☐ *I had enough of the boss and the whole place, so I cleaned out my desk and took a walk.* **3.** Go to **take a walk**.

take a hint to understand a hint and behave accordingly. ☐ *I said I didn't want to see you anymore. Can't you take a hint? I don't like you.* ☐ *Sure I can take a hint, but I'd rather be told directly.*

take a jab at someone **1.** and **take a punch at** someone to hit at someone; to poke someone. ☐ *Max took a jab at Lefty and missed.* ☐ *Lefty took a punch at Max.* **2.** Go to **take a dig at** someone.

take a leaf out of someone's **book** and **take a page from** someone's **book** *Fig.* to behave or to do something in a way that someone else would. ☐ *When you act like that, you're taking a leaf out of your sister's book, and I don't like it!* ☐ *You had better do it your way. Don't take a leaf out of my book. I don't do it well.*

take a leak *Inf.* to urinate. (Crude. Use caution with the topic. Usually in reference to a male.) ☐ *I gotta go take a leak. Back in a minute.* ☐ *He just went out to take a leak.*

take a licking Go to a **licking**.

take a liking to someone or something Go to **take a fancy to** someone or something.

take a load off (of) someone's **mind** and **take a lot off (of)** someone's **mind** *Fig.* to relieve one's mind of a problem or a worry. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *I'm glad to hear that. It sure takes a load off of my mind.* ☐ *This will take a load off her mind.*

take a load off one's **feet** Go to a **load off** one's **feet**.

Take a long walk off a short pier. and **Go play in the traffic.** *Inf.* Get out of here!; Go do something that will get you permanently out of here! ☐ *Get out of here! Take a long walk off a short pier!* ☐ *You bother me. Go play in the traffic.*

take a look at someone or something and **have a look at** someone or something to observe or examine someone or something. ☐ *I asked the doctor to take a look at my cut.* ☐ *Would you please have another look at your work? It is not complete.*

take a look for someone or something and **have a look for** someone or something to make a visual search for someone or something; to look for someone or something. ☐ *Please go to the library and have a look for a book about snakes.* ☐ *Take a look for a man in a black suit. He is your guide.*

take a lot of nerve Go to a **lot of nerve**.

take a lot off (of) someone's **mind** Go to **take a load off (of)** someone's **mind**.

take a lot out of someone to drain a lot of energy from someone. ☐ *This kind of workout takes a lot out of the team.* ☐ *Hot days like this take a lot out of me.*

take a nap to have a brief period of sleep. ☐ *I took a short nap just after lunch.* ☐ *The baby takes a long nap each afternoon.*

take a new turn [for something] to begin a new course or direction. ☐ *When I received the telegram with the exciting news, my life took a new turn.* ☐ *I began taking the medicine at noon, and by evening the disease had begun to take a new turn. I was getting better!*

take a nosedive Go to **go into a nosedive**.

take a page from someone's **book** Go to **take a leaf out of** someone's **book**.

take a poke at someone Go to next.

take a pop at someone and **take a poke at** someone to punch at someone. ☐ *Willie took a pop at me, but I ducked.* ☐ *The drunk took a poke at the cop—which was the wrong thing to do.*

take a potshot at someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to shoot at someone or something, as with a shotgun. (A *potshot* refers to the type of shooting done to provide meat for the cooking pot.) ☐ *The hunters were taking potshots at each*

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other in the woods. ☐ *Someone has been taking potshots at my mailbox!* **2.** *Fig.* to criticize or censure someone or something, often just to be mean. ☐ *Why are you taking potshots at me? What did I do to you?* ☐ *Everyone in the audience was taking potshots at the comedian's toupee.*

take a pound of flesh Go to a pound of flesh.

take a powder *Sl.* to leave; to leave town. (Underworld.) ☐ *Why don't you take a powder? Go on! Beat it!* ☐ *Willie took a powder and will lie low for a while.*

take a punch at someone Go to take a jab at someone.

take a rain check (on something**)** Go to a rain check (on something).

take a risk Go to take a chance.

Take a running jump (in the lake)! *Sl.* Go away!; Get away from me! ☐ *You know what you can do? You can take a running jump. Beat it!* ☐ *You can just take a running jump in the lake, you creep!*

take a shine to someone or something Go to take a fancy to someone or something.

take a shot at someone or something **1.** to fire a shot at someone or something. ☐ *The hunter took a shot at the deer.* ☐ *Who took a shot at my mailbox?* **2.** Go to a try at something.

take a shower and **take a bath** to bathe. ☐ *I take a shower every morning.* ☐ *John takes a hot bath to relax.*

take a spill to have a fall; to tip over. (Also with *bad, nasty, quite,* etc. Also with *have.*) ☐ *Ann tripped on the curb and took a nasty spill.* ☐ *John had quite a spill when he fell off his bicycle.*

take a stab at someone Go to a stab at someone.

take a stab at something Go to a try at something.

take a stand (against someone or something**)** to take a position in opposition to someone or something; to oppose or resist someone or something. ☐ *The treasurer was forced to take a stand against the board because of its wasteful spending.* ☐ *The treasurer took a stand, and others agreed.*

take a swing at someone to attempt to punch someone. ☐ *He took a swing at me!* ☐ *Tom took a swing at Bob, but Bob ducked out of the way.*

take a swipe at someone or something **1.** *Sl.* to hit at someone or something. ☐ *Max took a swipe at the cop by mistake.* ☐ *Lefty took a swipe at the punching bag—and missed.* **2.** *Sl.* to have a try at someone or something. ☐ *I think I can persuade him. I'll take a swipe at him and see.* ☐ *I will probably fail, but I'll take a swipe at it.*

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take a try at someone Go to a try at someone.

take a try at something Go to a try at something.

take a turn for the better to start to improve; to start to get well. ☐ *She was very sick for a month; then suddenly she took a turn for the better.* ☐ *Things are taking a turn for the better at my store. I may make a profit this year.*

take a turn for the worse to start to get worse. ☐ *It appeared that she was going to get well; then, unfortunately, she took a turn for the worse.* ☐ *My job was going quite well; then last week things took a turn for the worse.*

take a vacation to go somewhere for a vacation; to stop work to have a vacation. ☐ *Sue took a vacation at the Grand Canyon last year.* ☐ *I need to take a vacation and relax.*

take a walk Go to take a hike.

take a weight off one's **mind** Go to a load off one's mind.

take a whack at something Go to a try at something.

take a whiff of something Go to a whiff of something.

take account of someone or something to pay attention to someone or something. ☐ *You should take account of Tom. He has some good advice.* ☐ *Do I have to take account of the new policies?*

take action against someone or something to begin activity against someone or something. ☐ *The city council vowed to take action against the mayor.* ☐ *I will take action against the company for its negligence.*

take action on someone or something to act on someone or something; to do what has to be done on someone or something. ☐ *We still have to discuss what to do with Sam. I hope we can take action on him today.* ☐ *Do we still have time to take action on this proposal?*

take advantage of someone **1.** to deceive someone. ☐ *I knew that you wouldn't take advantage of me! I trusted you.* ☐ *Please don't take advantage of me the way you took advantage of Carl.* **2.** to impose on someone. ☐ *I am glad to have your help. I hope I am not taking advantage of you.* ☐ *I am glad to do it. You are not taking advantage of me.*

take advantage of someone or something to utilize someone or something to the fullest extent. ☐ *Try to take advantage of every opportunity that comes your way.* ☐ *Please take advantage of the consultant while she is here in the office.*

take after someone to resemble a close, older relative. ☐ *Don't you think that Sally takes after her mother?* ☐ *No, Sally takes after her Aunt Ann.*

take (a)hold of someone or something Go to (a)hold of someone or something.

take aim at someone or something *Fig.* to prepare to deal with someone or something; to focus on someone or something. (Based on take aim (at someone, something, or an animal).) ☐ *Now we have to take aim at the problem and try to get it solved.* ☐ *The critics took aim at the star of the musical and tore her to pieces.*

take aim (at someone, something, or an animal**)** to aim [something] at someone, something, or an animal. ☐ *The hunter took aim at the deer and pulled the trigger.* ☐ *You must take aim carefully before you shoot.*

take an amount of money **for** something to charge a certain amount for something. ☐ *I'll take four thousand for that car there.* ☐ *How much will you take for a big bag of flour?*

take an interest in someone or something to become concerned or interested in someone or something. ☐ *Do you take an interest in your children?* ☐ *You should take an interest in everything your child does.*

take an oath to make an oath; to swear to something. ☐ *You must take an oath that you will never tell anyone about this.* ☐ *When I was a witness in court, I had to take an oath that I would tell the truth.*

take attendance to make a record of persons attending something. ☐ *The teacher took attendance before starting the class.* ☐ *I will take attendance each day.*

take away from someone or something to lessen the value or esteem of someone or something; to detract from someone or something. ☐ *The fact that she is quiet does not take away from her one bit.* ☐ *The huge orange spot in the center of the painting takes away from the intense green of the rest of the work.*

Take care. Go to Take care (of yourself).

take care of number one and **take care of numero uno** to take care of oneself. ☐ *Mike, like everybody else, is most concerned with taking care of number one.* ☐ *If you don't take care of numero uno, who will?*

take care of numero uno Go to previous.

take care of someone **1.** to tip someone. ☐ *I took care of the doorman as we left.* ☐ *Did you remember to take care of the waiter?* **2.** *Euph.* to kill or dispose of someone. ☐ *Max said he was going to take care of Lefty once and for all.* ☐ *The crime king ordered Max to take care of a certain private detective.*

take care of someone or something to oversee and protect someone or something; to care for someone or something. ☐ *Please take care of my child while I am away.* ☐ *I will take care of everything for you.*

take care of something to deal with something; to handle or manage a problem or detail. ☐ *Would you please take care of this little problem?* ☐ *This is an easy thing to take care of. I will fix it immediately.*

Take care (of yourself). 1. Good-bye and keep yourself healthy. ☐ *John: I'll see you next month. Good-bye. Bob: Good-bye, John. Take care of yourself.* ☐ *Mary: Take care. Sue: Okay. See you later.* **2.** Take care of your health and get well. ☐ *Mary: Don't worry. I'll get better soon. Sue: Well, take care of yourself. Bye.* ☐ *Jane: I'm sorry you're ill. Bob: Oh, it's nothing. Jane: Well, take care of yourself.*

take charge (of someone or something**)** to take (over) control of someone or something. ☐ *The president came in late and took charge of the meeting.* ☐ *When the new manager took charge, things really began to happen.*

take cold Go to catch cold.

take control of someone or something to get the power and right to direct someone or something. ☐ *I will take control of him and see that he does what I want.* ☐ *Will you take control of the Wilson project?*

take cover to seek shelter from gunfire or other projectiles. ☐ *As soon as the firing started, we took cover behind a huge boulder.*

take credit for something to allow people to believe that one has done something praiseworthy, whether or not one has actually done it. ☐ *I can't take credit for the entire success. Toby helped a lot.* ☐ *Mary took credit for everything that Dave did.*

take digs at someone Go to take a dig at someone.

take effect Go to go into effect.

take exception (to something**) 1.** to take offense at something. ☐ *I must take exception to your remark.* ☐ *Sue took exception to Fred's characterization of Bill as a cheapskate.* **2.** to disagree with something. ☐ *I have to take exception to the figure you quoted.* ☐ *The manager took exception to the statement about having only three employees.*

take first crack at something Go to first crack at something.

take five *Sl.* to take a five-minute rest period; to take a short break. ☐ *Okay, everybody. Take five!* ☐ *Hey, Bob. I'm tired. Can we take five?*

take forty winks Go to catch forty winks.

take fuel on† to refuel; to be refueled. (Usually said of a large conveyance, such as a ship or a plane.) ☐ *We need to land at the next major airport to take fuel on.* ☐ *We will land somewhere to take on fuel.*

take (great) pains (to do something**)** *Fig.* to make a great effort to do something. ☐ *Tom took pains to decorate the room exactly right.* ☐ *We took great pains to get there on time.*

take heart (from something**)** to receive courage or comfort from some fact. ☐ *I hope that you will take heart from what we told you today.* ☐ *Even though you did not win the race, take heart from the fact that you did your best.* ☐ *I told her to take heart and try again next time.*

take heed (of someone or something**)** to be cautious with someone or something; to pay attention to someone or something. ☐ *We will have to take heed of Wendy and see what she will do next.* ☐ *You will learn to take heed of these little signs that things are not going well.*

take hold of someone or something to grasp someone or something. ☐ *He took hold of the child, which frightened her very much.* ☐ *Terry took hold of the doorknob and turned it.*

take ill Go to take sick.

take into account someone or something Go to take someone or something into account.

take inventory to make an inventory list. ☐ *They are taking inventory in the warehouse, counting each item and writing the number on a list.* ☐ *The hardware store closed once a year in order to take inventory.*

take issue with someone to argue with someone. ☐ *I heard your last statement and I have to take issue with you.* ☐ *Tom took issue with Maggie about the cost of the house.*

take issue with something to disagree with or argue about something. ☐ *I have to take issue with that statement.* ☐ *I want to take issue with the last statement you made.*

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take it to endure something, physically or mentally. (Often negative.) ☐ *I just can't take it anymore.* ☐ *If you can't take it, quit.*

Take it away! *Inf.* Start up the performance!; Let the show begin! (Typically a public announcement of the beginning of a musical performance.) ☐ *And now, here is the band playing "Song of Songs." Take it away!* ☐ *Sally will now sing us a song. Take it away, Sally!*

Take it easy. 1. *Inf.* Good-bye and be careful. ☐ *Mary: Bye-bye. Bill: See you, Mary. Take it easy.* ☐ *Sue: Take it easy, Tom. Tom: Bye, Sue. See you soon.* **2.** *Inf.* Be gentle.; Treat someone carefully. ☐ *Sue: Then I want you to move the piano and turn all the mattresses. Andy: Come on. Take it easy! I'm not made of steel, you know.* ☐ *Henry: Oh, I'm*

pooped. Alice: You just need a little rest and you'll feel as good as new. Just take it easy. **3.** *Inf.* Calm down.; Relax.; Do not get excited. ☐ *Andy: I am so mad I could blow my top! Rachel: Now, now. Take it easy. What's wrong?* ☐ *Mary could see that Sally was very upset at the news. "Now, just take it easy," said Mary. "It can't be all that bad."*

take it easy on someone, something, or an animal to be gentle on someone, something, or an animal. (See also Take it easy!; take it easy on something.) ☐ *Take it easy on Mary. She's been sick.* ☐ *Please take it easy on the furniture. It has to last us many years.*

take it easy on something *Fig.* to use less of something (rather than more). ☐ *Take it easy on the soup. There's just enough for one serving for each person.* ☐ *Please take it easy! There are hardly any left.*

Take it from me! *Inf.* Believe me! ☐ *It's true! Take it from me!* ☐ *Take it from me. This is a very good day for this part of the country.*

take it from the top *Fig.* to begin [again] at the beginning, especially the beginning of a piece of music. (Originally in reference to the top of a sheet of music.) ☐ *The conductor stopped the band and had the players take it from the top again.* ☐ *Let's take it from the top and play it a bit softer this time.*

take it like a man [for a male] to suffer misfortune stoically. (Compare this with take it.) ☐ *She said some really cutting things to him, but he took it like a man.* ☐ *I knew he could take it like a man.*

take it on the chin and **take it on the nose 1.** *Lit.* to stand up to something adverse, such as criticism. (Fig. on taking a direct punch to the head in boxing.) ☐ *They laid some blunt criticism on him, but he took it on the chin.* ☐ *I knew he could take it on the nose.* **2.** *Fig.* to receive the full brunt of something. ☐ *Why do I have to take it on the chin for something I didn't do?* ☐ *If you did it, you have to learn to take it on the chin.*

take it on the lam *Sl.* to get out of town; to run away. (Underworld.) ☐ *Both crooks took it on the lam when things got hot.* ☐ *Walt knew that the time had come to take it on the lam.*

take it on the nose Go to take it on the chin.

Take it or leave it. *Inf.* Take this one or none; you have no choice. ☐ *Bill: That's my final offer. Take it or leave it. Bob: Aw, come on! Take off a few bucks.* ☐ *Bill: Aw, I want eggs for breakfast, Mom. Mother: There's only cornflakes left. Take it or leave it.*

take it out on someone or something to punish or harm someone or something because one is angry or disturbed about something. ☐ *I'm sorry about your difficulty, but don't take it out on me.* ☐ *Don't take it out on the cat.*

take it slow to go slowly and carefully. ☐ *Just relax and take it slow. You've got a good chance.* ☐ *You'll make it. Take it slow and keep your spirits up.*

take it that... to understand it to be thus... ☐ *Am I to take it that you think this is the end of our relationship?*

take it to one's **grave** to carry a secret with one until one dies. ☐ *I will never tell anyone. I'll take your secret to my grave.* ☐ *She took the answer to the mystery to her grave.*

take it to the street *Sl.* to tell everyone about your problems. ☐ *If there's something bothering her, she's gonna take it to the street, first thing.* ☐ *Come on, don't take it to the street.*

take it upon oneself **to** do something Go to make it one's business to do something.

take it with one *Fig.* to take possessions with you when you die. (Usually negative.) ☐ *Spend a little on yourself. You can't take it with you, you know.* ☐ *He knew he couldn't take it with him, so he spent it all.*

take its course to continue along its way; [for a disease] to progress the way it normally progresses until it is cured naturally. ☐ *There is really no good medicine for this. This disease simply has to take its course.*

take kindly to something to be agreeable to something. ☐ *My father doesn't take kindly to anyone using his tools.* ☐ *I hope they'll take kindly to our request.*

take leave of one's **senses** *Fig.* to become irrational. (Often verbatim with *one's*.) ☐ *What are you doing? Have you taken leave of your senses?* ☐ *What a terrible situation! It's enough to make one take leave of one's senses.*

take leave of someone or something to go away from someone or something. ☐ *It is time for me to take leave of all of you.* ☐ *It saddened me to take leave of the city I grew up in.*

take liberties with someone or something and **make free with** someone or something to freely use or abuse someone or something. ☐ *You are overly familiar with me, Mr. Jones. One might think you were taking liberties with me.* ☐ *I don't like it when you make free with my lawn mower. You should at least ask when you want to borrow it.*

Take my word for it. Believe me.; Trust me, I am telling you the truth. ☐ *Bill: Take my word for it. These are the best power tools you can buy. Bob: But I don't need any power tools.* ☐ *Rachel: No one can cook better than Fred. Take my word for it. Bill: Really? Fred: Oh, yes. It's true.*

take names *Sl.* to make a list of wrongdoers. (Often figuratively, referring to a schoolteacher making a list of the names of misbehaving students to be sent to the principal.) ☐ *The boss is madder than hell, and he's taking names.* ☐ *Gary is coming by to talk about the little riot last night, and I think he's taking names.*

take no prisoners 1. *Lit.* to kill the enemy rather than seize the enemy as prisoners. ☐ *The soldiers' orders were to take no prisoners.* **2.** *Fig.* to be extremely ruthless with the opposition. ☐ *The new manager takes no prisoners. He is ruthless and stern.*

take no stock in something and **not take stock in** something; **not put (a lot) of stock in** something to pay no attention to someone; not to believe or accept something. ☐ *I take no stock in anything John has to say.* ☐ *He doesn't take stock in your opinions either.*

take note of someone or something *Fig.* to notice someone or something; to commit something about someone or something to one's memory, possibly by making a note on paper. ☐ *I took note of her when she came in. I thought she had left the company.* ☐ *Please take note of the hour. It is late.*

take notice of someone or something *Fig.* to notice the presence or existence of someone or something. ☐ *They*

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didn't take notice of me, so I left. ☐ *I took notice of the amount of the bill.*

take off 1. *Fig.* to leave the ground and begin to fly. (As with a bird or an airplane.) ☐ *When do we take off?* ☐ *The eagle took off and headed toward the mountains.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to leave in a hurry. ☐ *She really took off from there quickly.* ☐ *I've got to take off—I'm late.* **3.** *Fig.* [for something] to start selling well. ☐ *The fluffy dog dolls began to take off, and we sold out the lot.* ☐ *Ticket sales really took off after the first performance.* **4.** *Fig.* to become active and exciting. ☐ *Did the party ever take off, or was it dull all night?* ☐ *Things began to take off about midnight.*

take off (after someone or something**)** and **take out (after** someone or something**)** to begin to chase someone or something. ☐ *The bank guard took off after the robber.* ☐ *Did you see that police car take off?* ☐ *It took out after the bank robber's car.*

take off (for some place**) 1.** *Lit.* to take flight, heading for some place. ☐ *We took off for Moscow early in the evening.* ☐ *We took off at dawn.* **2.** *Fig.* to leave for some place. ☐ *The girls took off for home when they heard the dinner bell.* ☐ *It's late. I have to take off.*

take off from something to take flight from something or some place. ☐ *The plane took off from the busy airport right on schedule.* ☐ *We will take off from the airport on one side of town, fly across the city, and land at our destination within 15 minutes.*

take off from work and **take ((some) time) off from work; take off (from work)** not to appear at one's place of work for a period of time, hours or days. (Often used of an excused or planned absence.) ☐ *I will have to take off from work to go to the doctor.* ☐ *I want to take some time off from work and paint the house.* ☐ *Ken took off from work when he was ill.*

take off (on something**)** to start out speaking on something; to begin a discussion of something. ☐ *My father took off on the subject of taxes and talked for an hour.* ☐ *My uncle is always taking off on the state of the economy.*

take off one's **hat (to** someone**)** *Fig.* to offer praise for someone's good accomplishments. ☐ *I have to take off my hat to Mayor Johnson. She has done an excellent job.* ☐ *Yes, we all ought to take off our hats. She is our best mayor ever.*

take offense (at someone or something**)** to be insulted by someone or something. ☐ *Bill took offense at Mary for her thoughtless remarks.* ☐ *Almost everyone took offense at Bill's new book.* ☐ *I'm sorry you took offense. I meant no harm.*

take office to begin serving as an elected or appointed official. ☐ *When did the mayor take office?* ☐ *All the elected officials took office just after the election.*

take on a new meaning Go to next.

take on a new significance and **take on a new meaning** [for an event] to acquire a new interpretation; [for something] to become more meaningful or more significant. ☐ *All these monuments take on a new meaning when you realize the amount of human artistry and skill it took to design and build them.*

take on (so) to behave very emotionally. (Usually negative.) ☐ *Stop crying. Please don't take on so.* ☐ *I wish you wouldn't take on about this matter.*

take one **at** one's **word** to believe what someone says and act accordingly. ☐ *She told me to go jump in the lake, and I took her at her word.* ☐ *You shouldn't take her at her word. She frequently says things she doesn't really mean.*

take one **back (to** some time**)** *Fig.* to cause one to think of a time in the past. ☐ *This takes me back to the time I spent the summer in Paris.* ☐ *What you said really takes me back.*

take one for the road Go to one for the road.

take one's **belt in† (a notch)** and **pull** one's **belt in† (a notch) 1.** *Lit.* to tighten one's belt a bit. (Probably because one has not eaten recently or because one has lost weight.) ☐ *He pulled his belt in a notch and smiled at his success at losing weight.* ☐ *He took in his belt a notch and wished he had something to eat.* **2.** *Fig.* to reduce expenditures; to live or operate a business more economically. (As if one were going to have to eat less.) ☐ *They had to take their belts in a notch budgetarily speaking.* ☐ *The people at city hall will have to pull in their belts a notch unless they want to raise taxes.*

take one's **break** Go to take a break.

take one's **cue from** someone to use someone else's behavior or reactions as a guide to one's own. (From the theatrical cue as a signal to speak, etc.) ☐ *If you don't know which spoons to use at the dinner, just take your cue from John.* ☐ *The other children took their cue from Tommy and ignored the new boy.*

take one's **death (of cold)** Go to catch one's death (of cold).

take one's **eyes off (of)** someone or something to cease looking at someone or something. (Usually negative. *Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *I couldn't take my eyes off of the usher.* ☐ *Ken couldn't take his eyes off Judy.*

take one's **gloves off†** *Fig.* to stop being calm or civil and show an intention of winning a dispute by any means. (As if boxers were to remove their gloves in order to inflict more damage. See also The gloves are off.) ☐ *Both of them took their gloves off and really began arguing.*

take one's **hands off (of)** someone or something and **get** one's **hands off (of)** someone or something to let go of someone or something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Get your hands off of me!* ☐ *Please take your hands off the cake plate.*

take one's **hat† off to** someone *Fig.* to salute or pay an honor to someone. ☐ *Good work. I take my hat off to you.* ☐ *I take off my hat to you! What an excellent job!*

take (one's**) leave (of** someone**)** to say good-bye to someone and leave. ☐ *I took leave of the hostess at an early hour.* ☐ *One by one, the guests took their leave.*

take one's **lumps** *Inf.* to accept the result or punishment one deserves. (See also get one's lumps.) ☐ *You've got to learn to take your lumps if you're going to be in politics.* ☐ *I hate taking my lumps. I'd rather pretend nothing had happened.*

take one's **medicine** *Fig.* to accept the consequences or the bad fortune that one deserves. (Alludes to having to take unpleasant-tasting medicine.) ☐ *I know I did wrong, and I know I have to take my medicine.* ☐ *Billy knew he was going to get spanked, and he didn't want to take his medicine.*

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take one's **own life** to kill oneself; to commit suicide. ☐ *Bob tried to take his own life, but he was stopped in time.* ☐ *Later, he was sorry that he had tried to take his own life.*

take one's **pick of** someone or something to be able to have one's choice of someone or something. ☐ *Can I take my pick of anyone in the group?* ☐ *Please take your pick of desserts.*

take one's **time** to go as slow as one wants or needs to; to use as much time as is required. ☐ *There is no hurry. Please take your time.* ☐ *Bill is very careful and takes his time so he won't make any mistakes.*

take one's **turn** [when playing a game] to make one's move or play one's cards; [when alternating with someone, waiting for one's opportunity or place in a sequence] to perform one's task. ☐ *Somebody please wake Max up so he can take his turn.*

take oneself **off** some place to go away to some place more private. ☐ *I need to take myself off someplace and think all this over.* ☐ *She kept her sanity by taking herself off to her bedroom for a few hours each day.*

take out a loan to get a loan of money, especially from a bank. ☐ *Mary took out a loan to buy a car.* ☐ *We will have to take out a loan to remodel the kitchen.*

take out (after someone or something**)** Go to take off (after someone or something).

take over (from someone**)** to assume the role or job of someone. ☐ *I take over for the manager next month.* ☐ *Liz takes over and will be in charge.*

take pains over something *Fig.* to deal with something with great care. (See also take pains with someone or something.) ☐ *She certainly takes pains over her work.* ☐ *You will have to take pains over this if you want it to be done right.*

take pains with someone or something *Fig.* to deal with someone or something with great care. ☐ *He really took pains with me to make sure I understood it all.* ☐ *Ken took pains with the model plane.*

take part (in something**)** to participate in something. ☐ *Bill refused to take part in the game.* ☐ *Everyone is asked to take part in the celebration.*

take pity (on someone or an animal**)** to feel sorry for someone or an animal. ☐ *We took pity on the hungry people and gave them some hot food.* ☐ *She took pity on the little dog and brought it in to get warm.*

take place to happen. ☐ *When will this party take place?* ☐ *It's taking place right now.*

take possession (of something**)** to assume ownership of something. ☐ *I am to take possession of the house as soon as we sign the papers.*

take precedence over someone or something Go to precedence over someone or something.

take pride in someone or something to be proud of someone or something. ☐ *I take a great deal of pride in my children.* ☐ *She takes pride in her work and it shows in her products.*

take (quite) a toll (on someone or something**)** to cause damage or wear by using something or by hard living. ☐ *Years of sunbathing took a toll on Mary's skin.* ☐ *Drug abuse takes quite a toll on the lives of people.*

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take refuge in something to hide in something; to seek safety or the comfort of being safe in something. ☐ *The rabbits took refuge in a hole in the ground.* ☐ *The children took refuge in the house as soon as the storm began.*

take revenge (against someone**)** and **seek revenge (against** someone**); get revenge against** someone; **take revenge (on** someone**) (for** something**)** to get even with someone. ☐ *Linda planned to take revenge against Ellen.* ☐ *I intend to take revenge on Paul for what he did.* ☐ *I will not seek revenge.*

take root 1. *Lit.* [for a plant] to develop roots in soil or some other growing medium. ☐ *The new plants should take root in a few weeks and start growing.* **2.** *Fig.* to begin to take hold or have effect. ☐ *Things will begin to change when my new policies take root.* ☐ *My ideas began to take root and influence other people.*

take shape [for something, such as plans, writing, ideas, arguments, etc.] to begin to be organized and specific. ☐ *My plans are beginning to take shape.* ☐ *As my manuscript took shape, I started showing it to publishers.*

take sick and **take ill** to become ill. ☐ *I took sick with a bad cold last week.* ☐ *I hope I don't take ill before final exams.*

take sides to choose one side of an argument. ☐ *They were arguing, but I didn't want to take sides, so I left.* ☐ *I don't mind taking sides on important issues.*

take sides against someone or something to join a faction opposing someone or something; to establish a faction against someone or something. ☐ *Both of them took sides against me. It wasn't fair.* ☐ *We took sides against the bank.*

take solace (in something**)** to console oneself with some fact. ☐ *I am inordinately impoverished, but I take solace in the fact that I have a splendiferous vocabulary.*

take some doing to require considerable effort and care. ☐ *It'll take some doing, but it'll get done.* ☐ *It's not impossible. It'll just take some doing.*

take some heat Go to take the heat.

take (some) time off Go to time off.

take ((some) time) off from work Go to take off from work.

take someone **apart**† **1.** *Sl.* to beat someone up. (See also take something apart.) ☐ *Don't talk to me that way, or I'll take you apart.* ☐ *He was so mad that I thought he was going to take apart all of us.* **2.** *Inf.* to criticize or defame someone or something. ☐ *They really took me apart, but I just ignore bad reviews.* ☐ *The editorial took apart the entire city government.*

take someone **around**† to show someone the premises; to introduce someone to the people on the premises. ☐ *Mr. Franklin needs a plant tour. Would you take him around?* ☐ *Would you kindly take around our guests?*

take someone **as** someone to assume that someone is someone or a type of person. ☐ *I took her as some sort of crank.* ☐ *She didn't want to be taken as some sort of busybody.*

take someone **aside**† to remove someone temporarily from the group for the purposes of discussing something privately. ☐ *I'm sorry he insulted you. I'll take him aside and*

talk to him about it. ☐ *I took aside my secretary and explained the procedure.*

take someone **below** to guide someone to a lower deck on a ship. ☐ *The captain told the first mate to take the passengers below.* ☐ *Please take Mr. Wilson below, where he will not be in the way.*

take someone **by surprise** and **catch** someone **by surprise** to startle someone; to surprise someone with something unexpected. ☐ *Oh! You took me by surprise because I didn't hear you come in.* ☐ *Bill caught his mother by surprise by coming to the door and pretending to be selling something.*

take someone **down a notch (or two)** Go to next.

take someone **down a peg (or two)** and **take** someone **down a notch (or two); knock** someone **down a peg (or two); knock** someone **down a notch (or two)** *Fig.* to reprimand someone who is acting too arrogant. ☐ *The teacher's scolding took Bob down a notch or two.* ☐ *He was so rude that someone was bound to knock him down a peg or two.*

take someone **down (to size)** Go to cut someone down (to size).

take someone **for a fool** Go to take someone for an idiot.

take someone **for a ride 1.** *Lit.* to carry someone about, usually for recreation, in a car, plane, boat, etc. ☐ *Would you take us for a ride in your boat?* ☐ *Please take me for a ride in your new car.* **2.** *Fig.* to deceive someone. ☐ *You really took those people for a ride. They really believed you.* ☐ *I was taken for a ride on this matter.* **3.** *Fig.* to take away and murder a person. (Underworld.) ☐ *Mr. Big told Mike to take Fred for a ride.* ☐ *The gang leader had said he thought Mike had better take Walter for a ride.*

take someone **for an idiot** and **take** someone **for a fool** to assume that someone is stupid. ☐ *I wouldn't do anything like that! Do you take me for an idiot?* ☐ *I don't take you for a fool. I think you're very clever.*

take someone **for dead** to assume that someone who is still alive is dead. ☐ *When we found her, we took her for dead, but the paramedics were able to revive her.* ☐ *He was taken for dead and abandoned.*

take someone **for** someone or something to perceive someone as someone or something. ☐ *I took you for a fairly even-tempered person. You aren't.* ☐ *Alice took Jim for a gentleman—which he was.*

take someone **for** something **1.** *Lit.* to escort someone to and through some activities, such as a walk, a swim, a ride, etc. ☐ *Can I take you for a ride?* ☐ *He took me for a walk in the park, and then we came home.* **2.** *Inf.* to cheat someone by a certain amount of money. ☐ *That crook took me for a hundred bucks.* ☐ *How much did he take you for?*

take someone **hostage** to kidnap or seize someone to be a hostage. ☐ *The terrorists planned to take the ambassador hostage.* ☐ *The entire family was taken hostage by the robber.*

take someone **in**† **1.** to give someone shelter. (See also take something in.) ☐ *Do you think you could take me in for the night?* ☐ *I don't take in strangers.* **2.** Go to suck someone in.

take someone **in**† **as** something to make someone a member of an organization. ☐ *We took her in as an associate at first.* ☐ *I took in Karen as an associate.*

take someone **in hand** *Fig.* to take control of someone; to assume the responsibility of guiding someone. ☐ *Someone is going to have to take Tim in hand and help him out.* ☐ *Alice decided that she would take the new worker in hand.*

take someone **into** one's **confidence** to trust someone with confidential information; to tell a secret to someone and trust the person to keep the secret. ☐ *We are good friends, but I didn't feel I could take her into my confidence.* ☐ *I know something very important about Jean. Can I take you into my confidence?*

take someone **off**† *Sl.* to kill someone. (Underworld.) ☐ *The mob took the witness off a week before the trial.* ☐ *Barlowe didn't want to have to take off Lefty, but he was afraid he might talk.*

take someone **on 1.** to enter into a fight or argument with someone. ☐ *I pretended to agree because I really didn't want to take him on.* **2.** to employ someone. ☐ *I think we could take you on as an assistant editor, but it doesn't pay very well.*

take someone or an animal **in**† to provide shelter for someone or an animal. ☐ *When I needed a place to live, my uncle took me in.* ☐ *Mrs. Wilson took in the lonely little dog and gave it a loving home.*

take someone or an animal **into** one's **heart** *Fig.* to grow to love and trust someone or an animal; to receive a newcomer graciously and lovingly. ☐ *He was such a cute little boy. We took him into our hearts immediately.* ☐ *We loved the puppy instantly and took her into our hearts at once.*

take someone or something **aboard** to load someone or something onto a ship. ☐ *The ship was in its berth, taking passengers aboard.* ☐ *The ship took many tons of cargo aboard.*

take someone or something **across (**something**)** to carry or lead someone or something across something. ☐ *Tim took Liz across the bridge.* ☐ *We took a lot of food and medicine across before the flooded river washed the bridge out.*

take someone or something **along**† to bring someone or something along with one. ☐ *Can I take my friend along on the hike?* ☐ *You should take along your own drinking water.*

take someone or something **at face value** to accept someone or something just as it appears; to believe that the way things appear is the way they really are. ☐ *He means what he says. You have to take him at face value.* ☐ *I take everything he says at face value.*

take someone or something **away**† **(from** someone or something**)** to remove someone or something to some distance away from someone or something else; to remove someone or something from the possession of someone or something else. ☐ *Take her away from me!* ☐ *Take away that horrible food.*

take someone or something **before** someone or something to bring someone or something in front of someone or a group for judgment. ☐ *I will have to take Tom before the manager and let Tom tell his story.* ☐ *I took the invention before the committee.*

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take someone or something **by** something to grasp someone or something by holding on to some part. ☐ *She took him by the hand and helped him up.* ☐ *Tom took the dog by the collar and led it out.*

take someone or something **by storm 1.** *Fig.* to conquer someone or something in a fury. ☐ *The army took city after city by storm.* ☐ *They crashed in and took the general by storm.* **2.** *Fig.* to succeed overwhelmingly with someone, some place, or a group. ☐ *The singing star took the audience in each town by storm.* ☐ *The star took the critics by storm.*

take someone or something **by surprise** to startle or surprise someone or something. ☐ *She bolted into the room and took them by surprise.* ☐ *I took the little bird by surprise, and it flew away.*

take someone or something **down**† to move someone or something to a lower position or level. ☐ *The boss is downstairs and wants to meet our visitor. Will you take her down?* ☐ *The way down to the lobby is confusing. Let me take down our visitor.* ☐ *Let me take the sandwiches down.*

take someone or something **for granted** to expect someone or something to be always available to serve in some way without thanks or recognition; to value someone or something too lightly. ☐ *I wish you didn't take me for granted.* ☐ *I guess that I take a lot of things for granted.*

take someone or something **into account** and **take into account** someone or something to remember to consider someone or something. ☐ *I hope you'll take Bill and Bob into account when you plan the party.* ☐ *I'll try to take into account all the things that are important in a situation like this.*

take someone or something **off**† *Sl.* to rob someone or something. (Underworld.) ☐ *Weren't you in that bunch that took the bank off in Philly?* ☐ *No, we never took off no bank, did we, Lefty?*

take someone or something **off** someone's **hands** *Fig.* to relieve someone of the burden or bother of someone or something. ☐ *I would be happy to take your uncle off your hands for a few hours.* ☐ *Will you please take some of this food off my hands?*

take someone or something **off (**something**)** to remove someone or something from the surface of something. ☐ *Bob helped take his children off the merry-go-round.* ☐ *Please take your books off the table.*

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take someone or something **on**† to accept the task of handling a difficult person or thing. ☐ *I'll take it on if nobody else will do it.* ☐ *Nobody wanted to take on Mrs. Franklin, but it had to be done.*

take someone or something **out of** something and **take** someone or something **out**† to carry, lead, or guide someone or something out of something or some place. (See also **take** something **out**.) ☐ *He was becoming quite ill from the smoke, and I had to take him out of the room.* ☐ *They took out the injured people.*

take someone or something **over**† to take charge (of someone or something); to assume control of someone or something. ☐ *The new manager will take the office over next week.* ☐ *Will you please take over your children? I can't seem to control them.*

take someone or something **over (to** someone or something**)** to deliver someone or something to someone or something. ☐ *Would you take this over to Tiffany?* ☐ *Would you take Tiffany over to the office?*

take someone or something **with** one to take away someone or something when one leaves. ☐ *When you go, take Liz with you.* ☐ *Please take your dog with you.*

take someone or something **wrong** to misunderstand someone or something. ☐ *Please don't take me wrong, but I believe that your socks don't match.* ☐ *You'll probably take this wrong, but I have to say that I've never seen you looking better.*

take someone **out**† **1.** to date someone. ☐ *I hope he'll take me out soon.* ☐ *She wanted to take out her guest for the evening.* **2.** to block out a player in football. ☐ *You take Joe out and I'll carry the ball.* ☐ *Who was supposed to take out that huge guy?* **3.** *Sl.* to kill someone. (Underworld.) ☐ *Mr. Gutman told Lefty to take Max out.* ☐ *One more word out of you, and I'm going to take you out.*

take someone **out**† **to dinner** to take someone as one's guest to a meal at a restaurant. ☐ *Can I take you out to dinner sometime?* ☐ *We will take out the visitors to dinner tonight.*

take someone's **blood pressure** to measure a person's blood pressure. ☐ *The doctor takes my blood pressure every time I am in the office.* ☐ *Bob takes his blood pressure at home every day.*

take someone's **breath away 1.** *Lit.* to cause someone to be out of breath due to a shock or hard exercise. ☐ *Running this fast takes my breath away.* ☐ *Mary frightened me and took my breath away.* **2.** *Fig.* to overwhelm someone with beauty or grandeur; to surprise or astound someone. ☐ *The magnificent painting took my breath away.* ☐ *Ann looked so beautiful that she took my breath away.*

take someone's **head off** *Fig.* to scold or berate someone severely. ☐ *There is no need to take his head off about such a simple matter.*

take someone's **life** to kill someone. (Can include onself.) ☐ *It's the executioner's job to take people's lives.*

take someone's **life in** one's **hands** *Fig.* to risk someone's life. ☐ *If you go into the war zone, you will be taking your life in your hands.* ☐ *Ted didn't want to take his life in his hands by going there alone.*

take someone's **part** *Fig.* to take a side in an argument; to support someone in an argument. ☐ *My sister took my mother's part in the family argument.* ☐ *You are always taking the part of the underdog!*

take someone's **pulse** to measure the frequency of the beats of a person's pulse. ☐ *I can take my own pulse.* ☐ *The nurse took my pulse and said I was fine.*

take someone's **temperature** to measure a person's body temperature with a thermometer. ☐ *I took my temperature and I found that I am running a fever.* ☐ *The nurse took my temperature and said I was okay.*

take someone's **word for** something and **take** someone's **word on** something to believe what someone says about something without seeking further information or proof. ☐ *It's true! Take my word for it.* ☐ *I can't prove it. You will have to take my word on it.*

take someone's **word on** something Go to previous.

take someone, something, or an animal **in(side)** to transport someone, something, or an animal to shelter or inside something. ☐ *Please take your little brother in. It's starting to rain.* ☐ *Take the dog inside when you go.*

take someone **through (**something**)** to escort someone through something or some place. ☐ *Would you mind taking Jerry through the factory?* ☐ *I would be happy to take him through.*

take someone **to court** to sue someone; to force someone to appear in court. ☐ *I will take you to court if you persist in pestering my client.* ☐ *Don was taken to court in a negligence suit.*

take someone **to one side** *Fig.* to lead someone to a relatively private place, to say something private or give private instructions. (See also **take** someone **aside.**) ☐ *Gary took Fran to one side to talk to her.* ☐ *I will take Sue to one side and have a word with her about this matter.*

take someone **to task** to scold or reprimand someone. ☐ *The teacher took John to task for his bad behavior.* ☐ *I lost a big contract, and the boss took me to task in front of everyone.*

take someone **to the cleaners 1.** *Sl.* to take a lot of someone's money; to swindle someone. ☐ *The lawyers took the insurance company to the cleaners, but I still didn't get enough to pay for my losses.* ☐ *The con artists took the old man to the cleaners.* **2.** *Sl.* to defeat or best someone. ☐ *We took the other team to the cleaners.* ☐ *Look at the height they've got! They'll take us to the cleaners!*

take someone **under** someone's **wing(s)** Go to **under** someone's **wing(s).**

take someone **up†** to discuss or deal with someone. (See also **take** something **up.**) ☐ *What are we going to do about Bill? Are we going to take Bill up today at the board meeting?* ☐ *Let's take up the applicants in our next meeting.*

take someone **up on** something to accept an offer that someone has made. ☐ *That's a good offer. I'll take you up on it.* ☐ *Tom took Sue up on her offer of dinner.*

take something to endure something; to survive something. ☐ *I don't think I can take any more scolding today. I've been in trouble since I got up this morning.* ☐ *Mary was very insulting to Tom, but he can take it.*

take something **aloft** to take an aircraft into the air. ☐ *The pilot took the plane aloft and tested it out.* ☐ *When will you take this aloft for a test flight?*

take something **amiss** and **take** something **the wrong way** to understand something as wrong or insulting. ☐ *Would you take it amiss if I told you I thought you look lovely?* ☐ *I was afraid you'd take it the wrong way.*

take something **apart† 1.** *Lit.* to disassemble something. (See also **take** someone **apart.**) ☐ *Bobby took his bicycle apart.* ☐ *You take apart everything that is mechanical.* **2.** *Fig.* to damage or ruin something. ☐ *The wreck took both cars apart.* ☐ *The high wind took apart the roof and the fence.* **3.** *Fig.* to criticize something severely. ☐ *The critic took the play apart.* ☐ *The teacher took apart John's essay in front of the class.*

take something **around†** to take something from various people or places. ☐ *Would you take the pictures around and show them to everyone?* ☐ *I will take around this stack of pictures and show them to each person.*

take something **as** something *Fig.* to assume that something is intended a certain way. ☐ *I took your comments as a severe criticism.* ☐ *Sam's actions were taken as constructive.*

take something **at face value** to accept something exactly the way it appears to be. ☐ *I don't know whether I can take her story at face value, but I will assume that she is not lying.* ☐ *The committee took the report at face value and approved the suggested changes.*

take something **away† (from** someone or something**)** to detract from someone or something. ☐ *The bright costume on the soprano takes a lot away from the tenor, who is just as important.* ☐ *The main subject of the picture is good, but the busy background takes away a lot.*

take something **back†** to retract a statement; to rescind one's remark. ☐ *You had better take back what you said about my sister.* ☐ *I won't take what I said back! She's a twit!*

take something **back† (from** someone**)** to take possession of something that one had previously given away. ☐ *I took my sweater back from Tim, since he never wore it.* ☐ *I took back my money from the child.*

take something **back† to** someone or something to carry or transport something from someone or something. ☐ *Please take this report back to Liz.* ☐ *Take back this book to Karen.*

take something **down† 1.** to take some large or complicated things apart. ☐ *They plan to take all these buildings down and turn the land into a park.* ☐ *Do they plan to take down the television broadcasting tower?* **2.** to write something down in something. ☐ *Please take these figures down in your notebook.* ☐ *Take down these figures in your record of this meeting.*

take something **for a drive** Go to **for a spin.**

take something **from** someone **1.** *Lit.* to remove something from someone's possession. ☐ *Jimmy took Tim's cookie from him.* ☐ *Please don't take my money from me.* **2.** *Fig.* to endure abuse from someone. ☐ *I cannot take any more from you!* ☐ *Tom could not take any more bad treatment from Alice.*

take something **from** something to subtract something from something; to remove something from something. ☐ *Take ten from twenty and see what you have left.* ☐ *If you take the lettuce out of the salad, what do you have left?*

take something **home (with** oneself**) 1.** *Lit.* to carry something to one's home. ☐ *We took a lot of souvenirs home with us.* **2.** *Fig.* to take a thought, idea, or concept away [to one's home] from a meeting or conference. ☐ *Take this idea home with you—diversify your investments.*

take something **in† 1.** to reduce the size of a garment. ☐ *This is too big. I'll have to take it in around the waist.* ☐ *I'll have to take in these pants.* **2.** to view and study something; to attend something involving viewing. ☐ *The mountains are so beautiful! I need an hour or so to take it all in.* ☐ *I want to sit here a minute and take in the view.* ☐ *Would you like to take in a movie?* **3.** to receive money as payment or proceeds. ☐ *How much did we take in today?* ☐ *The box office took nearly a thousand dollars in within just the last hour.* **4.** to receive something into the mind, usually visu-

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ally. ☐ *Could you take those explanations in? I couldn't.* ☐ *I could hardly take in everything she said.* **5.** to inhale, drink, or eat something. ☐ *I think I'll go for a walk and take some fresh air in.* ☐ *Jane was very ill, but she managed to take in some fresh air from the open window.* **6.** Go to **take** something **into** some place.

take something **in (**one's**) stride** *Fig.* to accept advances or setbacks as the normal course of events. ☐ *She faced a serious problem, but she was able to take it in her stride.* ☐ *I'll just take it in stride.* ☐ *We were afraid that success would spoil her, but she just took it in stride.*

take something **into account** and **take** something **into consideration** to consider something to be an important factor in some decision. ☐ *We will take your long years of service into account when we make our final decision.* ☐ *You can be certain that we will take it into consideration.*

take something **into** one's **head** *Fig.* to get an obsession or overpowering idea into one's thinking. ☐ *George took this strange idea into his head about fixing the car himself.* ☐ *I don't know why she took that strange idea into her head.*

take something **into** some place and **take** something **in**† to carry something into a place. ☐ *Fred took the birthday cake into the dining room.* ☐ *Liz took in the cake for us.*

take something **lying down** *Fig.* to endure something unpleasant without fighting back. ☐ *He insulted me publicly. You don't expect me to take that lying down, do you?* ☐ *I'm not the kind of person who'll take something like that lying down.*

take something **off**† to remove something, such as an article of clothing. ☐ *Please take your coat off and stay awhile.* ☐ *Please take off your coat.*

take something **on faith** to accept or believe something on the basis of little or no evidence. ☐ *Please try to believe what I'm telling you. Just take it on faith.* ☐ *Surely you can't expect me to take a story like that on faith.*

take something **on the chin 1.** *Lit.* to absorb a blow on the chin. ☐ *The boxer tried to duck but took the blow on the chin.* **2.** *Fig.* to experience and endure bad news or other trouble. ☐ *The bad news was a real shock, but John took it on the chin.* ☐ *The worst luck comes my way, and I always end up taking it on the chin.*

take something **on trust** to accept that something is true through trust. ☐ *I don't know if it's so, but I'll take it on trust.* ☐ *You will have to take it on trust because I can't prove it.*

take something **out**† **1.** *Lit.* to carry something outside. ☐ *Please take the trash out.* ☐ *I'll take out the trash.* **2.** *Inf.* to bomb or destroy something. ☐ *The enemy took out one of the trucks, but not the one carrying the medicine.* ☐ *The last mission took two enemy bunkers out.* **3.** Go to **take** something **out of** someone or something.

take something **out in trade** *Fig.* to accept someone's goods or services in payment of a bill. ☐ *The grocer told the plumber that he would pay the plumber by allowing him to take his bill out in trade.* ☐ *I don't have any cash right now. Can you take what I owe you out in trade?*

take something **out of context** Go to **out of context.**

take something **out of** someone or something and **take** something **out**† to remove something from the inside of someone or something. ☐ *The doctors took a large intestinal tumor out of Wally.* ☐ *She took out a sheet of paper.*

take something **out of** someone's **hands** Go to **out of** someone's **hands.**

take something **out**† **on** someone or something to punish someone or something because of something, such as anger, hurt feelings, frustration, etc. ☐ *I know you're angry, but don't take it out on me!* ☐ *Don't take out your anger on me.*

take something **over**† **1.** to assume responsibility for a task. ☐ *It looks as if I'm going to have to take the project over.* ☐ *I will take over the project.* **2.** to acquire all of an asset; [for a company] to acquire another company. ☐ *Carl set out to take the failing airline over.* ☐ *He took over the failing company with the help of a number of investment bankers.* **3.** to take control of something. ☐ *The dictator hoped to take over the world little by little.* ☐ *He just might take it over.*

take something **personally** to interpret a remark as if it were mean or critical about oneself. ☐ *Don't take it personally, but you really need a haircut.* ☐ *I want to tell you something, but please don't take it personally.*

take something **public 1.** to make something known to the public. ☐ *You gotta take it public—put it on the street—even when it's none of your business.* ☐ *Don't take it public. You'll just get talked about.* **2.** to sell shares in a company to the general public. (Securities markets.) ☐ *The board decided not to take the company public.* ☐ *We're going to take it public whenever the market looks good.*

take something **the wrong way** Go to **take** something **amiss.**

take something **to heart** *Fig.* to consider that some comment is significant to oneself. ☐ *Mary listened to Bob's advice and took it all to heart.* ☐ *All Sue's advice was taken to heart by the show committee.*

take something **to pieces** *Inf.* to disassemble something. ☐ *I will have to take the vacuum cleaner to pieces to find out what's wrong with it.* ☐ *The machine was taken to pieces again in an effort to find where the leftover part belonged.*

take something **to** someone or something to carry something to someone or something. ☐ *Should I take this package to Carol?* ☐ *Would you take this to the post office?*

take something **under advisement** to hear an idea and think about it carefully. ☐ *It's a good idea, but I'll have to take it under advisement.* ☐ *The suggestion was taken under advisement, and a reply was not expected for at least a month.*

take something **up**† **1.** [for someone or a group] to deliberate something. ☐ *When will the board of directors take this up?* ☐ *Let's take up that matter now.* **2.** to raise something, such as the height of a hem. ☐ *The skirt is too long. I'll have to take it up.* ☐ *Can you take up this skirt for me?* **3.** to continue with something after an interruption. ☐ *They took it up where they left off.* ☐ *Let's take up this matter at the point we were at when we were interrupted.* ☐ *We must take up our work again.* **4.** to begin something; to start to acquire a skill in something. (See also **take** something **up**† **(with** someone**)**.) ☐ *When did you take this hobby up?* ☐ *I took up skiing last fall.* **5.** to absorb something. ☐ *This old sponge doesn't take much water up.* ☐ *It used to*

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take up more. **6.** to adopt something new. ☐ *I see you've taken a new lifestyle up.* ☐ *Toby took up the life of a farmer.*

take something **up to** someone to deliver something to a person on a higher level. ☐ *I will take this up to the boss and try to get it approved.* ☐ *Please take this up to Sue on the next floor and see what she thinks about it.*

take something **up† (with** someone**)** to raise and discuss a matter with someone. ☐ *This is a very complicated problem. I'll have to take it up with the office manager.* ☐ *She'll take up this problem with the owner in the morning.*

take something **(up)on** oneself to accept the entire burden of something on oneself. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *You didn't need to take it all upon yourself. There are others here who can help, you know.* ☐ *Jan takes too much on herself.*

take something **with a pinch of salt** and **take something with a grain of salt** *Fig.* to listen to a story or an explanation with considerable doubt. ☐ *You must take anything she says with a grain of salt. She doesn't always tell the truth.* ☐ *They took my explanation with a pinch of salt. I was sure they didn't believe me.*

take something **with** one to take something [away] with one. ☐ *I am going to take this food with me.* ☐ *Can I take one of these catalogs with me?*

take something **with** something to eat or swallow something, such as medicine, with something. ☐ *You have to take this medicine with milk or soda water.* ☐ *I will take this pill with milk.*

take steps (to prevent something**)** *Fig.* to do what is necessary to prevent something. ☐ *I took steps to prevent John from learning what we were talking about.* ☐ *I have to keep John from knowing what I've been doing. I can prevent it if I take steps.*

take stock (of something**)** to make an appraisal of resources and potentialities. ☐ *I spent some time yesterday taking stock of my good and bad qualities.* ☐ *We all need to take stock now and then.*

take the bit between the teeth Go to next.

take the bit in one's **teeth** and **take the bit between the teeth** to put oneself in charge; to take charge. ☐ *Someone needed to direct the project, so I took the bit in my teeth.* ☐ *If you want to get something done, you've got to take the bit between your teeth and get to work.*

Take the bitter with the sweet. *Prov.* Accept the bad things as well as the good things that happen. (Implies that the bad and good things you are talking about are very serious or important.) ☐ *If you intend to get married, you must be prepared to take the bitter with the sweet.*

take the blame (for doing something**)** to acknowledge that one is to blame for doing something. ☐ *Do you really expect for me to take the blame for something I didn't do?*

take the bull by the horns *Fig.* to confront a problem head-on and deal with it openly. ☐ *It's time to take the bull by the horns and get this job done.*

take the chill off ((of) a place**)** to do something that warms a place up slightly. ☐ *Let's build a fire and take the chill off this place.* ☐ *I turned up the heat to take the chill off of the apartment.*

take the coward's way out *Euph.* to kill oneself. ☐ *When faced with financial disaster, Sarah took the coward's way out.* ☐ *I can't believe that Bill would take the coward's way out. His death must have been an accident.*

take the cure to enter into any treatment program or treatment center. (Especially those dealing with drugs and alcohol.) ☐ *I wanted to take the cure, but I just couldn't bring myself to do it.* ☐ *It's hard to get those addicted to realize that they are the ones who have to decide to take the cure.*

take the day off Go to the day off.

take the easy way out to get free of something by taking the path of least resistance. ☐ *You can depend on Kelly to take the easy way out of a tough situation.* ☐ *I'm not the type that takes the easy way out.*

take the edge off ((of) something**) 1.** *Lit.* to dull a blade. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Cutting hard stuff like that will take the edge off your knife blade.* **2.** *Fig.* to decrease the effect of something; to make something less blunt, critical, etc. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *He did not mean to insult the guest, and he quickly thought of something to say that would take the edge off his remark.* ☐ *Her comments were quite cruel, and nothing could be said to take the edge off of them.*

take the fall *Sl.* to get arrested for a particular crime. (Especially when others are going unpunished for the same crime.) ☐ *Walt and Tony pulled the job off together, but Tony took the fall.* ☐ *You did it, and I won't take the fall!*

take the floor 1. *Fig.* to stand up and address the audience. ☐ *When I take the floor, I'll make a short speech.* ☐ *The last time you had the floor, you talked for an hour.* **2.** *Fig.* to go to the dance floor in order to dance. ☐ *They took the floor for the foxtrot.* ☐ *When the band played, everyone took the floor.*

Take the goods the gods provide. *Prov.* If you have good fortune, enjoy it and use it to your advantage. ☐ *Frances: I feel I have an unfair advantage over other people in the violin contest. After all, my parents were able to give me lessons with the very best teachers when I was young. Alan: Frances, take the goods the gods provide.*

take the heat and **take some heat** *Sl.* to receive or put up with criticism (for something). ☐ *The cops have been taking some heat about the Quincy killing.* ☐ *If you can't take the heat, stay out of the kitchen.*

take the heat off (of) someone or something *Fig. to relieve the pressure on someone or something. (Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *That really takes the heat off of all of us.* ☐ *The change in the deadline takes the heat off the office staff.*

take the initiative (to do something**)** to activate oneself to do something even if one has not been asked to do it. ☐ *The door hinges squeak because no one will take the initiative to oil them.* ☐ *Sometimes, in order to get things done, you have to take the initiative.*

take the law into one's **own hands** *Fig.* to attempt to administer the law; to pass judgment on someone who has done something wrong. ☐ *Citizens don't have the right to take the law into their own hands.* ☐ *The shopkeeper took the law into his own hands when he tried to arrest the thief.*

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take the liberty of doing something to do something for someone voluntarily; to do something slightly personal for someone that would be more appropriate if one knew the person better. (Often used as an overly polite exaggeration in a request.) ☐ *Do you mind if I take the liberty of flicking a bit of lint off your collar?* ☐ *May I take the liberty of removing your coat?* ☐ *I took the liberty of ordering an entree for you. I hope you don't mind.*

take the lid off (of) something and **take the lid off**† **1.** *Lit.* to remove the lid from something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *I took the lid off the box and set it aside.* ☐ *Karen took off the lid.* **2.** *Fig.* to reveal a set of previously concealed problems. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *You took the lid off this mess. You straighten it out!* ☐ *You took off the lid, so you have to settle it.*

take the (long) count *Sl.* to die. (Fig. on a boxer being counted out and losing a fight.) ☐ *The poor cat took the long count at last.* ☐ *I'm too young to take the count.*

take the pledge *Fig.* to promise to abstain from drinking alcohol. ☐ *I'm not ready to take the pledge yet, but I will cut down.* ☐ *My aunt tried to get me to take the pledge.*

take the plunge to marry someone. ☐ *I'm not ready to take the plunge yet.* ☐ *Sam and Mary took the plunge.*

take the pulse of something *Fig.* to sample or survey something to learn about its progress or state. ☐ *Two executives came in to take the pulse of the local business unit.*

take the rap (for someone**)** *Inf.* to take the blame [for doing something] for someone else. ☐ *I don't want to take the rap for you.* ☐ *John robbed the bank, but Tom took the rap for him.*

take the rap (for something**)** *Inf.* to take the blame for (doing) something. ☐ *I won't take the rap for the crime. I wasn't even in town.* ☐ *Who'll take the rap for it? Who did it?*

take (the) roll Go to call (the) roll.

Take the rough with the smooth. *Prov.* Accept difficult as well as easy times. ☐ *Don't give up on your business just because you lost money this month. You have to take the rough with the smooth.*

take the slack up† **1.** *Lit.* to tighten a rope that is holding something loosely. ☐ *Take the slack up if you can.* ☐ *This clothesline is too loose. Do something to take up the slack.* **2.** *Fig.* to do what needs to be done; to do what has been left undone. ☐ *Do I have to take the slack up?* ☐ *Jill did her job poorly and I have to take up the slack.*

take the spear (in one's **chest)** *Sl.* to accept full blame for something; to accept the full brunt of the punishment for something. ☐ *The CFO got the short straw and had to take the spear in his chest.* ☐ *I sure didn't want to take the spear.*

take the stage *Fig.* to become the center of attention; to become the focus of everyone's attention. ☐ *Later in the day, the problems in the warehouse took the stage, and we discussed them until dinnertime.*

take the stand to go to and sit in the witness chair in a courtroom. ☐ *I was in court all day, waiting to take the stand.* ☐ *The lawyer asked the witness to take the stand.*

take the starch out of someone **1.** *Fig.* to make someone less arrogant or stiff. ☐ *I told a joke that made Mr. Jones laugh very hard. It really took the starch out of him.* ☐ *John is so arrogant. I'd really like to take the starch out of him!* **2.** *Fig.* to make someone tired and weak. ☐ *This hot weather really takes the starch out of me.* ☐ *What a long day! It sure took the starch out of me.*

take the stuffing out of someone Go to kick the (natural) stuffing out of someone.

take the trouble (to do something**)** to make an effort to do something (that one might not otherwise do). ☐ *I wish I had taken the trouble to study this matter more carefully.* ☐ *I just didn't have enough time to take the trouble.*

take the wind out of someone's **sails** *Fig.* to challenge someone's boasting or arrogance. ☐ *John was bragging about how much money he earned until he learned that most of us make more. That took the wind out of his sails.* ☐ *Learning that one has been totally wrong about something can really take the wind out of one's sails.*

take the words out of someone's **mouth** *Fig.* to say something just before someone else was going to say the same thing; to say something that someone who agrees with you might have said. ☐ *That is exactly right! You took the words right out of my mouth!* ☐ *When you said "expensive," you took the words right out of my mouth!*

take things easy 1. to live well and comfortably. ☐ *I'll be glad when I can make enough money to take things easy.* ☐ *I make enough to take things easy.* **2.** to relax temporarily and recuperate. ☐ *The doctor says I'm supposed to take things easy for a while.* ☐ *I want you to take it easy until the stitches heal.*

take time out to spend time away from studying or working. ☐ *He's taking time out between high school and starting at the university.* ☐ *Mary's taking time out from her job to work abroad for a year.*

take to one's **bed** to go to bed, as with an illness. ☐ *I feel a little ill, so I'll take to my bed for a day or so.* ☐ *Sam took to his bed with a fever.*

take to one's **heels** *Fig.* to run away. ☐ *The little boy said hello and then took to his heels.* ☐ *The man took to his heels to try to get to the bus stop before the bus left.*

take to someone or something to become fond of or attracted to someone or something. ☐ *Mary didn't take to her new job, and she quit after two weeks.* ☐ *The puppy seems to take to this new food just fine.*

take to the hills Go to head for the hills.

take too much on† to undertake to do too much work or too many tasks at one time. ☐ *Don't take too much on, or you won't be able to do any of it well.* ☐ *Ann tends to take on too much and get exhausted.*

take turns ((at doing something**)** and **take turns (at** something**); take turns (with** something**)** [for two or more people] to alternate in doing something. ☐ *Let's take turns with mowing the lawn.* ☐ *Do you want to take turns at answering the telephone?*

take turns with someone to alternate [doing something] with someone. ☐ *We both can't be there at the same time. I'll take turns with you.* ☐ *You have to take turns with your brother.*

take turns (with something**)** Go to **take turns ((at)** doing something**)**.

take umbrage at something to feel that one has been insulted by something. ☐ *The employee took umbrage at not getting a raise.* ☐ *Mary took umbrage at the suggestion that she was being unreasonable.*

take up arms (against someone or something**)** to prepare to fight against someone or something. ☐ *Everyone in the town took up arms against the enemy.* ☐ *They were all so angry that the leader convinced them to take up arms.*

take up one's **abode** some place to make some place one's home. ☐ *I am going to take up my abode in a different city.* ☐ *I will take up my abode in this place and hope to find a job close by.*

take up residence some place to make a residence of a place. ☐ *Ed took up residence in a small efficiency apartment.* ☐ *It looks as if a family of mice has taken up residence in the cupboard.*

take up room Go to **take up space**.

take up (someone's**) time** to require too much of someone else's time; to waste someone's time. (Also with *so much of* or *too much of,* as in the examples.) ☐ *You're taking up my time. Please go away.* ☐ *This problem is taking up too much of my time.*

take up space and **take up room** to fill or occupy space. (Note the variations in the examples.) ☐ *The piano is taking up too much room in our living room.* ☐ *John, you're not being any help at all. You're just taking up space.*

take up the challenge to respond to a challenge and do what the challenge asks. ☐ *I am not prepared to take the challenge up.* ☐ *Dave took up the challenge without much urging.*

take up where one **left off** to start up again in the very place that one has stopped. ☐ *I had to leave the room for a minute, but when I got back, I took up where I left off.* ☐ *It's time to stop for lunch. After lunch, we will take up where we left off.*

take up with someone to become close with someone; to become friends with someone. ☐ *I think that Albert may have taken up with the wrong people.* ☐ *I did not want Lefty to take up with Max, but he did, and look where it's gotten him.*

take years off (of) someone or something to make someone seem or look younger. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *My exciting vacation took years off of me.* ☐ *Your shorter haircut has taken years off your face.*

Take your seat. Please sit down. (Often plural.) ☐ *Please take your seats so we can begin.*

taken aback *Cliché* surprised and confused. ☐ *When Mary told me the news, I was taken aback for a moment.* ☐ *When I told my parents I was married, they were completely taken aback.*

taken for dead appearing to be dead; assumed to be dead. ☐ *I was so ill with the flu that I was almost taken for dead.* ☐ *The accident victims were so seriously injured that they were taken for dead at first.*

taken with someone or something highly attracted to someone or something. ☐ *She was really quite taken with the young man who escorted her to the ball.* ☐ *The audience was taken with the stage setting.*

take-off artist *Sl.* a thief. (Underworld.) ☐ *A take-off artist known as the Cat is cleaning out closets and jewelry boxes all over town.* ☐ *He's not a sales agent. He's a take-off artist, pure and simple.*

taking calls willing to receive telephone calls. ☐ *I'm sorry, but she's not taking calls at the moment. Can I have her call you later?*

A **tale never loses in the telling.** *Prov.* When people tell stories, they tend to exaggerate. ☐ *Johnny's bicycle accident tale never loses in the telling; he convinced his friends that four semitrucks had been involved, when in fact he only ran into one parked car.*

tale of woe a sad story; a list of personal problems; an excuse for failing to do something. ☐ *I listened to her tale of woe without saying anything.* ☐ *This tale of woe that we have all been getting from Kelly is just too much.*

talk a blue streak *Fig.* to talk very much and very rapidly. ☐ *Billy didn't talk until he was two, and then he started talking a blue streak.* ☐ *I can't understand anything Bob says. He talks a blue streak, and I can't follow his thinking.*

talk a mile a minute Go to a **mile a minute**.

talk about someone or something to discuss someone or something. ☐ *I don't want to talk about Jerry anymore.* ☐ *Let's not talk about it now.*

Talk about someone or something**!** If you think that thing or person is remarkable, then... ☐ *Talk about ugly buildings! This one is horrendous.*

talk around something to talk, but avoid talking directly about the subject. ☐ *You are just talking around the matter! I want a straight answer!* ☐ *He never really said anything. He just talked around the issue.*

talk at someone to say words at someone; to talk to someone in a desultory manner. ☐ *You are just talking at her and she isn't paying attention.* ☐ *Talk to me, not at me. I want to communicate with you.*

talk back (to someone**)** to challenge verbally a parent, an older person, or one's superior. ☐ *Please don't talk back to me!* ☐ *I've told you before not to talk back!*

talk big to brag; to make grandiose statements. ☐ *She talks big but can't produce anything.* ☐ *He has some deep need to talk big, but it's just talk—no action.*

talk down to someone to speak to someone in a patronizing manner; to speak to someone in the simplest way. ☐ *The manager insulted everyone in the office by talking down to them.* ☐ *Please don't talk down to me. I can understand anything you have to say.*

talk in circles *Fig.* to talk in a confusing or roundabout manner. ☐ *I couldn't understand a thing he said. All he did was talk in circles.* ☐ *We argued for a long time and finally decided that we were talking in circles.*

Talk is cheap. *Prov.* It is easier to say you will do something than to actually do it. (Saying this in response to someone who promises you something implies that you do not believe that person will keep the promise.) ☐ *My boss keeps saying she'll give me a raise, but talk is cheap.* ☐ *You've been promising me a new dishwasher for five years now. Talk is cheap.*

talk like a nut to say stupid things. ☐ *You're talking like a nut! You don't know what you are saying.* ☐ *Don't talk like a nut! We can't afford a trip to Florida!*

the **talk of** a place someone or something who is the subject of a conversation somewhere, such as the town, the office, the community, etc. ☐ *The handsome new teacher was the talk of the town.* ☐ *John's new car is the talk of the office.*

talk of someone or something to speak about someone or something. ☐ *Weren't we talking of old Mrs. Watson just now?* ☐ *We were just talking of old times—happier times.*

Talk of the devil (and he is sure to appear). Go to Speak of the devil (and in he walks).

talk on to continue to talk. ☐ *The lecturer talked on for hours.* ☐ *How can anyone talk on so long without saying anything useful?*

talk on someone or something to speak on the subject of someone or something. ☐ *Today, I will talk on Abraham Lincoln.* ☐ *Ann is going to talk on the subject of manners.*

talk one's **head off** *Fig. Inf.* to talk endlessly; to argue vigorously. ☐ *I talked my head off trying to convince them.* ☐ *Don't waste time talking your head off to them.*

talk one's **way out of** something to get out of something by verbal persuasion. ☐ *You are in a mess and you can't talk your way out of it.* ☐ *If I get into some sort of problem, I will try to talk my way out of it.*

talk oneself **out** to talk until one can talk no more. ☐ *She talked herself out and was silent for the rest of the day.* ☐ *I talked until I talked myself out.*

talk over someone's **head** *Fig.* to say things that someone cannot understand; to speak on too high a level for one's audience. ☐ *The speaker talked over our heads and we learned nothing.* ☐ *It is not a good idea to talk over your audience's heads.*

talk over something to use something, such as a microphone, intercom, or telephone, to talk. ☐ *I don't mind talking over the telephone.* ☐ *I will talk to Jeff over the intercom and see what he thinks about the idea.*

talk shop to talk about business or work matters at a social event (where such talk is out of place). ☐ *All right, everyone, we're not here to talk shop. Let's have a good time.* ☐ *Mary and Jane stood by the punch bowl, talking shop.*

talk someone **down**† **1.** to win at debating someone. ☐ *Liz was able to talk her opponent down.* ☐ *She talked down her opponent.* **2.** to direct a novice pilot to make a safe landing by giving spoken instructions over the airplane's radio. ☐ *The people on the ground talked down the amateur pilot successfully.* ☐ *I wonder how many movies have been made about someone talking a pilot down.* **3.** to convince someone to lower the price of something. ☐ *The price tag said $2,000 for the car, but I talked down the salesman by threatening to go elsewhere.* ☐ *This is my final offer. Don't try to talk me down.*

talk someone **into (**doing**)** something to overcome someone's objections to doing something; to convince someone to do something. ☐ *They talked me into going to the meeting, even though I didn't really have the time.* ☐ *No one can talk me into doing something illegal.* ☐ *She finally talked herself into making the dive.*

talk someone or something **over**† **(with** someone**)** to discuss someone or something with someone. ☐ *I want to talk John over with my staff.* ☐ *I will talk over this matter with Sam.*

talk someone or something **up**† to promote or speak in support of someone or something. ☐ *I've been talking the party up all day, trying to get people to come.* ☐ *They keep taking up the candidate as if he represented a real change.*

talk someone **out of** doing something to convince someone not to do something. ☐ *I tried to talk her out of going, but she insisted.* ☐ *Don't try to talk me out of quitting school. My mind is made up.*

talk someone **out of** something to convince someone to give up or change something. ☐ *They were trying to talk me out of my decision.* ☐ *Timmy tried to talk Mary out of her ice cream cone.*

talk someone **ragged** *Fig.* to talk to someone too much; to bore someone. ☐ *That was not an interview. She talked me ragged.* ☐ *He always talks me ragged, but I always listen.*

talk someone's **ear off** *Fig.* to talk to someone endlessly; to bore someone with too much talk. ☐ *My aunt always talks my ear off when she comes to visit.* ☐ *Stay away from Mr. Jones. He will talk your ear off if he gets a chance.*

talk someone's **head off 1.** *Fig.* [for someone] to speak too much. ☐ *Why does John always talk his head off? Doesn't he know he bores people?* ☐ *She talks her head off and doesn't seem to know what she's saying.* **2.** *Fig.* to talk to and bore someone. ☐ *John is very friendly, but watch out or he'll talk your head off.* ☐ *My uncle always talked my head off whenever I went to visit him.*

talk something **out**† to settle something by discussion. ☐ *Let's not get mad. Let's just talk it out.* ☐ *Please, let's talk out this matter calmly.*

talk something **over**† to discuss something. ☐ *Come into my office so we can talk this over.* ☐ *We talked over the plans for nearly an hour.*

talk something **through**† **1.** to discuss something in detail. ☐ *Let's talk the issue through and get it decided.* **2.** to get something approved by talking convincingly. ☐ *The board was reluctant to approve it, but I talked it through.* ☐ *We will talk through this matter in the board meeting.*

talk something **up**† to promote or advertise something by saying good things about it to as many people as possible. ☐ *Let's talk the play up around campus so we can get a good audience.* ☐ *I will talk up the play all I can.*

talk through one's **hat** *Fig.* to brag or exaggerate; to talk nonsense. ☐ *That can't be so! You are just talking through your hat!* ☐ *Pay no attention to Mary. She is just talking through her hat.*

talk to hear one's **own voice** *Fig.* to talk far more than is necessary; to talk much, in an egotistical manner. ☐ *Oh, he's just talking to hear his own voice.* ☐ *Am I just talking to hear my own voice, or are you listening to me?*

talk to someone **1.** *Lit.* to speak to someone; to confer with someone. ☐ *Talk to me! I really want your opinion.* ☐ *I will have to talk to Mark to see what he thinks.* **2.** *Fig.* to lecture to someone; to reprimand someone. ☐ *I wish you would talk to your son. He is creating havoc in the classroom.*

☐ *I am going to have to talk to Roberta. She is not getting things clean.*

talk turkey *Fig.* to talk business; to talk frankly. ☐ *Okay, Bob, we have business to discuss. Let's talk turkey.* ☐ *John wanted to talk turkey, but Jane just wanted to joke around.*

talk until one **is blue in the face** *Fig.* to talk until one is exhausted. ☐ *I talked until I was blue in the face, but I couldn't change her mind.* ☐ *She had to talk until she was blue in the face in order to convince him.*

talk up a storm Go to **up a storm.**

talk with someone **(about** someone or something**)** to hold a discussion with someone or a group. ☐ *Could I talk with you about Alice?* ☐ *Can I talk with you about my salary?*

talked out tired of talking; unable to talk more. ☐ *I can't go on. I'm all talked out.* ☐ *She was talked out in the first hour of discussion.*

a **tall drink of water** Go to a **big drink of water.**

***a tall order** a request that is difficult to fulfill. (*Typically: **be ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *That's a tall order. Do you think anyone can do it?* ☐ *Well, it's a tall order, but I'll do it.*

tall timber(s) some remote place in the country or the woods. ☐ *Oh, Chuck lives out in the tall timbers somewhere. He only has a post office box number.* ☐ *You're not going to move me out into the tall timber somewhere!*

tally something **up**† to add something up. ☐ *Please tally everything up and tell me the total.* ☐ *Let's tally up everything and ask for donations.*

tally with something **1.** *Lit.* [for one set of figures] to match another set of figures. ☐ *Your figures don't tally with mine. Let's add them up again.* ☐ *The total Sam got didn't tally with what the tax agent had come up with.* **2.** *Fig.* [for one thing] to agree or correlate with another. ☐ *What you just said doesn't tally with what you told me before.* ☐ *His story doesn't tally with what I already know.*

tamp something **down**† to pat or pack something down. ☐ *Tamp the soil down over the seeds after you plant them.* ☐ *Please tamp down the soil firmly.*

tamper with someone or something to fiddle with someone or something; to meddle with someone or something. ☐ *I've got him believing just what I want him to believe. Don't tamper with him.* ☐ *Please don't tamper with the thermostat.*

tan someone's **hide** to spank someone. ☐ *Billy's mother said she'd tan Billy's hide if he ever did that again.* ☐ *"I'll tan your hide if you're late!" said Tom's father.*

tangle someone or something **up**† to entangle someone or something. ☐ *Please don't tangle me up in your ropes.* ☐ *I tangled up my feet in the cords on the floor.*

tangle with someone or something **(over** someone or something**)** to battle against someone or something about someone or something. ☐ *Tim tangled with Karen over the children.* ☐ *I hope I don't have to tangle with the bank over this loan.* ☐ *I don't want to tangle with city hall.*

tank up (on something**)** and **tank up with** something **1.** *Lit.* to fill one's fuel tank with something. ☐ *I need to tank up on premium gas to stop this engine knock.* ☐ *It's time to stop and tank up.* ☐ *We need to tank up with gas.* **2.** *Sl.* to drink some kind of alcoholic beverage. ☐ *Toby spent the evening tanking up on bourbon.* ☐ *Jerry tanked up with gin and went to sleep.*

tap at something to make one or more light blows on something. ☐ *Fred tapped at the door, but no one heard him.* ☐ *Who is tapping at my window?*

tap on something to make one or more light blows on something. ☐ *Who is that tapping on my windowpane?* ☐ *I wish you would stop tapping on the tabletop.*

tap out 1. *Sl.* to lose one's money in gambling or in the securities markets. ☐ *I'm gonna tap out in about three more rolls—just watch.* ☐ *I really tapped out on that gold-mining stock.* **2.** *Sl.* to die; to expire. ☐ *My dog tapped out after being hit by a car.* ☐ *Mary was so tired that she thought she was going to tap out.*

tap someone **(for** something**)** to select someone for some purpose or position. ☐ *The committee tapped John to run for Congress.* ☐ *I had thought they were going to tap Sally.*

tap someone or something **on** something to make one or more light blows on some part of someone or something. ☐ *Someone tapped me on the shoulder, and I turned around to see who it was.* ☐ *I tapped the drum on the top to find its pitch.*

tap something **down**† to pound something down with light blows. ☐ *Please tap that nail down so no one gets hurt on it.* ☐ *Tap down the tack, if you would.*

tap something **into** something and **tap** something **in**† to move something in with light blows. ☐ *The mechanic tapped the bracket into place.* ☐ *The worker tapped in the bracket.*

tap something **out**† **1.** *Lit.* to clean something, as the ashes out of a pipe, by tapping. ☐ *He took the pipe out of his mouth and tapped the ashes out.* ☐ *He tapped out the soil from the flower pot.* **2.** *Fig.* to send a message in Morse code, as on a telegraph. ☐ *The telegraph operator tapped a message out and waited for a reply.* ☐ *The operator tapped out a message.* **3.** *Fig.* to thump the rhythm of a piece of music [on something]. ☐ *Tap the rhythm out until you get it right.* ☐ *Let's tap out the rhythm together.*

tap something **with** something to make light blows on something with something. ☐ *Alice tapped the table with her keys in an annoying fashion.* ☐ *Just tap the nail lightly with your hammer.*

tap-dance like mad *Sl.* to appear busy continuously; to have to move fast or talk cleverly to distract someone. ☐ *When things get tough, the whole Congress tap-dances like mad.* ☐ *Any public official knows how to tap-dance like mad when the press gets too nosy.*

taper off (doing something**)** gradually to stop doing something; to do less and less of something until there is no more to do. ☐ *Bob tried to taper off smoking again.* ☐ *I can't taper off overeating. I have to stop all at once by going on a strict diet.*

tar and feather someone to punish or humiliate someone by coating them with tar and feathers. ☐ *The people of the village tarred and feathered the bank robber and chased him out of town.* ☐ *They threatened to tar and feather me if I ever came back into their town.*

target someone or something **as** something to aim at someone or something as something; to choose someone or

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something as someone or something. ☐ *The board targeted Alice as a potential candidate.* ☐ *We targeted the first of August as the starting date.*

tarred with the same brush *Fig.* sharing the same characteristic(s); having the same good or bad points as someone else. ☐ *Jack and his brother are tarred with the same brush. They're both crooks.* ☐ *The Smith children are tarred with the same brush. They're all lazy.*

taste blood *Fig.* to experience something exciting, and perhaps dangerous, for the first time. ☐ *She had tasted blood once, and she knew that the life of a race-car driver was for her.* ☐ *Once you taste blood, you're hooked.*

*a **taste for** something a desire for a particular food, drink, or experience. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~; acquire ~**.) ☐ *The Smiths have a taste for adventure and take exotic vacations.* ☐ *When she was pregnant, Mary often had a taste for pickles.*

taste like more to taste very good; to taste so good as to make one want to eat more. ☐ *This pie is great. It tastes like more.* ☐ *Mom's cooking always tastes like more.*

taste like something to have the same taste as something. ☐ *This stuff tastes like watermelon.* ☐ *What do you think this tastes like?*

*a **taste of** one's **own medicine** and *a **dose of** one's **own medicine** *Fig.* a sample of the unpleasantness that one has been giving other people. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Now you see how it feels to have someone call you names! You are getting a taste of your own medicine!* ☐ *John, who is often rude and abrupt with people, was devastated when the teacher treated him rudely. He doesn't like having a dose of his own medicine.*

taste of something **1.** to have a taste similar to something; to have the hint of a certain flavor. ☐ *This ice cream tastes of apricots.* ☐ *Why does this wine taste of vinegar?* **2.** to take a taste of something. (Typically southern.) ☐ *Here, taste of this pie.* ☐ *Can I taste of your apple?*

a **taste of** something an experience; an example. ☐ *Bill gave Sue a taste of her own rudeness.* ☐ *My friend used a parachute and got a taste of what it's like to be a bird.*

Tastes differ. *Prov.* Different people like different things. ☐ *Fred: Bill always goes out with such stupid girls. I can't understand why. Alan: Tastes differ.*

tattle (on someone**) (to** someone**)** to tell on someone to someone. ☐ *Are you going to tattle on me to my mother?* ☐ *Please don't tattle on me.*

taunt someone **about** something to mock, tease, or torment someone about something. ☐ *Stop taunting me about something that happened years ago!* ☐ *Terry was being taunted about his gaudy tie, so he took it off.*

taunt someone **into** something to mock, tease, or torment someone into doing something. ☐ *The gang taunted Liz into taking unnecessary chances.* ☐ *Don was taunted into leaving the room.*

taunt someone **with** something to tease or tantalize someone with something. ☐ *Jerry taunted Fran with the plate of fudge.* ☐ *Please don't taunt me with food I shouldn't eat.*

tax someone or something **with** something to burden or tire someone or something with something. ☐ *Please don't tax me with any more requests for my immediate attention.* ☐ *You are continuing to tax this committee with your constant complaints.*

tax-and-spend spending freely and taxing heavily. (Referring to a legislative body that repeatedly passes expensive new laws and keeps raising taxes to pay for the cost. Fixed order.) ☐ *I hope that people do not elect another tax-and-spend Congress this time.* ☐ *The only thing worse than a tax-and-spend legislature is one that spends and runs up a worsening deficit.*

teach one's **grandmother to suck eggs** *Fig.* to try to tell or show someone more knowledgeable or experienced than oneself how to do something. ☐ *Don't suggest showing Mary how to knit. It will be like teaching your grandmother to suck eggs.* ☐ *Don't teach your grandmother to suck eggs. Bob has been playing tennis for years.*

teach someone **a lesson** to get even with someone for bad behavior. ☐ *John tripped me, so I punched him. That ought to teach him a lesson.* ☐ *That taught me a lesson. I won't do it again.*

teach someone **the hang of** something Go to the hang of something.

teach someone **the tricks of the trade** Go to the tricks of the trade.

*the **teacher's pet** the teacher's favorite student. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *Sally is the teacher's pet. She always gets special treatment.* ☐ *The other students don't like the teacher's pet.*

a **team player** someone who works well with the group; someone who is loyal to the group. ☐ *Ted is a team player. I am sure that he will cooperate with us.*

team up against someone or something Go to up against someone or something.

team up (with someone**)** to join with someone. ☐ *I teamed up with Jane to write the report.* ☐ *I had never teamed up with anyone else before. I had always worked alone.*

tear a place **apart**† *Fig.* to search somewhere to the point of destruction. ☐ *The cops came with a search warrant and tore your room apart.* ☐ *If you don't come up with the money you kept for us, we'll tear apart your house!*

tear across something to move rapidly across some area. ☐ *The boys tore across the lawn to the swimming pool.* ☐ *As the plane tore across the sky it made a horrendous roar.*

tear along to go along very fast, as in running, driving, cycling, etc. ☐ *The cars tore along the road, raising dust and making noise.* ☐ *Andy tore along on his bicycle, trying to see how fast he could go.*

tear around (some place**)** to move or run around rapidly and perhaps recklessly. ☐ *The kids were tearing around through the house all day. They've made a real mess.* ☐ *Please don't tear around the house.*

tear at someone or something to rip at someone or something; to try to tear someone or something up. ☐ *The badger tore at me, but I dodged it and ran away fast.* ☐ *Timmy tore at the package, struggling to get the paper off.*

tear away (from someone or something**)** to leave someone or something, running. ☐ *Dave tore away from Jill, leaving her to find her own way home.* ☐ *Roger tore away from the meeting, trying to make his train.*

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tear down something to race down something very fast. (See also **tear** something **down**.) ☐ *The girls tore down the hallway as fast as they could run.* ☐ *They tore down the stairs and ran out the door.*

tear into some place to run or race into a place. ☐ *The kids tore into the house and knocked over a lamp.* ☐ *Kelly tore into the boss's office and put the papers on the desk.*

tear into someone *Fig.* to scold someone severely; to attack someone with criticism. ☐ *I was late, and the boss tore into me like a mad dog.* ☐ *I don't know why she tore into me. I was at work when the window was broken.*

tear into someone or something to attack someone or something; to attack someone or something with the intent of eating someone or something. ☐ *The wolves tore into the hunter and injured him severely.* ☐ *The kids tore into the cake and ate it all.*

tear into something *Fig.* to begin eating food with gusto. ☐ *The family tore into the mountain of food like they hadn't eaten since breakfast—which was true, in fact.* ☐ *Jimmy tore into the turkey leg and cleaned it off in no time.*

tear loose (from someone or something**)** to manage to break away from someone or something. ☐ *The quarterback tore loose and took twenty yards for a first down.* ☐ *Barlowe tore loose from Bill and made for the door.*

tear off (from someone or something**)** to leave someone or something in a great hurry. ☐ *I hate to tear off from you guys, but I'm late for dinner.* ☐ *It's time for me to go. I have to tear off.*

tear one's **hair (out)** *Fig.* to be anxious, frustrated, or angry. ☐ *I was so nervous, I was about to tear my hair.* ☐ *I had better get home. My parents will be tearing their hair out.*

tear (oneself**) away (from** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to force oneself to leave someone or something. ☐ *Do you think you can tear yourself away from your friends for dinner?* ☐ *I could hardly tear myself away from the concert.*

tear out (of some place**)** to leave a place in a great hurry. ☐ *The kids tore out of the house after they broke the window.* ☐ *They saw what they had done and tore out.*

tear someone **apart**† **1.** *Lit.* to rip someone apart savagely. (See also **tear** something **apart**.) ☐ *Max threatened to tear Tom apart.* ☐ *The bear tore apart the hiker.* **2.** *Fig.* to cause two people, presumably lovers, to separate unwillingly. ☐ *The enormous disruption of the accident tore them apart and they separated.* ☐ *The bickering between their parents finally tore apart the engaged couple.* **3.** *Fig.* to cause someone enormous grief or emotional pain. ☐ *The death of her dog tore her apart.* ☐ *It was the dog's death that tore apart Barbara.* **4.** *Fig.* to criticize someone mercilessly. ☐ *The critic tore apart the entire cast of the play.* ☐ *Why do you have to tear yourself apart for making a little error?*

tear someone or some animal **limb from limb** to rip someone or an animal to bits. ☐ *The explosion tore the workers limb from limb.* ☐ *The crocodiles attacked the wading zebras and tore them limb from limb.*

tear someone or something **down**† to criticize or degrade someone or something. ☐ *Tom is always tearing Jane down. I guess he doesn't like her.* ☐ *It's not nice to tear down the people who work in your office.* ☐ *Why are you always tearing my projects down?*

tear someone or something **to pieces** and **tear** someone or something **to shreds** to rip or shred someone or something into bits. ☐ *Careful of that dog. It will tear you to pieces!* ☐ *The dog tore the newspaper to pieces.* ☐ *It tore my shoes to shreds.*

tear someone **up**† *Fig.* to cause someone much grief. (See also **tear** someone **apart**.) ☐ *The news of Tom's death really tore Bill up.* ☐ *Bad news tears up some people. Other people can take it calmly.*

tear something **apart**† **1.** to pull or rip something apart. (See also **tear** someone **apart**.) ☐ *The bear tore the tent apart.* ☐ *The lions tore apart the wildebeest in minutes, and began eating it.* **2.** to criticize something mercilessly. ☐ *The critic tore apart the entire cast of the play.* **3.** to divide something or the members of a group, citizens of a country, etc. ☐ *The financial crisis tore the club apart.* ☐ *The crisis tore apart the organization.*

tear something **away**† **(from** someone or something**) 1.** to peel something from someone or something. ☐ *The paramedic tore the clothing away from the burn victim and began to treat the wounds immediately.* ☐ *She tore away the clothing from the victim.* ☐ *She tore the clothing away.* **2.** to quickly take something away from someone or something. ☐ *I tore the firecracker away from the child and threw it in the lake.* ☐ *Liz tore away the cover from the book.* ☐ *She tore the wrapping paper away.*

tear something **down**† to dismantle or destroy something. ☐ *They plan to tear the old building down and build a new one there.* ☐ *They'll tear down the building in about two weeks.*

tear something **from** something to rip or peel something from something. ☐ *He tore the wrapping from the gift.* ☐ *The monkey tore the peel from the banana and took a bite of it.*

tear something **off (of)** someone or something and **tear** something **off**† to peel or rip something off someone or something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Max tore the necklace off his victim and ran away with it.* ☐ *He tore off the necklace.*

tear something **on** something to rip something on something sharp or jagged. ☐ *I tore my pants on the corner of the desk.* ☐ *Mary tore her new skirt on something sharp on the side of the car.*

tear something **out of** something and **tear** something **out**† to remove something from something by ripping or tearing. ☐ *Tear the coupons out of the magazine and save them.* ☐ *Please tear out the coupons.*

tear something **up**† to rip someone or something to pieces. ☐ *The two drunks tore the bar up in their brawling.* ☐ *The dog tore up the newspaper.*

tease someone **about** someone or something to make fun of someone about someone or something; to poke fun at someone about someone or something. ☐ *The boys teased Don about his girlfriend.* ☐ *Stop teasing me about it!*

tease someone **into** doing something to force someone to do something through teasing or tormenting. ☐ *Sam teased her into doing what he wanted.* ☐ *Perhaps you can tease him into leaving, but he won't go if you ask him.*

tease something **out**† *Fig.* to separate threads or hairs by combing. ☐ *The hairdresser teased Jill's hair out carefully.* ☐ *The hairdresser teased out Jill's hair.*

tease something **out of** something and **tease** something **out**† to lure something out of something by teasing or tempting. ☐ *I managed to tease the cat out of the tree with a bit of fish.* ☐ *I teased out the cat.*

tee off 1. *Lit.* to start the first hole in a game of golf. ☐ *It's time to tee off. Let's get on the course.* ☐ *What time do we tee off?* **2.** *Fig.* to begin [doing anything]; to be the first one to start something. ☐ *The master of ceremonies teed off with a few jokes and then introduced the first act.* ☐ *Everyone is seated and ready to begin. Why don't you tee off?*

tee someone **off**† *Sl.* to make someone angry. (See also **teed off**.) ☐ *That really teed me off!* ☐ *Well, you sure managed to tee off everybody!*

teed off *Inf.* angry. ☐ *I'm not teed off! I'm enraged.* ☐ *I was so teed off I could have spit!*

teed (up) *Sl.* intoxicated. ☐ *She was totally teed up by midnight.* ☐ *Tom was too teed to drive.*

teem with someone or something to swarm with someone or something; to be abundant with someone or something. ☐ *The porch was teeming with flies, so we couldn't eat there.* ☐ *The beach teemed with people enjoying the sunny weather.*

teething troubles 1. *Lit.* pain and crying on the part of a baby whose teeth are growing in. ☐ *Billy has been whining because of teething troubles.* **2.** *Fig.* difficulties and problems experienced in the early stages of a project, activity, etc. ☐ *There have been a lot of teething troubles with the new computer system.* ☐ *We have finally gotten over the teething troubles connected with the new building complex.*

telegraph one's **punches 1.** *Fig.* to signal, unintentionally, what blows one is about to strike. (Boxing.) ☐ *Wilbur used to telegraph his punches until his trainer worked with him.* ☐ *Don't telegraph your punches, kid! You'll be flat on your back in twenty seconds.* **2.** *Fig.* to signal, unintentionally, one's intentions. ☐ *When you go in there to negotiate, don't telegraph your punches. Don't let them see that we're in need of this contract.* ☐ *The mediator telegraphed his punches, and we were prepared with a strong counterargument.*

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telephone something **in**† **(to** someone**)** to call someone on the telephone, usually to give particular information. (The person called is in a special location, such as one's workplace or headquarters.) ☐ *I will telephone my report in to my secretary.* ☐ *I telephoned in my report.* ☐ *I will telephone it in tomorrow.*

telescope into something [for one cylindrical part of something] to fit down inside another part, thereby reducing the length of the whole. ☐ *This part telescopes into this part.* ☐ *The tent poles telescoped into a small, compact unit.*

tell all to tell everything, even the secrets. ☐ *Some reporter got hold of the actress's maid who offered to tell all for a fee.*

Tell it like it is. *Inf.* Speak frankly.; Tell the truth no matter who is criticized or how much it hurts. ☐ *Come on man, tell it like it is!* ☐ *Well, I've got to tell it like it is.*

Tell it to the marines! *Inf.* I do not believe you (maybe the marines will)! ☐ *Your excuse is preposterous. Tell it to the marines.* ☐ *I don't care how good you think your reason is. Tell it to the marines!*

tell its own story and **tell its own tale** *Fig.* [for the state of something] to indicate clearly what has happened. ☐ *The upturned boat told its own tale. The fisherman had drowned.* ☐ *The girl's tear-stained face told its own story.*

tell its own tale Go to previous.

Tell me another (one)! *Inf.* What you just told me was a lie, so go ahead and tell me another lie! (Indicates incredulity.) ☐ *Bill: Did you know that the football coach was once a dancer in a movie? Tom: Go on! Tell me another one!* ☐ *"Tell me another one!" laughed Bill at Tom's latest exaggeration.*

tell of someone or something to speak of someone or something. ☐ *The messenger told of great destruction, hunger, and disease in the northern part of the country.* ☐ *I want you to tell of Jane and how she is doing.*

tell on someone to report someone's bad behavior; to tattle on someone. ☐ *If you do that again, I'll tell on you!* ☐ *Please don't tell on me. I'm in enough trouble as it is.*

tell one one's **bearings** Go to one's **bearings.**

tell one **to** one's **face** to tell [something] to someone directly. ☐ *I'm sorry that Sally feels that way about me. I wish she had told me to my face.* ☐ *I won't tell Tom that you're mad at him. You should tell him to his face.*

tell people or things **apart**† to distinguish one from another. ☐ *I can't tell Bob and Bill apart.* ☐ *I find it easy to tell apart Bill and Bob.* ☐ *The two cakes look different, but in taste, I can't tell this one and that one apart.*

tell shit from Shinola Go to **know shit from Shinola.**

tell someone **a thing or two (about** someone or something**)** Go to **a thing or two (about** someone or something**).**

tell someone **about** someone or something to give information to someone about someone or something. ☐ *Please tell me about Wallace.* ☐ *You were going to tell me about the old neighborhood.*

tell someone **from** someone else and **tell** something **from** something else to distinguish one from another. ☐ *I can't tell Chuck from Roger. They look so much alike.* ☐ *I can't tell orange from yellow.*

tell someone **off**† to scold someone; to attack someone verbally. (This has a sense of finality about it.) ☐ *I was so mad at Bob that I told him off.* ☐ *By the end of the day, I had told off everyone else, too.*

tell someone **on** someone to tattle to someone about someone. ☐ *I'm going to tell your mother on you!* ☐ *I'll tell the teacher on you!*

tell someone or something **by** something to identify someone or something by something. ☐ *You can tell Jim by the old-fashioned shoes he wears.* ☐ *I can tell the new season's fashions by how short the skirts are.*

tell someone **what to do with** something to reject someone's idea by suggesting that someone do something rude with something. (With the unspoken notion that one should stick it up one's ass.) ☐ *I'll tell you what you can do*

with it. ☐ *If that's the way he wants to be, you can just tell him what to do with it.*

tell someone **where to get off** to scold someone; to express one's anger to someone; to **tell** someone **off.** ☐ *Wait till I see Sally. I'll tell her where to get off!* ☐ *She told me where to get off and then started in scolding Tom.*

tell something **from** something to know something because of something, such as evidence, signs, experience, etc. ☐ *I can tell that she's lying from the way she holds her eyebrows.* ☐ *I can't tell anything from what you told me.*

tell something **from** something else Go to **tell** someone **from** someone else.

tell something **to** someone to say something to someone. ☐ *Please tell the whole truth to me.* ☐ *Please tell your explanation to Mary.*

tell tales out of school to tell secrets or spread rumors. ☐ *I wish that John would keep quiet. He's telling tales out of school again.* ☐ *If you tell tales out of school a lot, people won't know when to believe you.*

tell the difference between someone **and** someone else or something **and** something else to recognize the things that distinguish people or things. ☐ *I can't tell the difference between Billy and Bobby.* ☐ *Sam can't tell the difference between Granny Smith and Royal Gala apples.*

Tell the truth and shame the devil. *Prov.* To tell the truth even though you have strong reasons for concealing it. ☐ *Jill: Have you been using my computer without asking permission? Jane: Uh . . . no. . . . Jill: Come on, Jane, tell the truth and shame the devil.*

tell the (whole) world *Fig.* to spread around someone's private business. ☐ *Well, you don't have to tell the whole world.* ☐ *Go ahead, tell the world!*

tell things **apart** to distinguish one thing or a group of things from another thing or group of things. ☐ *This one is gold, and the others are brass. Can you tell them apart?* ☐ *Without their labels, I can't tell them apart.*

tell time 1. *Lit.* to keep or report the correct time. ☐ *This clock doesn't tell time very accurately.* ☐ *My watch stopped telling time, so I had to have it repaired.* **2.** *Fig.* to be able to read time from a clock or watch. ☐ *Billy is only four. He can't tell time yet.* ☐ *They are teaching the children to tell time at school.*

tell which is which Go to **know which is which.**

temper something **with** something **1.** *Fig.* to harden something, such as metal, with something. ☐ *You have to temper the metal pieces with very high heat.* ☐ *The sheet of metal was tempered by the application of great pressure.* **2.** *Fig.* to soften the impact of something, such as news, with something. ☐ *We can temper this disaster story a bit with a picture of the happy survivors.* ☐ *The news story was tempered with a paragraph of explanation and justification.*

a **tempest in a teacup** and a **tempest in a teapot** an argument or disagreement over a very minor matter. ☐ *The entire issue of who was to present the report was just a tempest in a teapot.* ☐ *The argument at the office turned into a tempest in a teacup. No one really cared about the outcome.*

a **tempest in a teapot** Go to previous.

tempt someone **into** something to lure or seduce someone into something. ☐ *Could I tempt you into going swimming?* ☐ *She would not be tempted into eating the rich and fattening cake.*

tempt someone **to** do something to entice someone to do something. ☐ *You can't tempt me to eat any of that cake!* ☐ *I wasn't even tempted to go into town with the others.*

tempt someone **with** something to entice someone with something. ☐ *Can I tempt you with a bit of chocolate cake?* ☐ *I was tempted with a free book if I sent in my name, but I decided against it.*

tend to do something to have a tendency to do something. ☐ *Jill tends to play with her hair while she works.* ☐ *Sam tends to say things like that when he is upset.*

tend toward something to have a tendency to display a certain characteristic. ☐ *Roger tends toward the dramatic.* ☐ *We all tend toward bad humor during bad weather.*

the **tender age of...** the young age of... ☐ *She left home at the tender age of 17 and got married to a rock singer.*

tender something **for** something to offer something (of value) for something. ☐ *The shareholders were asked to tender one of their shares for two of the offering company's.* ☐ *I decided not to tender my shares.*

tender something **(to** someone**) (for** something**)** to offer or present something to someone for something. ☐ *Laura tendered payment to Gary for the tickets.* ☐ *Walter tendered the old shares to the company for new shares.*

tense up (for something**)** to become tense, anxious, and ready for something. ☐ *Liz tensed up for the game and was very nervous.* ☐ *He tensed up and that made it hard to give him the injection he needed.*

terrify someone **into** something and **terrorize** someone **into** something to threaten or frighten someone into doing something. ☐ *The salesman is just trying to terrify you into buying a new car by saying the one you have is dangerous.* ☐ *They tried to terrorize people into staying off the streets.*

terrify someone or an animal **out of** something **1.** to terrify someone or an animal to leave something or some place. ☐ *The attackers terrified the farmers out of their homes.* ☐ *The snake terrified the gophers out of their burrow.* **2.** to cause someone or an animal to lose something through fear. ☐ *They tried to terrify the old lady out of her money, but she refused to tell where it was.* ☐ *The eagle terrified the hawk out of the food it was holding.*

terrorize someone **into** something Go to **terrify** someone **into** something.

test for something to try to find out about something by testing. ☐ *We are testing for weak places in your roof. That's the noise you hear up there.* ☐ *They are testing for some sort of infection.*

test out (of something**)** to score high enough on a placement test that one does not need to take a particular course. ☐ *I tested out of calculus.* ☐ *I don't know enough Spanish to test out.*

test someone **in** something to test someone in a particular subject. ☐ *The committee decided to test her in her knowledge of the laws of the state.* ☐ *We were all tested in math and English.*

test someone or something **for** something to apply a test to someone or something to try to determine something or identify something. ☐ *They tested me for all sorts of diseases.* ☐ *Ken tested the roof for weak spots.*

test something **out**† to try something out; to test something to see if it works. ☐ *I can't wait to test my new laptop out.* ☐ *I will test out the new brakes on the car.*

testify against someone or something to be a witness against someone or something. ☐ *Who will testify against him in court?* ☐ *I cannot testify against the company I work for.*

testify for someone to present evidence in favor of someone; to testify on someone's behalf. ☐ *I agreed to testify for her at the trial.* ☐ *Max testified for Lefty, but they were both convicted.*

testify to something to swear to something. ☐ *I will testify to your whereabouts if you wish.* ☐ *I think I know what happened, but I would not testify to it.*

Thank God for small favors. *Rur.* Be thankful that something good has happened in a bad situation. ☐ *Charlie: We're out of gas, but I think I see a gas station up ahead. Tom: Thank God for small favors.* ☐ *He had a heart attack, but it was right there in the doctor's office, so they could take care of him right away. Thank God for small favors.*

Thank goodness! and **Thank heavens!** Oh, I am so thankful! ☐ *John: Well, we finally got here. Sorry we're so late. Mother: Thank goodness! We were all so worried.* ☐ *Jane: There was a fire on Maple Street, but no one was hurt. Bill: Thank heavens!*

Thank heavens! Go to previous.

thank one's **lucky stars** *Fig.* to be thankful for one's luck. ☐ *You can thank your lucky stars that I was there to help you.* ☐ *I thank my lucky stars that I studied the right things for the test.*

thank someone **for** something to show or state one's gratitude to someone for something. ☐ *We would all like to thank you for coming tonight.* ☐ *Thank you for inviting me.*

Thank you. I am grateful to you and offer you my thanks. ☐ *Bill: Here, have some more cake. Bob: Thank you.* ☐ *John: Your hair looks nice. Mary: Thank you.*

Thank you a lot. Go to Thanks (a lot).

Thank you for a lovely evening. an expression said by a departing guest to the host or hostess at the end of an evening. (Other adjectives, such as *nice*, can be used in place of *lovely*.) ☐ *Mary: Thank you for a lovely evening. John: Will I see you again?* ☐ *Bill: Thank you for a nice evening. Mary: Thank you so much for coming. Good night.*

Thank you for a lovely time. an expression said by a departing guest to the host or hostess. (Other adjectives, such as *nice*, can be used in place of *lovely*.) ☐ *Bill: Thank you for a nice time. Mary: Thank you so much for coming. Bye now.* ☐ *John: Thank you so much for coming. Jane: Well, thank you for a lovely time. John: Don't stay away so long next time.*

Thank you for calling. Thank you for calling on the telephone. (Said when the call is helpful or a bother to the caller.) ☐ *Mary: Good-bye. Sue: Good-bye, thanks for calling.* ☐ *John: Okay. Well, I have to get off the phone. I just wanted you to know what was happening with your order. Jane: Okay. Bye. Thanks for calling.*

Thank you for having me. Go to next.

Thank you for inviting me. and **Thank you for inviting us.; Thank you for having me.; Thank you for having us.** a polite expression said to a host or hostess on departure. ☐ *Mary: Good-bye, glad you could come. Bill: I had a great time. Thank you for inviting me.* ☐ *John: I had a good time. Thank you for inviting me. Sally: Come back again, John. It was good talking to you.*

Thank you for sharing. *Inf.* a sarcastic remark made when someone tells something that is unpleasant, overly personal, disgusting, or otherwise annoying. ☐ *Thank you for sharing. I really need to hear about your operation.* ☐ *Thank you for sharing, Bob. I hope your parents' divorce goes well.*

Thank you kindly. Thank you very much. ☐ *Tom: May I give you a lift? Jane: Why, yes. Thank you kindly.* ☐ *Mary: That's a nice suit, and you wear it well. Charlie: Thank you kindly, ma'am.*

Thank you so much. Go to next.

Thank you very much. and **Thank you so much.** a more polite and emphatic way of saying Thank you. ☐ *Tom: Welcome. Come in. Bob: Thank you very much.* ☐ *Bill: Here's the book I promised you. Sue: Thank you so much.*

***thankful for small blessings** grateful for any small benefits or advantages one has, especially in a generally difficult situation. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *We have very little money, but we must be thankful for small blessings. At least we have enough food.* ☐ *Bob was badly injured in the accident, but at least he's still alive. Let's be thankful for small blessings.*

thanks a bunch *Inf.* thanks. ☐ *Thanks a bunch for your help.* ☐ *He said "thanks a bunch" and walked out.*

Thanks (a lot). and **Thank you a lot. 1.** *Inf.* Thank you, I am grateful. ☐ *Bill: Here, take mine. Bob: Thanks a lot.* ☐ *Mary: Well, here's your pizza. Bill: Thanks.* **2.** That is not worth much.; That is nothing to be grateful for. (Sarcasm is indicated by the tone of voice used with this expression.) ☐ *John: I'm afraid that you're going to have to work the night shift. Bob: Thanks a lot.* ☐ *Fred: Here's your share of the money. We had to take out nearly half to make up for the damage you did to the car. Bill: Thanks a lot.*

Thanks a million. *Inf.* Thank you a lot. ☐ *Bill: Oh, thanks a million. You were very helpful. Bob: Just glad I could help.* ☐ *John: Here's your book. Jane: Thanks a million. Sorry I needed it back in such a rush.*

Thanks awfully. Thank you very much. ☐ *John: Here's one for you. Jane: Thanks awfully.* ☐ *Mary: Here, let me help you with all that stuff. Sue: Thanks awfully.*

Thanks, but no thanks. *Inf.* Thank you, but I am not interested. (A way of turning down something that is not very desirable.) ☐ *Alice: How would you like to buy my old car? Jane: Thanks, but no thanks.* ☐ *John: What do you think about a trip over to see the Wilsons? Sally: Thanks, but no thanks. We don't get along.*

Thanks for the lift. Go to next.

Thanks for the ride. and **Thanks for the lift.** Thank you for giving me a ride in your car. ☐ *John (stopping the*

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car): Here we are. Bob: Thanks for the ride. Bye. John: Later. □ *As Fred got out of the car, he said, "Thanks for the lift."*

Thanks loads. *Inf.* Thanks a lot. □ *Mary: Here, you can have these. And take these too. Sally: Thanks loads.* □ *John: Wow! You look great! Sally: Thanks loads. I try.*

thanks to someone or something due to someone or something; because of someone or something. (This does not necessarily suggest gratitude.) □ *Thanks to the storm, we have no electricity.* □ *Thanks to Mary, we have tickets to the game. She bought them early before they were sold out.*

That ain't hay. *Inf.* That is not a small amount of money. (The highly informal word *ain't* is built into the expression.) □ *I paid forty dollars for it, and that ain't hay!* □ *Bob lost his wallet with $200 in it—and that ain't hay.*

That ain't no lie. *Rur.* What was said is true. (The highly informal word *ain't* is built into the expression.) □ *Tom: Sure is hot today. Jane: That ain't no lie.* □ *I'm plumb exhausted, and that ain't no lie.*

That ain't the way I heard it. *Rur.* That is not the way I heard the story told. (The highly informal word *ain't* is built into the expression.) □ *John: It seemed like a real riot, then Sally called the police and things calmed down. Sue: That ain't the way I heard it. John: What? Sue: Somebody said the neighbors called the police.* □ *Fred: Four of us went fishing and were staying in this cabin. These women stopped and said they were having car trouble. What could we do? Sally: That ain't the way I heard it.*

That (all) depends. My answer depends on factors that have yet to be discussed. □ *Tom: Will you be able to come to the meeting on Thursday night? Mary: That all depends.* □ *Bob: Can I see you again? Sally: That depends.*

That beats everything! Go to If that don't beat all!

that beats something **all to pieces** *Rur.* that is much better than the person or thing named. □ *Mary's layer cake beats mine all to pieces.* □ *I say the book beats the movie all to pieces.*

That brings me to the (main) point. a transitional expression that introduces the main point of a conversation. (See also which brings me to the (main) point.) □ *Father: It's true. All of us had to go through something like this when we were young, and that brings me to the point. Aren't you old enough to be living on your own and making your own decisions and supporting yourself? Tom: Well, yes, I guess so.* □ *Fred: Yes, things are very expensive these days, and that brings me to the main point. You simply have to cut back on spending. Bill: You're right. I'll do it!*

(That causes) no problem. That will not cause a problem for me or anyone else. (No problem is informal.) □ *Mary: Do you mind waiting for just a little while? Bob: No problem.* □ *Sue: Does this block your light? Can you still read? Jane: That causes no problem.*

That does it! 1. *Inf.* That completes it!; It is now done just right! □ *When Jane got the last piece put into the puzzle, she said, "That does it!"* □ *John (signing a paper): Well, that's the last one! That does it! Bill: I thought we'd never finish.* **2.** and **That tears it!** *Inf.* That's the last straw!; Enough is enough! □ *Bill: We're still not totally pleased with your work. Bob: That does it! I quit!* □ *Sally: That tears it! I never want to see you again! Fred: I only put my arm around you!*

[that is] See the entries beginning with *that's.*

That makes two of us. *Inf.* The same is true for me. □ *So you're going to the football game? That makes two of us.* □ *Bill: I just passed my biology test. Bob: That makes two of us!*

That (really) burns me (up)! *Inf.* That makes me very angry! □ *Bob: Did you hear that interest rates are going back up? Mary: That really burns me up!* □ *Sue: Fred is telling everyone that you are the one who lost the party money. Mary: That burns me! It was John who had the money in the first place.*

That's a fine how-do-you-do. *Inf.* That is a terrible situation. □ *Well, that's a fine how-do-you-do! I tried to call Mary, and her number is disconnected!* □ *That's a fine how-do-you-do. I come home and find the kids are playing catch with my best crystal bowl.*

That's a new one on me! *Inf.* I had not heard that before. □ *Bob: Did you hear? They're building a new highway that will bypass the town. Fred: That's a new one on me! That's terrible!* □ *Sue: All of us will have to pay our taxes monthly from now on. Mary: That's a new one on me!*

That's about the size of it. *Inf.* That is the way it is. (Often a response to someone who has acknowledged bad news.) □ *Bob: We only have a few hundred dollars left in the bank. Sally: That means that there isn't enough money for us to go on vacation? Bob: That's about the size of it.* □ *Bob: I'm supposed to take this bill to the county clerk's office and pay them four hundred dollars? Sally: That's about the size of it.*

That's all for someone. *Inf.* Someone will get no more chances to do things correctly. □ *That's all for you, Tom. I've had all I can take from you. One disappointment after another.* □ *You've gone too far, Mary. That's all for you. Good-bye!*

That's all she wrote. and **That's what she wrote.** *Inf.* That is all of it.; That is the last of it. □ *Here's the last one we have to fix. There, that's all she wrote.* □ *That's what she wrote. There ain't no more.*

That's all someone **needs.** and **It's all** someone **needs.; (It's) just what you need.; That's just what you need.** Someone does not need that at all.; That's the last straw! (Always sarcastic. The *someone* can be a person's name or a pronoun.) □ *Jane: The dog died and the basement is just starting to flood. Fred: That's all we need.* □ *Sally: Bill, the check you wrote to the Internal Revenue Service was returned. There's no more money in the bank. Bill: That's all we need.* □ *Bob: On top of having too many bills to pay, now I have car trouble! Mary: That's just what you need!*

That's easy for you to say. You can say that easily because it really does not affect you the way it affects others. □ *Waiter: Here's your check. Mary: Thanks. (turning to others) I'm willing to just split the check evenly. Bob: That's easy for you to say. You had lobster!* □ *Sally: Let's each chip in ten bucks and buy him a sweater. Sue: That's easy for you to say. You make twice what I do.*

That's enough! *Inf.* No more!; Stop that! □ *Sue: Here, I'll stack another one on top. Mary: That's enough! It will fall.*

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☐ *John: I could go on with complaint after complaint. I could talk all week, in fact. Bob: That's enough!*

That's enough for now. No more of that for now.; Please stop for a while. ☐ *Mary: Here, have some more cake. Do you want a larger piece? Bill: Oh, no. That's enough for now.* ☐ *Bill: Shall I cut a little more off this tree, lady, or save the rest till spring? Jane: No, that's enough for now.*

(That's) enough (of this) foolishness! 1. Stop this foolish behavior. ☐ *Bill: Enough of this foolishness. Stop it! Sally: Sorry.* ☐ *Father: That's enough of this foolishness. You two stop fighting over nothing. Bob: Okay. Bill: Sorry.* **2.** I have had enough of this. (Does not refer to something that is actual foolishness.) ☐ *Andy: Enough of this foolishness. I hate ballet. I'm leaving. Sue: Well, please leave quietly.* ☐ *Sally: That's enough foolishness. I'm leaving and I never want to see you again! Bob: Come on! I was only teasing.*

(That's) fine with me. and **(That's) fine by me.; (That's) okay by me.; (That's) okay with me.** That is agreeable as far as I am concerned. (The expressions with *by* are colloquial.) ☐ *Sue: I'm giving away your old coat. Bob: That's fine with me.* ☐ *Sally: Can I take twenty dollars out of your wallet? Fred: That's okay by me—if you can find it, of course.*

That's for dang sure! *Rur.* That is quite certain! (The formulaic response to *That's for sure!*. The accent is always on the *dang*.) ☐ *Tom: That's for sure! Jane: That's for dang sure!* ☐ *Sally: We'll be there and that's for sure! Bill: Yup! That's for dang sure!*

That's funny. That is strange or peculiar. ☐ *Bill: Tom just called from Detroit and says he's coming back tomorrow. Mary: That's funny. He's not supposed to.* ☐ *Sue: The sky is turning very gray. Mary: That's funny. There's no bad weather forecast.*

That's it! 1. *Inf.* That does it!; That's the last straw! ☐ *That's it! I'm leaving! I've had enough!* ☐ *Okay. That's it! I'm going to report you to human resources!* **2.** That is the answer! ☐ *That's it! You are right.* ☐ *That's it! You got the right answer.*

That's (just) the way it goes. and **That's (just) how it goes.; That's (just) the way it is.** *Inf.* That is the normal way of things.; That is fate. ☐ *Mary: All my roses died in the cold weather. Sue: That's the way it goes.* ☐ *Sally: Someone stole all the candy we left out in the front office. Jane: That's just how it goes.*

That's (just) too much! 1. *Inf.* That is unpleasant and unacceptable!; That is more than I can bear! ☐ *"That's just too much!" exclaimed Sue, and she walked out.* ☐ *Bill: I'm afraid this movie isn't what we thought it was going to be. Sue: Did you see that? That's too much! Let's go!* **2.** *Inf.* That is just too funny. (Compare this with You're too much.) ☐ *After Fred finished the joke, and Bill had stopped howling with laughter, Bill said, "That's too much! Your jokes are so hilarious."* ☐ *When Tom stopped laughing, his sides ached and he had tears in his eyes. "Oh, that's too much!" he moaned.*

That's just what you need. Go to That's all someone needs.

That's more like it. That is better.; That is a better response this time. ☐ *Waiter: Here is your order, sir. Roast chicken as you requested. Sorry about the mix-up. John: That's more like it.* ☐ *Clerk: Now, here's one that you might like. Sally: Now, that's more like it!*

That's my boy. and **That's my girl.** That is my child of whom I am proud.; I'm proud of this young person. ☐ *After the game, Tom's dad said, "That's my boy!"* ☐ *That's my girl! Always a winner!*

That's my girl. Go to previous.

That's news to me. I did not know that.; I had not been informed of that. ☐ *Bill: They've blocked off Maple Street for some repairs. Tom: That's news to me.* ☐ *Sally: The telephones are out. None of them work. Bill: That's news to me.*

That's show business (for you). That is the way that life really is. (Also with *biz* and *show biz*.) ☐ *And now the car won't start. That's show business for you.* ☐ *Too bad about the bad investment. That's show biz.*

That's that! *Inf.* That is the end of that! Nothing more can be done. ☐ *Tom: Well, that's that! I can do no more. Sally: That's the way it goes.* ☐ *Doctor (finishing an operation): That's that! Would you close for me, Sue? Sue: Nice job, Doctor. Yes, I'll close.*

That's the pot calling the kettle black. Go to The pot is calling the kettle black.

That's the spirit! That is the right attitude and preferred evidence of high motivation. ☐ *A: I am sure I can do it! B: That's the spirit!*

That's the stuff! *Inf.* That is the right attitude or action. ☐ *Bob: I'm sure I can do it! Fred: That's the stuff!* ☐ *"That's the stuff!" cried the coach as Mary crossed the finish line.*

That's the ticket! *Inf.* That is what is required! ☐ *Mary: I'll just get ready and drive the package directly to the airport! Sue: That's the ticket. Take it right to the airport post office.* ☐ *Bob: I've got it! I'll buy a new computer! Bill: That's the ticket!*

That's the way the ball bounces. and **That's the way the cookie crumbles.; That's the way the mop flops.** *Prov.* You cannot control everything that happens to you.; You should accept the bad things that happen. ☐ *Bill: I bought a hundred lottery tickets this week, but I still didn't win! Alan: That's the way the ball bounces.* ☐ *I was planning to have fun on my vacation, but I've been sick the whole time. I guess that's just the way the cookie crumbles.* ☐ *That's tough, but that's the way the mop flops.*

That's the way the cookie crumbles. Go to previous.

That's the way the mop flops. Go to That's the way the ball bounces.

(That's the) way to go! *Inf.* a phrase encouraging someone to continue the good work. ☐ *As John ran over the finish line, everyone cried, "That's the way to go!"* ☐ *"Way to go!" said Mary when Bob finally got the car started.*

(That's) too bad. It is unfortunate.; I'm sorry to hear that. ☐ *Tom: I hurt my foot on our little hike. Fred: That's too bad. Can I get you something for it? Tom: No, I'll live.* ☐ *Bob: My uncle just passed away. Tom: That's too bad. I'm sorry to hear that. Bob: Thanks.*

That's what I say. *Inf.* I agree with what was just said. ☐ *Tom: We've got to get in there and stand up for our rights! Mary: That's what I say.* ☐ *Bob: They shouldn't do that! They should be put in jail! Mary: That's what I say!*

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That's what she wrote. Go to That's all she wrote.

that's why! a tag on the end of a statement that is an answer to a question beginning with *why.* (Shows a little impatience.) ☐ *Sue: Why do you always put your right shoe on first? Bob: Because, when I get ready to put on my shoes, I always pick up the right one first, that's why!* ☐ *Mary: Why do you eat that awful peppermint candy? Tom: Because I like it, that's why!*

That sucks. and **It sucks.** *Sl.* That is worthless. ☐ *Yuck! That sucks!* ☐ *This meat loaf is terrible. It sucks.*

That takes care of that. *Inf.* That is settled. ☐ *That takes care of that, and I'm glad it's over.* ☐ *I spent all morning dealing with this matter, and that takes care of that.*

That takes the cake! 1. *Inf.* That is good, and it wins the prize! (Assuming that the prize is a cake.) ☐ *"What a performance!" cheered John. "That takes the cake!"* ☐ *Sue: Wow! That takes the cake! What a dive! Rachel: She sure can dive!* **2.** *Inf.* That is too much; That does it! ☐ *Bob: What a dumb thing to do, Fred! Erik: Yeah, Fred. That takes the cake!* ☐ *Bob: Wow! That takes the cake! Bill: What is it? Bob: That stupid driver in front of me just hit the car on the left and then swung over and hit the car on the right.*

That tears it! Go to That does it!

that there *Rur.* that. ☐ *Gimme that there can of nails.* ☐ *That there car is an old Pontiac.*

that very thing exactly that. ☐ *Why, I was just looking for that very thing!* ☐ *You know, I was just about to say that very thing.*

[that will] See the entries beginning with *that'll.*

That will do. That is enough.; Do no more. ☐ *That'll do, Billy. Stop your crying.* ☐ *"That will do," said Mr. Jones when he had heard enough of our arguing.*

That'll be the day! *Inf.* It will be an unusually amazing day when that happens! ☐ *Bill: I think I'll fix that lamp now. Andy: When you finally get around to fixing that lamp, that'll be the day!* ☐ *Sue: I'm going to get this place organized once and for all! Alice: That'll be the day!*

That'll teach someone! *Inf.* What happened to *someone* is a suitable punishment! (The *someone* is usually a pronoun.) ☐ *Bill: Tom, who has cheated on his taxes for years, finally got caught. Sue: That'll teach him.* ☐ *Bill: Gee, I got a ticket for speeding. Fred: That'll teach you!*

thaw out to warm up from being frozen. ☐ *How long will it take for the chicken to thaw out?* ☐ *I can't wait for the cake to thaw out. I want some now!*

thaw someone or something **out†** to raise the temperature of someone or something above freezing; to warm someone up. ☐ *We need to get inside so I can thaw my brother out. His toes are almost frozen.* ☐ *Did you thaw out the chicken?*

the American dream the idealistic notion that Americans are preoccupied with obtaining certain materialistic goals. ☐ *The American dream of home ownership, a car in the garage, and a chicken in every pot started in the early thirties.*

(the) be-all and (the) end-all *Cliché* something that is the very best or most important; something so good that it will end the search for something better. ☐ *Finishing the building of his boat became the be-all and end-all of Roger's existence.* ☐ *Sally is the be-all and the end-all of Don's life.*

(The) best of luck (to someone**).** I wish good luck to someone. ☐ *Alice: Good-bye, Bill. Bill: Goodbye, Alice. Best of luck. Alice: Thanks. Bye.* ☐ *"Good-bye, and the best of luck to you," shouted Mary, waving and crying at the same time.*

The butler did it. 1. *Lit.* The butler performed the crime. (A catchphrase.) ☐ *I know who killed Lord Drax. The butler did it! I saw him!* **2.** *Fig.* It happened just the way it always happens. ☐ *Of course, that's it. The butler did it. The butler always does it.*

the heavens opened *Fig.* It started to rain heavily. ☐ *The heavens opened, and we had to run for cover.* ☐ *We were waiting at the bus stop when the heavens opened.*

The hell you say! Nonsense!; I don't believe it! ☐ *A: I won the lottery! B: The hell you say!*

(the) Lord only knows no one but God knows. ☐ *The Lord only knows if John's marriage will be a happy one.* ☐ *How Mary can stay so cheerful through her terrible illness, the Lord only knows.*

the luck of the Irish luck associated with the Irish people. (Also said as a catch phrase for any kind of luck.) ☐ *Bill: How did you manage to do it, Jeff. Jeff: It's the luck of the Irish, I guess.*

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. *Prov.* You don't know the quality of something until you have tried it or experienced it. ☐ *Theory says that this material will produce a superior widget, but the proof of the pudding is in the eating.*

***the race card** *Cliché* the issue of race magnified and injected into a situation which might otherwise be non-racial. (*Typically: **deal ~; play ~; use ~**.) ☐ *At the last minute, the opposition candidate played the race card and lost the election for himself.*

The very idea! I do not approve!; That is outrageous! ☐ *Resignation? The very idea!* ☐ *The very idea! Absolutely not!*

The wages of sin is death. *Prov.* Doing bad things can get you in a lot of trouble. ☐ *Serves him right. I always said, "The wages of sin is death."*

the way I see it Go to from my perspective.

The wolf is at the door. *Fig.* The threat of poverty is upon us. ☐ *I lost my job, my savings are gone, and now the wolf is at the door.*

Them as has, gits. *Rur.* Rich people can always get more. ☐ *The millionaire keeps making more and more money, because he has lots of money to invest. Them as has, gits.* ☐ *Tom: Bill already owns half the property in town, and here the court went and awarded him that vacant lot. Jane: You know how it is—them as has, gits.*

Them's fighting words! *Rur.* What you just said will lead to a fight. (Said as a threat.) ☐ *I heard what you said about my brother, and them's fighting words.* ☐ *Put up your dukes. Them's fighting words!*

then and there *Cliché* right at that time and place. ☐ *I asked him right then and there exactly what he meant.* ☐ *I decided to settle the matter then and there and not wait until Monday.*

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then the fat hit the fire Go to the fat hit the fire.

theorize about someone or something to hypothesize about someone or something; to conjecture about someone or something. ☐ *Let's not waste time theorizing about Ted. He won't change.* ☐ *I can only theorize about what happened.*

theorize on something to make a theory about something. ☐ *There is no point in theorizing on something when you have all the empirical evidence you need to draw a conclusion.* ☐ *He spent the afternoon theorizing on the origin of the universe.*

There ain't no such thing as a free lunch. Go to There's no such thing as a free lunch.

(There ain't) nothin' to it. *Rur.* It is easy. ☐ *Mary: How do you keep your car so shiny? Tom: There ain't nothin' to it. I just wax it once a week.* ☐ *It took Jane just two minutes to sew up the hole in my shirt. "See?" she said. "Nothin' to it!"*

There are plenty of (other) fish in the sea. *Fig.* There are other choices. (Used to refer to persons.) ☐ *When John broke up with Ann, I told her not to worry. There are plenty of other fish in the sea.* ☐ *It's too bad that your secretary quit, but there are plenty of other fish in the sea.*

There are tricks in every trade. *Prov.* In every occupation, there are established ways of doing things. (See also the tricks of the trade.) ☐ *John thought that he wouldn't have to learn much in order to wait tables. But there are tricks in every trade, and the experienced waiters were able to teach him a lot.*

There are two sides to every question. and **There are two sides to every story.** *Prov.* There are valid reasons for holding opposing opinions. ☐ *Jim: I can't see why anyone would object to building a city park on the corner. John: There are two sides to every question. Maybe the people who own the buildings on the corner don't want them knocked down.* ☐ *Fred: Only an idiot would want to go hang gliding. It's too dangerous. Ellen: There are two sides to every question. Maybe some people think it's enjoyable enough to be worth the risk.*

There are two sides to every story. Go to previous.

There aren't enough hours in the day. There are too many things to do and not enough time. ☐ *I am behind in all my work. There aren't enough hours in the day!* ☐ *We can't handle all the problems that come our way. There aren't enough hours in the day.*

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There but for the grace of God (go I). *Prov.* I would likely have experienced or done the same bad thing if God had not been watching over me. (You can say this to refer to someone who has had bad luck; implies that the person is no less virtuous than you are but is now miserable purely because of bad luck, which might happen to you as well.) ☐ *Jill: Ever since Julia's house burned down, she's been drinking heavily; she'll probably lose her job because of it. Jane: There but for the grace of God. . . .* ☐ *Whenever Sally saw a beggar, she thought, "There but for the grace of God go I."*

There is a fine line between something **and** something **else.** There is little difference between something and something else. ☐ *There is a fine line between a frown and a grimace.*

There is a remedy for everything except death. *Prov.* Everything but death can be cured.; As long as you are alive, your problems can somehow be solved. ☐ *Bill: I'll never recover from losing Nancy. Fred: Nonsense. There is a remedy for everything except death.* ☐ *Whenever Linda despaired, she sternly reminded herself that there is a remedy for everything except death.*

There is a tide in the affairs of men. *Prov.* If you have a favorable opportunity to do something, do it, or you will lose your chance. (From Shakespeare's play, *Julius Caesar*.) ☐ *I think that this is the best possible time to start our own business. We shouldn't hesitate. There is a tide in the affairs of men.*

There is a time and a place for everything. *Prov.* Different things are appropriate on different occasions. ☐ *There is a time and a place for everything, but this formal dinner is not the time or the place to eat with your fingers.*

There is honor among thieves. *Prov.* Criminals do not commit crimes against each other. ☐ *The gangster was loyal to his associates and did not tell their names to the police, demonstrating that there is honor among thieves.*

There is no accounting for taste(s). *Prov.* You cannot blame different people because they like different things, even if you do not understand why they like what they like. ☐ *Jill: I can't believe so many people are going to see that idiotic movie. Jane: There's no accounting for tastes.*

(There is) no chance. There is no chance that something will happen. (*No chance* is informal.) ☐ *Tom: Do you think that some little country like that will actually attack England? John: There's no chance.* ☐ *Bill: No chance you can lend me a few bucks, is there? Bill: Nope. No chance.*

there is no doing something one is not permitted to do something (as specified). ☐ *There is no arguing with Bill.* ☐ *There is no cigarette smoking here.*

(There is) no doubt about it. It cannot be doubted.; It is obvious. ☐ *Jane: It's really cold today. Fred: No doubt about it!* ☐ *Sue: Things seems to be getting more and more expensive. Tom: There's no doubt about that. Look at the price of oranges!*

There is no love lost (between someone **and** someone else**).** There is no friendship wasted between someone and someone else (because they are enemies). ☐ *Ever since their big argument, there has been no love lost between Tom and Bill.* ☐ *You can tell by the way that Jane is acting toward Ann that there is no love lost.*

(There is) no need (to). You do not have to.; It is not necessary. ☐ *Mary: Shall I try to save all this wrapping paper? Sue: No need. It's all torn.* ☐ *Bob: Would you like me to have it repaired? I'm so sorry I broke it. Bill: There is no need to. I can just glue it, thanks.*

There is no pleasure without pain. *Prov.* For every pleasure you enjoy, you must suffer some pain. ☐ *We had a fabulous vacation, but it's going to take us years to pay for it. Oh, well, there's no pleasure without pain.* ☐ *Yesterday I basked in the warm sunshine all afternoon; today I'm badly sunburned. There is no pleasure without pain.*

There is no rest for the weary. *Prov.* Even people who are worn-out must continue to work. (Describes a situation in which a tired person has to do more work.) ☐ *By the time I finished doing the laundry, it was so late I had to*

begin cooking supper for the family. There is no rest for the weary.

There is no royal road to learning. *Prov.* Learning things requires work. □ *Sue: I don't see why we have to do homework every night. Why can't we just listen to the lectures? Nancy: There is no royal road to learning.*

There is nothing new under the sun. *Prov.* Everything that is happening now has happened before. (Biblical.) □ *Jill: The newspaper today is shocking. Three prominent politicians have been convicted of fraud. Jane: That's not shocking. It only proves that there's nothing new under the sun.*

There is safety in numbers. *Prov.* A group of people is less likely to be attacked than a single person. □ *Gail never went out after dark without at least three friends, since she knew that there is safety in numbers.* □ *We should gather together a group of people to make our complaint to the boss. There's safety in numbers.*

There is trouble brewing. Go to Trouble is brewing.

There's many a good tune played on an old fiddle. *Prov.* Old people can be very capable. □ *Just because Nigel is old doesn't mean he's useless. There's many a good tune played on an old fiddle.*

There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip. *Prov.* Many things may happen to prevent you from carrying out what you intend to do. □ *Bob: Now that I have a contract with a publisher, nothing in the world can stop me from writing this book. Alan: Don't be so sure. There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip.*

There's many a true word spoken in jest. Go to Many a true word is spoken in jest.

There's more than one way to skin a cat. *Prov.* You can always find more than one way to do something. □ *Jill: How will we fix the sink without a wrench? Jane: There's more than one way to skin a cat.* □ *Our first approach didn't work, but we'll figure out some other way. There's more than one way to skin a cat.*

There's no accounting for taste. *Prov. Cliché* There is no explanation for people's preferences. □ *Look at that purple and orange car! There's no accounting for taste.* □ *Some people seemed to like the music, although I thought it was worse than noise. There's no accounting for taste.*

There's no flies on someone. *Rur.* Someone is full of energy and drive. □ *There's no flies on Jane. She's up at five every morning, training for the big race.*

There's no fool like an old fool. *Prov. Cliché* Old people are supposed to be wise, so if an old person behaves foolishly, it is worse than a young person behaving foolishly. □ *As old Mrs. Fleischman watched her husband try to dance the way their grandchildren danced, she muttered, "There's no fool like an old fool."*

There's no place like home. *Prov. Cliché* Home is the most satisfying place to be. □ *After his long trip, Bob came into his house, sat down in his favorite chair, and happily sighed, "There's no place like home."* □ *Jane: Are you glad to be home from school? Jenny: There's no place like home.*

There's no rose without a thorn. *Prov.* To enjoy any beautiful or pleasant thing, you must endure something difficult or painful. □ *Mike: My bride is lovely and gracious, but I'm discovering that she has a terrible temper. Bill: There's no rose without a thorn.*

(There's) no smoke without fire. and **Where there's smoke there's fire.** *Prov.* There is usually some truth behind every rumor. □ *I'm going to withdraw all my money from that bank. I read an article that the bank was in financial trouble, and where there's smoke there's fire.*

There's no such thing as a free lunch. and **There ain't no such thing as a free lunch.** *Prov. Cliché* Everything costs something. (Can imply that you should be suspicious of anything that appears to be free.) □ *Fred: This advertisement says I can get an expensive camera for free! Jane: Don't be so gullible. There's no such thing as a free lunch.* □ *Mary gave me her sewing machine, but I had to give it $100 worth of repairs before I could even use it. There's no such thing as a free lunch.*

(There's) no time like the present. *Prov. Cliché* Do what you are supposed to do now. (You can use this to suggest that something be done right away.) □ *Jill: When should we start cleaning up the house? Jane: No time like the present.* □ *Start studying for the big exam now, instead of waiting till the night before. There's no time like the present.*

(There's) no way to tell. No one can find out the answer. □ *Tom: How long are we likely to have to wait before the plane takes off? Clerk: Sorry, sir. There's no way to tell.*

There's nobody home. There are no brains in someone's head. □ *There's lots of goodwill in that head, but there's nobody home.* □ *What a fool! There's nobody home—that's for sure.*

There's none so blind as those who will not see. *Prov.* You cannot make someone pay attention to something that he or she does not want to notice. (Used often to upbraid someone for being unwilling to notice what you are trying call attention to.) □ *Mother: This is the fifth time our daughter has been arrested for shoplifting. Don't you think we ought to seek some kind of help for her? Father: Our girl would never shoplift. I'm sure all those arrests were just some kind of mistake. Mother: There's none so blind as those who will not see.* □ *By October, it was obvious to everyone that Richard was coming in drunk every morning. Obvious, that is, except to his devoted secretary; there's none so blind as those who will not see.*

There's none so deaf as those who will not hear. *Prov.* If you tell someone something that he or she does not want to know, he or she will not pay attention to you. □ *I tried repeatedly to tell my supervisor about the low morale in our department, but there's none so deaf as those who will not hear.*

(There's) nothing to it! 1. *Inf.* It is easy! □ *John: Is it hard to learn to fly a small plane? Sue: There's nothing to it!* □ *Bill: Me? I can't dive off a board that high! I can hardly dive off the side of the pool! Bob: Aw, come on! Nothing to it!* **2.** *Inf.* The rumor you heard is not true. □ *Pay no attention to all that talk. There's nothing to it.*

There, there. and **There, now.** an expression used to comfort someone. □ *There, there. You'll feel better after you take a nap.* □ *There, now. Everything will be all right.*

There will be hell to pay. and **There will be the devil to pay.** *Inf.* There will be a lot of trouble if something is done or if something is not done. (See also have

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the devil to pay.) ☐ *Fred: If you break another window, Andy, there will be hell to pay. Andy: I didn't do it! I didn't.* ☐ *Bill: I'm afraid there's no time to do this one. I'm going to skip it. Bob: There will be hell to pay if you do.* ☐ *Bill broke a window, and now there will be the devil to pay.*

There will be the devil to pay. Go to previous.

There you are. That's the way things are.; This is the way things have worked out. (A fatalistic dismissal.) ☐ *"There's nothing more that can be done. We've done what we could. So there you are," said Fred, dejected.* ☐ *Andy: Then what happened? Bob: Then they put me in a cell until they found I was innocent. Somebody stole my watch in there. All because of mistaken identity. So there you are.*

There you go. 1. Hooray! You did it right! (Usually **There you go!**) ☐ *There you go! That's the way!* ☐ *Good shot, Chuck! There you go!* **2.** That is the way things are, just like I told you.; Isn't this just what you would expect? ☐ *There you go. Isn't that just like a man!* ☐ *There you go, acting rude and ugly!* **3.** You are doing it again. ☐ *There you go! You said it again.* ☐ *I just told you not to put that junk on the table, and there you go.* **4.** Here is what you wanted. (As might be said by a food server in a restaurant when placing your food in front of you.) ☐ *"There you go," said the waiter.* ☐ *Who ordered the fried shrimp? There you go.*

thereby hangs a tale there is an interesting story connected with this matter. ☐ *Yes, she comes in late most mornings, and thereby hangs a tale. She has a drinking problem.*

They also serve who only stand and wait. *Prov.* Sometimes you must be patient and do nothing, even though you would like to be actively helping. (From John Milton's poem, "On His Blindness.") ☐ *Jill: Can I help? Jane: No, we've got enough people helping. Jill: But I want to help. Jane: They also serve who only stand and wait.*

They don't make them like they used to. *Cliché* Goods are not as well made now as they were in the past. (Often used as a catchphrase. Them is often *'em*.) ☐ *Look at this flimsy door! They don't make 'em like they used to.* ☐ *Why don't cars last longer? They just don't make 'em like they used to.*

They must have seen you coming. You were really cheated. They saw you coming and decided they could cheat you easily. ☐ *Andy: It cost two hundred dollars. Rachel: You paid two hundred dollars for that thing? Boy, they must have seen you coming.* ☐ *Bob: Do you think I paid too much for this car? It's not as good as I thought it was. Tom: It's almost a wreck. They must have seen you coming.*

They went that a'way. *Cliché* The villains went in that direction. (From Western movies.) ☐ *Those guys aren't here. They went that a'way.*

thick and fast in large numbers or amounts and at a rapid rate. ☐ *The enemy soldiers came thick and fast.* ☐ *New problems seem to come thick and fast.*

***thick as a short plank** and ***thick as two short planks** exceptionally dim-witted. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Dumb? He's as thick as a short plank, more like.* ☐ *Oh, I'd not say she was stupid. As thick as two short planks, yes, but stupid? Never!*

***thick as pea soup** [of fog] very thick. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *This fog is as thick as pea soup. You can't see ten feet in front of you.*

***thick as thieves** *Cliché* very close-knit; friendly; allied. (*Thick* = close and loyal. *Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Mary, Tom, and Sally are as thick as thieves. They go everywhere together.* ☐ *Those two families are thick as thieves.*

thick as two short planks Go to thick as a short plank.

thicken something **up**† **1.** to make something, such as a fluid, thicker. ☐ *I have to thicken this gravy up before we can serve dinner.* ☐ *Please thicken up the gravy before you serve it.* **2.** to make something wider. ☐ *See this line here? You need to thicken it up so that it shows more clearly.* ☐ *Try to thicken up the line a little.*

***thick-skinned** *Fig.* not easily upset or hurt; insensitive. (The opposite of thin-skinned. *Typically: **be ~; become ~; grow ~**.) ☐ *Tom won't worry about your insults. He's completely thick-skinned.* ☐ *Jane's so thick-skinned she didn't realize Fred was being rude to her.*

thin down to become thinner or slimmer. ☐ *He stopped eating desserts and fatty foods so he could thin down.* ☐ *I have to thin down so I can get into my winter coat.*

thin on top *Fig.* balding. ☐ *James is wearing a hat because he's getting thin on top.* ☐ *Father got a little thin on top as he got older.*

thin out to spread out; to become less dense. ☐ *The trees began to thin out as we got higher up the mountain.* ☐ *The crowd began to thin out as we got a little farther from the theater.*

thin someone **down**† to make someone thinner or slimmer. ☐ *What you need to thin you down is less, not more.* ☐ *The hospital dietitian tried to thin down the obese man.*

thin something **down**† to dilute a fluid. ☐ *You should thin this down with a little water.* ☐ *Try to thin down this paint a little.*

thin something **out**† to make something less dense; to scatter something. ☐ *You will have to thin the young plants out, because there is not room for all of them.* ☐ *Can you thin out these young plants?*

A **thing of beauty is a joy forever.** *Prov.* Beautiful things give pleasure that lasts even longer than the beautiful things themselves. (This is a line from John Keats's poem "Endymion." Also **a thing of beauty and a joy forever,** used to describe something beautiful in lofty terms, often ironically.) ☐ *Jill: I don't understand why someone would pay millions of dollars to have some old painting. Jane: Because a thing of beauty is a joy forever.*

*****a **thing or two (about** someone or something**) 1.** bits of information or criticism about someone or something; a few facts about someone or something. (*Typically: **find out ~; know ~; learn ~; tell** someone **~**.) ☐ *I told Bob a thing or two about cars.* ☐ *I know a thing or two about Mary that would really shock you.* **2.** a few points of criticism about someone or something. (*Typically: **tell** someone **~**.) ☐ *I told her a thing or two about her precious little boy!* ☐ *Let me tell you a thing or two about your messy yard!*

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A **thing you don't want is dear at any price.** *Prov.* You should not buy something just because it is cheap. ☐ *Jill: There's a sale on black-and-white film; we should get some. Jane: We never use black-and-white film. Jill: But it's so cheap. Jane: A thing you don't want is dear at any price.*

Things are looking up. Conditions are looking better. ☐ *Since I got a salary increase, things are looking up.* ☐ *Things are looking up at school. I'm doing better in all my classes.*

Things are seldom what they seem. *Prov.* Things often appear different from what they really are. ☐ *Emily seems to be a fine young lady, but be careful. Things are seldom what they seem.* ☐ *To judge from his elegant clothing and luxurious car, William was a wealthy man. But things are seldom what they seem; in fact, he was in desperate need of money.*

(Things) could be better. and **(I) could be better.; (Things) might be better.** a response to a greeting meaning "My state is not as good as it might be." (Not necessarily a direct answer.) ☐ *John: How are things going, Fred? Fred: Things could be better. And you? John: About the same.* ☐ *Bob: Hi, Bill! How are you? Bill: I could be better. What's new with you? Bob: Nothing much.*

(Things) could be worse. and **(I) could be worse.** a response to a greeting meaning "My state is not as bad as it might be." (Not necessarily a direct answer.) ☐ *John: How are you, Fred? Fred: Things could be worse. And you? John: Okay, I guess.* ☐ *Bob: Hi, Bob! What's happening? Bob: I could be worse. What's new with you?*

(Things) couldn't be better. Go to (It) couldn't be better.

Things haven't been easy. Go to (It) hasn't been easy.

(Things) might be better. Go to (Things) could be better.

Things will work out (all right). and **Everything will work out (all right).; Everything will work out for the best.; Things will work out for the best.** The situation will reach a satisfactory conclusion.; The problem(s) will be resolved. ☐ *"Cheer up!" Mary said to a gloomy Fred. "Things will work out all right."* ☐ *Mary: Oh, I'm so miserable! Bill: Don't worry. Everything will work out for the best.* ☐ *"Now, now, don't cry. Things will work out," consoled Sally, hoping that what she was saying was really true.*

think a great deal of someone or something Go to next.

think a lot of someone or something and **think a great deal of** someone or something; **think highly of** someone or something; **think much of** someone or something to think well of someone or something. ☐ *The teacher thinks a lot of Mary and her talents.* ☐ *No one really thinks a great deal of the new policies.* ☐ *I think highly of John.* ☐ *The manager doesn't think much of John and says so to everyone.*

think about someone or something to contemplate someone or something. ☐ *Whenever I think about him, I get goose bumps.* ☐ *I don't want to think about it.*

think ahead of one's **time** Go to ahead of one's time.

think ahead (to something**)** to have thoughts about something that is to happen in the future. ☐ *I began to think ahead to next year when the same thing might happen.* ☐ *You must learn to think ahead if you want to get ahead.*

think back (on someone or something**)** to remember and think about someone or something. ☐ *When I think back on Sally and the good times we had together, I get very sad.* ☐ *I like to think back on my childhood and try to remember what it was like.*

think back (to something**)** to remember back to something in the past. ☐ *Now, try and think back to the night of January 16.* ☐ *I can't think back. My mind is preoccupied with other things.*

think before doing something to consider the consequences before doing something. ☐ *You really ought to think before you take on a job like that.* ☐ *I finally learned to think carefully before accepting jobs like the one I just took on.*

think better of someone or something to raise one's opinion of someone or something. ☐ *I think better of him since I saw how well he does in the sales meetings.* ☐ *I hope that you will think better of the plan now.*

think better of something to reconsider doing something and end up not doing it. ☐ *I hope that you will think better of what you are doing and how many people you are hurting.* ☐ *I will think better of making such a careless remark next time.*

think for oneself to do one's own thinking; to think independently. ☐ *I think for myself. I don't need anyone to tell me what to do, do I?* ☐ *Sam has to learn to think for himself. He can't let other people make his decisions for him all his life.*

think highly of someone or something Go to think a lot of someone or something.

think inside the box *Fig.* to think in traditional fashion, bound by old, nonfunctional, or limiting structures, rules, or practices. (As if thinking or creativity were confined or limited by a figurative box. Compare this with think outside the box.) ☐ *You won't come up with good ideas if you think only inside the box.* ☐ *You guys only think inside the box and will never find a better solution.*

think little of someone or something and **think nothing of** someone or something to have a low opinion of someone or something. ☐ *Most experts think little of Jane's theory.* ☐ *People may think nothing of it now, but in a few years everyone will praise it.* ☐ *The critics thought little of her latest book.*

think much of someone or something Go to think a lot of someone or something.

think nothing of doing something to give no thought or hesitation to doing something. ☐ *She thinks nothing of helping other people at any time of day or night.* ☐ *Toby thinks nothing of driving one block to the store.*

Think nothing of it. and **Don't give it another thought.; Don't give it a (second) thought.** **1.** You're welcome.; It was nothing.; I was glad to do it. ☐ *Mary: Thank you so much for driving me home. John: Think nothing of it.* ☐ *Sue: It was very kind of you to bring the kids back all the way out here. Alice: Think nothing of it. I was delighted to do it.* **2.** You did no harm at all. (A very polite way of reassuring someone that an action has

not harmed or hurt the speaker.) ☐ *Sue: Oh, sorry. I didn't mean to bump you! Bob: Think nothing of it.* ☐ *Jane: I hope I didn't hurt your feelings when I said you were too loud. Bill: Don't give it a second thought. I was too loud.*

think nothing of someone or something Go to think little of someone or something.

think of someone or something to contemplate someone or something. ☐ *I think of you whenever I go to the restaurant where we used to eat.* ☐ *Whenever I see a rainbow, I think of Susan.*

think on one's **feet** *Fig.* to be able to speak and reason well while (standing and talking) in front of an audience, especially extemporaneously. ☐ *She really thinks on her feet well.* ☐ *I am not able to think on my feet too well before a bunch of people.*

think out loud *Fig.* to say one's thoughts aloud. ☐ *Excuse me. I didn't really mean to say that. I was just thinking out loud.* ☐ *Mr. Johnson didn't prepare a speech. He just stood there and thought out loud. It was a terrible presentation.*

think outside the box *Fig.* to think freely, not bound by old, nonfunctional, or limiting structures, rules, or practices. (As if thinking or creativity were confined in or limited by a figurative box. Compare this with think inside the box.) ☐ *You won't come up with good ideas until you think outside the box.* ☐ *Let's think outside the box for a minute and try to find a better solution.*

think someone **fit for** something to judge someone to be in condition or healthy enough for something. ☐ *Do you think me fit for the race?* ☐ *She is not fit for the game Friday night.*

think someone **hung the moon (and stars)** and **think** someone **is God's own cousin** *Rur.* to think someone is perfect. ☐ *Joe won't listen to any complaints about Mary. He thinks she hung the moon and stars.* ☐ *Jim is awful stuck-up. He thinks he's God's own cousin.*

think someone **is God's own cousin** Go to previous.

think someone or something **fit for** someone or something to judge someone or something to be suitable for someone or something. ☐ *I do not think this book fit for young readers.* ☐ *You are not fit for the office of mayor!* ☐ *This plate is not fit for further use.* ☐ *I don't think John fit for the job.*

think something **of** someone or something to hold a particular kind of opinion of someone or something; to hold someone or something in a particular kind of regard. (Such as ill, good, highly, bad, much, a lot, a great deal.) ☐ *Please don't think ill of me. It was a silly mistake. That's all.* ☐ *We think quite highly of your plan.*

think something **out**† to think through something; to prepare a plan or scheme. ☐ *This is an interesting problem. I'll have to take some time and think it out.* ☐ *We spent all morning thinking out our plan.*

think something **over**† to think about something and whether one will choose to do it. ☐ *I need a few minutes to think it over.* ☐ *Let me think over your request for a day or so.*

think something **through**† to run over and try to settle something in one's mind. ☐ *Let me think this through and call you in the morning.* ☐ *I will think through this matter and get back to you.*

think something **up**† to contrive or invent something. ☐ *Don't worry. I'll find a way to do it. I can think something up in time to get it done.* ☐ *John thought up a way to solve our problem.*

think straight to think clearly. (Often negative.) ☐ *I'm so tired I can't think straight.*

think the sun rises and sets on someone *Fig.* to think someone is the most important person in the world. ☐ *Her daddy just thinks the sun rises and sets on her.* ☐ *She worships that boyfriend of hers. She thinks the sun rises and sets on him.*

think the world of someone or something *Fig.* to be very fond of someone or something. ☐ *Mary thinks the world of her little sister.* ☐ *The old lady thinks the world of her cats.*

think to do something to remember to do something. ☐ *Sorry. I didn't think to call you in time.* ☐ *I will try to think to bring everything with me next time.*

think twice about someone or something to give careful consideration to someone or something. ☐ *Ed may be a good choice, but I suggest that you think twice about him.* ☐ *You will want to think twice about it.*

think twice (before doing something**)** to consider carefully whether one should do something; to be cautious about doing something. ☐ *You should think twice before quitting your job.* ☐ *That's a serious decision, and you should certainly think twice.*

think under fire Go to under fire.

think (up)on someone or something to contemplate someone or something; to muse or reflect on someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *I thought upon Abraham Lincoln and how much we all owe him.* ☐ *I thought on all the fine things we used to do.*

think worlds apart Go to worlds apart.

***thin-skinned** *Fig.* easily upset or hurt; sensitive. (The opposite of thick-skinned. *Typically: **be ~; become ~; grow ~**.) ☐ *You'll have to handle Mary's mother carefully. She's very thin-skinned.* ☐ *Jane weeps easily when people tease her. She's too thin-skinned.*

*the **third degree** *Fig.* a long and detailed period of questioning. (*Typically: **get ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Why is it I get the third degree from you every time I come home late?* ☐ *Poor Sally spent all night at the police station getting the third degree.*

The **third time's the charm.** *Prov.* The third time you try to do something, it will work. ☐ *Jill: I've called Miriam twice, but she doesn't answer her phone. Jane: Try again. The third time's the charm.*

thirst for something **1.** *Lit.* to desire something to drink. (Somewhat formal.) ☐ *"I thirst for something cooling and refreshing." said the preacher.* ☐ *You could see that everyone there was thirsting for water, or even coffee, but there was no refreshment in sight.* **2.** *Fig.* to have a strong desire for something. (See also have a thirst for something.) ☐ *In the old days, students were said to thirst for knowledge.* ☐ *The generals thirsted for new battles to be fought.*

thirsty for something **1.** *Lit.* needing to drink something. ☐ *I'm thirsty for a glass of cold water.* **2.** *Fig.* craving or

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desiring something. ☐ *The students were thirsty for knowledge.* ☐ *That evil tyrant is thirsty for power.*

this a-way and that a-way *Rur.* first one way and then the other. ☐ *She was craning her neck this a-way and that a-way, looking for him.* ☐ *The dogs were running this a-way and that a-way.*

This doesn't quite suit me. and **It doesn't quite suit me.** This is not quite what I want.; This does not please me. (Compare this with **(It) suits me (fine).**) ☐ *Clerk: How do you like this one? Mary: It doesn't quite suit me.* ☐ *Bob: This doesn't quite suit me. Let me see something a little darker. Clerk: How's this? Bob: Better.*

this here *Rur.* this. ☐ *Just let me fix this here chair leg.* ☐ *This here picture was painted by my Aunt Lena.*

This is it. This is the time, place, or thing that we have been looking or waiting for. ☐ *This is it. This is the chance you've been waiting for!* ☐ *This is it. This is my stop. I have to get off the bus.*

This is my floor. a phrase said by someone at the back of an elevator suggesting that people make way for that person to exit at a particular floor. ☐ *Mary said, "This is my floor," and everyone made room for her to get out of the elevator.* ☐ *"Out, please," said Tom loudly. "This is my floor!"*

This is where I came in. *Fig.* I have heard all this before. (Said when a situation begins to seem repetitive, as when a film one has seen part of before reaches familiar scenes.) ☐ *John sat through a few minutes of the argument, and when Tom and Alice kept saying the same thing over and over John said, "This is where I came in," and left the room.* ☐ *The speaker stood up and asked again for a new vote on the proposal. "This is where I came in," muttered Jane as she headed for the door.*

This one is on someone the cost of this drink or meal will be paid by the person named or designated. ☐ *A: Should we ask for separate checks or what? B: No, no, this one's on the boss!* ☐ *As the waiter set down the glasses, Fred said, "This one's on me."*

(this) vale of tears *Fig.* the earth; mortal life on earth. (A *vale* is a literary word for *valley*.) ☐ *When it comes time for me to leave this vale of tears, I hope I can leave some worthwhile memories behind.* ☐ *Uncle Fred left this vale of tears early this morning.*

thither and yon there and everywhere. (Stilted or jocular.) ☐ *I sent my résumé thither and yon, but no one responded.* ☐ *The children are all scattered thither and yon, and it is difficult for them to get home for the holidays.*

*a **thorn in** someone's **flesh** Go to next.

*a **thorn in** someone's **side** and *a **thorn in** someone's **flesh** *Fig.* a constant bother or annoyance to someone. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *This problem is a thorn in my side. I wish I had a solution for it.* ☐ *John was a thorn in my flesh for years before I finally got rid of him.*

Those were the days. *Cliché* The days we have been referring to were the greatest of times. ☐ *Ah, yes. The eighties. Those were the days!* ☐ *Those were the days. Back when people knew right from wrong.*

Those who can, do; those who can't, teach. *Prov.* People who are able to do something well can do that thing for a living, while people who are not able to do anything that well make a living by teaching. (Used to disparage teachers. From George Bernard Shaw's *Man and Superman.*) ☐ *Bob: I'm so discouraged. My writing teacher told me my novel is hopeless. Jane: Don't listen to her, Bob. Remember: those who can, do; those who can't, teach.*

thoughts to live by Go to **words to live by.**

thrash around to move about restlessly or violently. ☐ *Settle down and stop thrashing around.* ☐ *Timmy thrashed around all night when he had the high fever.*

thrash something **out**† *Fig.* to discuss something thoroughly and solve any problems. ☐ *The committee took hours to thrash the whole matter out.* ☐ *John and Anne thrashed out the reasons for their constant disagreements.*

thrash something **out of** someone *Lit.* to beat something out of someone. ☐ *The sheriff really wanted to thrash the truth out of Tex, but that is illegal.* ☐ *Max wanted to know where the money was hidden and he tried to thrash it out of Lefty.*

thread one's **way through** something *Fig.* to make a path for oneself through a crowded area; to make one's way carefully through a crowded area. ☐ *The spy threaded his way through the crowd.* ☐ *The bicyclists threaded their way through the cars stopped in traffic.*

thread through something *Fig.* to travel through a crowded area; to move carefully through an area where there are many obstacles. ☐ *The spy threaded through the crowd at the palace.* ☐ *The joggers threaded through the shoppers on the sidewalks.*

threaten someone **with** someone or something to warn someone that there will be punishment in the form of someone or something if conditions are not met. ☐ *No, no! Your Uncle Herman is not coming here! Please don't threaten me with Uncle Herman!* ☐ *Are you threatening me with bodily harm?*

three bricks shy of a load stupid; dense; shortchanged on intelligence. ☐ *I would never say she was dense. Just three bricks shy of a load.* ☐ *Why do you act like you're three bricks shy of a load?*

three sheets in the wind and **three sheets (to the wind); two sheets to the wind** *Inf.* intoxicated and unsteady. (Sheets are the ropes used to manage a ship's sails. It is assumed that if these ropes were blowing in the wind, the ship would be out of control.) ☐ *He had gotten three sheets to the wind and didn't pay attention to my warning.* ☐ *By midnight, he was three sheets.*

three squares (a day) three nourishing meals a day. (With breakfast, lunch, and dinner considered the usual three meals.) ☐ *I was glad to get back home to three squares.* ☐ *If I could limit myself to three squares, I could lose some weight.*

Three strikes and you are out. *Fig.* Three chances and you are finished. (From baseball.) ☐ *One more arrest for speeding and you lose your license. You know, three strikes and you're out.*

thrill at someone or something to become excited by someone or something. ☐ *The opera was mystically intoxicating, and the audience thrilled at the tenor lead.* ☐ *We thrilled at the agility of the dancers.*

thrill someone **to pieces** and **thrill** someone **to death; thrill** someone **to bits** *Fig.* to please or excite someone very much. ☐ *John sent flowers to Ann and thrilled her to pieces.* ☐ *Your wonderful comments thrilled me to death.*

thrill someone **with** something to create or use something to cause someone much joy. ☐ *The famous singer thrilled us with a lovely song.* ☐ *Sally was thrilled with the praise heaped upon her daughter.*

thrill to something to become excited by something; to experience great joy while experiencing something. ☐ *I always thrill to the sound of a marching band.* ☐ *The crowd thrilled to the sight of the winning team parading down Main Street.*

thrilled to death and **thrilled to pieces** *Fig.* very excited; to be very pleased. ☐ *She was thrilled to death to get the flowers.* ☐ *I'm just thrilled to pieces to have you visit me.*

thrilled to pieces Go to previous.

thrive (up)on something to grow vigorously because of something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *These plants thrive upon wet soil.* ☐ *Children thrive on love.*

throng around someone or something to crowd around someone or something. ☐ *The children thronged around the lady with the bags of candy.* ☐ *Everyone thronged around the piano for the group sing.*

throng in(to something**)** [for a crowd] to swarm into some place. ☐ *The eager crowd thronged into the department store to partake in the advertised sale.* ☐ *The doors opened and they thronged in.*

throng out (of something**)** [for a crowd] to swarm out of something or some place. ☐ *The people thronged out of the concert hall at the end of the program.* ☐ *At half past ten, the crowd thronged out.*

throttle something **down†** to reduce the speed of an engine by adjusting the throttle. ☐ *She throttled her engine down and came to a stop.* ☐ *She throttled down her engine.*

through and through thoroughly; completely. ☐ *I've studied this report through and through trying to find the facts you've mentioned.* ☐ *I was angry through and through, and I had to sit and recover before I could talk to anyone.*

through hell and high water *Fig.* through all sorts of severe difficulties. (Use *hell* with caution.) ☐ *I came through hell and high water to get to this meeting on time. Why don't you start on time?* ☐ *You'll have to go through hell and high water to accomplish your goal, but it'll be worth it.*

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***through the cracks** *Fig.* [moving] past the elements that are intended to catch or detect such things. (*Typically: **fall ~; drop ~; go ~; slip ~**.) ☐ *I am afraid that some of these issues will slip through the cracks unless we make a note about each one.*

***through the mill** *Fig.* badly treated; abused and exhausted. (Fig. on a grain mill. *Typically: **be ~; go ~; put** someone **~; send** someone **~**.) ☐ *This has been a rough day. I've really been through the mill.* ☐ *This old car is banged up, and it hardly runs. We really put it through the mill.*

through thick and thin *Cliché* through good times and bad times. ☐ *We've been together through thick and thin, and we won't desert each other now.* ☐ *Over the years, we went through thick and thin and enjoyed every minute of it.*

***through with** someone or something finished with someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I'm all through with course requirements. Now I can learn something I really enjoy.* ☐ *Lily is through with Max.*

throw a fight *Fig.* to lose a boxing match on purpose. (Boxing. Other words can replace *a*.) ☐ *I just know that Wilbur didn't throw that fight.* ☐ *The guy would never throw a fight.*

throw a fit Go to have a fit.

throw a game *Fig.* to lose a game on purpose. ☐ *I know Wilbur. He could never throw a game.* ☐ *There's a couple of those guys who would throw a game if they got enough money to do it.*

throw a glance at someone or something to take a quick peek at someone or something. ☐ *Liz threw a glance at her brother to see what he was going to do.* ☐ *I threw a glance at my watch and got ready to go.*

throw a monkey wrench in the works *Fig.* to cause problems for someone's plans. ☐ *I don't want to throw a monkey wrench in the works, but have you checked your plans with a lawyer?* ☐ *When John suddenly refused to help us, he really threw a monkey wrench in the works.*

throw a party (for someone**)** *Fig.* to have a party; to hold a party; to arrange a party. ☐ *Bill threw a party for his sister before she went away to college.* ☐ *Things seem sort of dull. Let's throw a party.*

throw a punch to jab; to punch. ☐ *She tried to throw a punch at me, but I blocked it.* ☐ *Wilbur threw a punch at the thug.*

throw a tantrum to have a temper tantrum; to put on an active display of childish temper. ☐ *I never dreamed that Bob would throw a tantrum right there in the department store. You must be so embarrassed!*

throw an amount of **light on** someone or something to present some revealing information about someone or something. ☐ *What you have just told me throws a lot of light on George and his motivation.* ☐ *Will you please throw some light on the problem?*

throw caution to the wind *Cliché* to become very careless. ☐ *Jane, who is usually cautious, threw caution to the wind and went swimming in the ocean.* ☐ *I don't mind taking a little chance now and then, but I'm not the type of person who throws caution to the wind.*

throw cold water on something Go to pour cold water on something.

Throw dirt enough, and some will stick. *Prov.* If you persistently say bad things about someone, people will begin to believe your accusations, even if they are not true. (Sometimes *mud* is used instead of *dirt*.) ☐ *One of the candidates in the election kept accusing the other one of having cheated on his income tax, and eventually the voters believed it. As they say, throw dirt enough, and some will stick.*

throw down the gauntlet *Fig.* to challenge someone to an argument or to (figurative) combat. ☐ *When Bob chal-*

lenged my conclusions, he threw down the gauntlet. I was ready for an argument. □ *Frowning at Bob is the same as throwing down the gauntlet. He loves to get into a fight about something.*

throw good money after bad *Fig.* to waste additional money after wasting money once. □ *I bought a used car and then had to spend $300 on repairs. That was throwing good money after bad.* □ *The Browns are always throwing good money after bad. They bought an acre of land that turned out to be swamp, and then had to pay to have it filled in.*

throw in the sponge Go to next.

throw in the towel and **throw in the sponge; toss in the sponge** *Fig.* (From boxing, where this is done by a boxer's trainer to stop the fight.) to signal that one is going to quit; to quit. □ *When John could stand no more of Mary's bad temper, he threw in the towel and left.* □ *Don't give up now! It's too soon to throw in the sponge.*

throw in with someone to join with someone; to join someone's enterprise. □ *I will throw in with you and we can all go hunting together.* □ *Do you mind if I throw in with you?*

throw insults (at someone**)** Go to **hurl insults (at** someone**)**.

throw money at something *Fig.* to try to solve a problem by indiscriminately spending money on it. □ *This agency has thrown money at the housing problem, but it has been nothing but a long-term disaster.* □ *Don't just throw money at it.*

throw one **off** one's **game** Go to **off** one's **game**.

throw one **out on** one's **ear** *Fig.* to remove someone from a place forcibly. □ *Straighten up, or I'll throw you out on your ear.* □ *The caretaker caught us and threw us out on our ear.*

throw one's **hands up† (in despair) 1.** *Lit.* to make a gesture of throwing up one's hands indicating futility, despair, finality, etc. □ *He threw his hands up in despair and walked away.* □ *She threw up her hands and fled.* **2.** *Fig.* to give up in despair. □ *John threw his hands up in despair because they wouldn't let him see his brother in the hospital.* □ *Don't give up! Don't just throw up your hands!*

throw one's **hands up† in horror** *Fig.* to be shocked and horrified. □ *When Bill heard the bad news, he threw his hands up in horror.* □ *I could do no more. I had seen more than I could stand. I just threw up my hands in horror and screamed.*

throw one's **hat in the ring** Go to **toss** one's **hat into the ring**.

throw one's **voice** to project one's voice so that it seems to be coming from some other place. □ *The ventriloquist threw his voice.* □ *Jane can throw her voice, so I thought she was standing behind me.*

throw one's **weight around** *Fig.* to attempt to boss people around; to give orders. □ *The district manager came to our office and tried to throw his weight around, but no one paid any attention to him.* □ *Don't try to throw your weight around in this office. We know who our boss is.*

throw oneself **at** someone and **fling** oneself **at** someone *Fig.* to give oneself willingly to someone else for romance. □ *I guess that Mary really likes John. She practically threw herself at him when he came into the room.* □ *Everyone could see by the way Tom flung himself at Jane that he was going to ask her for a date.*

throw oneself **at** someone's **feet 1.** *Lit.* to bow down humbly at someone's feet; to prostrate oneself before someone. □ *In his guilt and horror, he threw himself at the feet of his master and begged forgiveness.* **2.** *Fig.* to beg someone's mercy, forgiveness, blessing, etc. □ *I throw myself at your feet and beg for your blessing.* □ *I love you sincerely, Jane. I throw myself at your feet and await your command. I'm your slave!*

throw oneself **at the mercy of** some authority and **throw** oneself **on the mercy of** some authority**; throw** oneself **(up)on** someone's **mercy** *Fig.* to seek mercy from a court of law, especially at one's sentencing for a crime; to seek help from an official or institution. □ *He pleaded guilty and threw himself at the mercy of the court.* □ *It did no good to throw myself on the mercy of the State Department.* □ *Please don't! I throw myself upon your mercy!*

throw oneself **into** something **1.** *Lit.* to jump into something, such as a body of water. □ *He stood on the bridge and threw himself into the river because he was unhappy with life.* **2.** *Fig.* to dress in something hurriedly. □ *She threw herself into the dress.* □ *He just threw himself into his tux and ran on stage.* **3.** *Fig.* to enter into or join something eagerly and wholeheartedly. □ *Todd always threw himself into a project from start to finish.* □ *She threw herself into the project and helped immensely.*

throw oneself **on the mercy of** some authority Go to **throw** oneself **at the mercy of** some authority.

throw people **together** to bring or put two or more people together. □ *The crisis threw complete strangers together, and they became fast friends before it was over.* □ *They were thrown together by fate.*

throw (some) light on something Go to **shed (some) light on** something.

throw someone *Fig.* to confuse someone. □ *You threw me for a minute when you asked for my identification. I thought you recognized me.* □ *The question the teacher asked was so hard that it threw me, and I became very nervous.*

throw someone **a curve 1.** *Lit.* to pitch a curveball to someone in baseball. (See **pitch** someone **a curve(ball)**.) □ *The pitcher threw John a curve, and John swung wildly against thin air.* □ *During that game, the pitcher threw everyone a curve at least once.* **2.** *Fig.* to confuse someone by doing something tricky or unexpected. □ *When you said "house" you threw me a curve. The password was supposed to be "home."* □ *John threw me a curve when we were making our presentation, and I forgot my speech.*

throw someone **for a loop** Go to **knock** someone **for a loop**.

throw someone **for a loss** to cause someone to be uncertain or confused. (Often passive.) □ *The stress of being in front of so many people threw Ann for a loss. She forgot her speech.* □ *It was a difficult problem. I was thrown for a loss for an answer.*

throw someone **in the drink** Go to **in the drink**.

throw someone **off** to interrupt and confuse someone; to mislead someone. □ *The interruption threw me off, and I*

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lost my place in the speech. ☐ *Little noises throw me off. Please try to be quiet.* ☐ *Your comment threw me off.*

throw someone **off balance 1.** *Lit.* to cause someone to falter (and probably fall). ☐ *The cyclist bumped into me and threw me off balance.* ☐ *I was thrown off balance by the gust of wind.* **2.** *Fig.* to confuse or disorient one. ☐ *Your last question sort of threw me off balance.* ☐ *The teacher was thrown off balance by the students' difficult questions.*

throw someone **off the track 1.** and **throw** someone **off the trail** *Lit.* to cause someone to lose the trail (when following someone or something. See also put someone off the track). ☐ *The raccoon threw us off the track by running through the creek.* ☐ *The robber threw the police off the trail by leaving town.* **2.** *Fig.* to cause one to lose one's place in the sequence of things. ☐ *The interruption threw me off the track for a moment, but I soon got started again with my presentation.* ☐ *Don't let little things throw you off the track. Concentrate on what you're doing.*

throw someone **off the trail** Go to previous.

throw someone or an animal **off (of)** something and **throw** someone or an animal **off†** to divert or confuse someone or an animal away from something, such as the scent, track, or trail. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *She put a little detail in her story to throw the cops off of her trail.* ☐ *The diversion threw off the investigation.*

throw someone or something **around†** to toss or cast someone or something around. ☐ *The belligerent fellow at the bar threatened to throw me around a little if I didn't get out of his way.* ☐ *Don't throw around your empty cans.*

throw someone or something **aside† 1.** *Lit.* to cast someone or something to the side. ☐ *He threw his child aside just as the car was about to run him down.* ☐ *Don't just throw aside the wrapper!* **2.** *Fig.* to get rid of someone or something. ☐ *He threw his wife aside and took up with a younger woman.* ☐ *Don't throw aside material that might still be useful.*

throw someone or something **back†** to return someone or something by tossing. ☐ *The sailor climbed out of the water into the boat, and his mates grabbed him and threw him back. That was their idea of fun.* ☐ *Karen threw back the undersize fish.*

throw someone or something **in†** Go to throw someone or something into something.

throw someone or something **into confusion** to cause people or a process to become confused, aimless, or disorderly. ☐ *She made her entrance early and threw eveyone onstage into confusion.* ☐ *The judge's surprise ruling threw the courtroom into confusion.*

throw someone or something **into** something and **throw** someone or something **in†** to cast or hurl someone or something into something. ☐ *The cops threw Max into jail again.* ☐ *The warden opened the cell door and threw in the prisoner.* ☐ *We threw the aluminum cans in the bin.*

throw someone or something **off (of)** something and **throw** someone or something **off†** to cast someone or something off something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *The character in the movie wanted to throw the heroine off a cliff.* ☐ *He went to the middle of the bridge and threw off the gun used in the shooting.*

throw someone or something **on(to)** something to hurl someone or something onto something. ☐ *The intruder threw Jason onto the floor and began to kick him.* ☐ *He threw the book on the floor and stalked out.*

throw someone or something **out of** something and **throw** someone or something **out†** to eject someone or something from something or a place. ☐ *The intruder tried to throw Walter out of the window.* ☐ *He went to the window and threw out Walter.*

throw someone or something **over** someone or something to toss someone or something over someone or something; to lay someone or something across someone or something. ☐ *The wrestler picked his opponent up and threw him over the referee.* ☐ *He threw his opponent over the ropes.*

throw someone **out of** something and **throw** someone **out†** to force a person to leave a place or an organization. ☐ *John behaved so badly that they threw him out of the party.* ☐ *I was very loud, but they didn't throw me out.*

throw someone **over** to end a romance with someone. ☐ *Jane threw Bill over. I think she met someone she likes better.* ☐ *Bill was about ready to throw her over, so it's just as well.*

throw someone **over† for** someone else to break up with a lover in order to take another lover. ☐ *Sarah threw Jason over for Larry.* ☐ *She threw over Jason for Walter.*

throw someone's **name around** *Fig.* to impress people by saying you know a famous or influential person. ☐ *You won't get anywhere around here by throwing the mayor's name around.* ☐ *When you get to the meeting, just throw my name around a bit, and people will pay attention to you.*

throw someone **to the dogs** *Fig.* to abandon someone to enemies or evil. ☐ *He served the evil empire well, but in the end, they threw him to the dogs.*

throw someone **to the wolves** *Fig.* to sacrifice someone to save the rest; to abandon someone to harm. (Fig. on the image of giving one person to the wolves to eat so the rest can get away.) ☐ *Don't try to throw me to the wolves. I'll tell the truth about the whole affair!* ☐ *The investigation was going to be rigorous and unpleasant, and I could see they were going to throw someone to the wolves.*

throw something **across** someone or something to toss or spread something, such as a blanket, over someone or something. ☐ *Tom threw a blanket across Martha.* ☐ *Tom threw a blanket across his knees.*

throw something **across** something to toss something over something, from one side of it to the other. ☐ *Can you throw this stone across the river?* ☐ *Walter threw the ball across the court to Michael.*

throw something **at** someone or something to toss or cast something at someone or something. ☐ *The boy threw a rock at his sister.* ☐ *He threw the stone at the target.*

throw something **away†** to toss something out; to dispose of something. ☐ *Should I throw this away?* ☐ *Don't throw away anything that might be useful.*

throw something **away† on** someone or something to waste something on someone or something. ☐ *I won't throw any more money away on your brother-in-law.* ☐ *I've thrown away too much money on that project.*

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throw something **back†** *Sl.* to eat or drink something quickly. □ *He threw a beer back and got up and left.* □ *She threw back a beer.*

throw something **back† at** someone *Fig.* to return a problem or difficulty to the person from whom it came. □ *He said that the problem was mine alone, and he threw it back at me.* □ *I tried to get someone else to take care of it, but it was thrown back at me.*

throw something **back† to** someone **1.** *Lit.* to return something to someone by throwing. □ *Liz threw the ball back to Kelly.* □ *She threw back the ball.* **2.** *Fig.* to return a problem to someone. □ *I can't do anything about this. I'll throw it back to Roger.* □ *Karen threw back the problem to Roger, who had caused it.*

throw something **down†** to cast something down onto the ground; to cast something to a lower level. □ *Dave took one look at the box and threw it down.* □ *He threw down the box.*

throw something **down** something to hurl something downward through something, such as a stairway, a duct, a drain, a hole. □ *Max threw the weapon down the storm sewer.* □ *Someone threw the bucket down the well.*

throw something **in†** Go to **throw** something **into the bargain.**

throw something **into sharp relief** *Fig.* [for something] to make something plainly evident or clearly visible. □ *The dull, plain background threw the ornate settee into sharp relief.* □ *The red vase was thrown into sharp relief against the black background.*

throw something **in(to)** someone's **face 1.** *Lit.* to hurl or splash something into someone's face. □ *Jerry got mad at Bob and threw his drink into Bob's face.* □ *He threw the pie in Ken's face.* **2.** *Fig.* to confront someone with a problem or criticism. □ *Jerry caused this mess. I'll just throw the whole problem into his face and tell him to fix it.* □ *It's her fault. Just throw this problem in her face and make her deal with it.*

throw something **into the bargain** and **include** something **in the bargain; throw** something **in†** to include something extra in a deal. □ *To encourage me to buy a new car, the car dealer threw a free radio into the bargain.* □ *If you purchase three pounds of chocolates, I'll throw one pound of salted nuts into the bargain.* □ *She threw in a free calendar.*

throw something **off† 1.** *Lit.* to cast something, such as a coat, off one's body. □ *He threw his jacket off and dived into the icy water.* □ *He threw off his jacket.* **2.** *Fig.* to resist or recover from a disease. □ *It was a bad cold, but I managed to throw it off in a few days.* □ *I can't seem to throw off my cold. I've had it for weeks.* **3.** *Fig.* to emit or give off an odor. □ *The small animal threw a strong odor off.* □ *The flowers threw off a heavy perfume.*

throw something **on** someone or something to toss or sling something over or onto someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) □ *Mommy, Jimmy threw some mud on me!* □ *Throw a cloth on the sofa to protect it from paint spatters.*

throw something **to** someone or something to toss something to someone or something. □ *Throw the ball to me!* □ *Gary threw a bit of meat to the dog to quiet it.*

throw something **together†** and **slap** something **together†** to assemble or arrange something in haste. □ *Don't just slap something together! Use care and do it right.* □ *You assembled this device very badly. It seems that you just slapped it together.* □ *John went into the kitchen to throw together something for dinner.*

throw something **up† 1.** to build or erect something in a hurry. □ *They sure threw that building up in a hurry.* □ *They threw up the building in only a few weeks.* **2.** to vomit something. □ *Poor Wally threw his dinner up.* □ *He threw up his dinner.*

throw something **up to** someone to confront someone with something. □ *I threw the whole matter up to her, but she had nothing to say about it.* □ *I can't figure out what to do. I will just throw the whole business up to the boss.*

throw something **up to** someone or something to cast something upward to someone or something. □ *Gary threw a hammer up to the top of the porch roof where Ted could get it.* □ *Please throw a can of lemonade up to me.*

throw the baby out† with the bath(water) *Fig.* to dispose of the good while eagerly trying to get rid of the bad. (Fig. on the image of carelessly emptying a tub of both the water inside as well as the baby that was being washed.) □ *In her haste to talk down a project that had only a few disagreeable points, she has thrown the baby out with the bathwater.* □ *Hasty action on this major spending bill will result in throwing out the baby with the bath.*

throw the book at someone *Fig.* to charge or convict someone with as many crimes as is possible. □ *I made the police officer angry, so he took me to the station and threw the book at me.* □ *The judge threatened to throw the book at me if I didn't stop insulting the police officer.*

throw the bull and **throw the crap** *Sl. Fig.* to chat; to boast. (Use caution with *crap*.) □ *Tom could really throw the bull and sound right as rain.* □ *You're just throwing the crap. Can it!*

throw the crap See previous.

throw up to vomit. □ *I was afraid I would throw up, the food was so horrible.* □ *This food is bad enough to make you throw up.*

throw up one's **toenails** *Sl.* to vomit heavily. □ *I was so sick. I nearly threw up my toenails.* □ *Frank was in the bathroom, throwing up his toenails.*

thrust and parry *Fig.* to enter into verbal combat [with someone]; to compete actively [with someone]. (Fig. on the sport of fencing.) □ *I spent the entire afternoon thrusting and parrying with a committee of so-called experts in the field of insurance.* □ *I do not intend to stand here and thrust and parry with you over a simple matter like this. Let's get someone else's opinion.*

thrust out to stick out; to stab outward; to protrude outward. □ *A deck thrust out from the back of the house, offering a lovely view of the stream far below.* □ *As he grew angrier, his chin thrust out farther and farther.*

thrust someone or something **against** someone or something to drive or shove someone or something against someone or something. □ *The force of the crash thrust Liz against Tiffany.* □ *The crash thrust Liz against the car door.*

thrust someone or something **aside**† to push someone or something out of the way or to one side. ☐ *Walter thrust Fred aside and dashed by him into the room.* ☐ *He thrust aside Fred and came into the room.*

thrust someone or something **away**† **from** someone or something to push or throw someone or something away from someone or something. ☐ *The guards thrust the spectators away from the path the rock star was taking.* ☐ *They thrust away the spectators from the star.*

thrust someone or something **back**† to push someone or something backward and away. ☐ *Tom moved forward, but the guard thrust him back.* ☐ *He thrust back the door, which had closed on his foot.*

thrust someone or something **through** something to drive or push someone or something through something. ☐ *I thrust Larry through the open door and followed along quickly.* ☐ *Ann thrust the wad of papers through the opening.*

thrust something **at** someone or something to stab at someone or something with something. ☐ *The goat thrust its head at the dog.* ☐ *Ann thrust the pencil at the balloon and popped it.*

thrust something **down**† to jab something downward. ☐ *Max thrust the knife down and speared a piece of chicken.* ☐ *He thrust down the fork like a spear.*

thrust something **down** something to jab or stab something down into something. ☐ *The keeper quickly thrust the medicine down the lion's throat.* ☐ *The chimney sweep thrust his brush down the chimney.*

thrust something **forward** to jab something forward. ☐ *She thrust her jaw forward and walked into the room.* ☐ *Roger thrust his hand forward just in time to stop the child from crossing the street.*

thrust something **into** someone or something and **thrust** something **in**† to stab or run something into someone or something. ☐ *The knight thrust his lance into the villain.* ☐ *He thrust in his knife.*

thrust through something to drive or push through something forcefully. ☐ *The front end of the car thrust through the side of the house.* ☐ *The stock clerk's knife thrust through the box, ruining the packages of noodles inside.*

thrust up through something to stick or stab upward through something. ☐ *The tallest of the trees thrust up through the canopy of leaves far overhead.* ☐ *We heard a ripping sound and saw the tent pole thrust up through the top of the tent.*

thud against someone or something to thump against someone or something, making a dull noise on impact. ☐ *The pumpkin thudded against Jerry, breaking open and messing up his clothes.* ☐ *The ball thudded against the wall and bounced back.*

thud into someone or something to bump into someone or something, making a dull noise on impact. ☐ *The door blew open and thudded into Marie, giving her a bump on the knee.* ☐ *The ball thudded into the side of the house.*

thumb a ride and **hitch a ride** to get a ride from a passing motorist; to make a sign with one's thumb that indicates to passing drivers that one is asking for a ride. ☐ *My car broke down on the highway, and I had to thumb a ride to get back to town.* ☐ *Sometimes it's dangerous to hitch a ride with a stranger.*

thumb one's **nose at** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to show a sign of derision at someone or something by placing the thumb to the side of the nose. (Often while wiggling the other fingers of the hand.) ☐ *Don't thumb your nose at me unless you want a fight.* ☐ *Fred thumbed his nose at the car as it drove off.* **2.** *Fig.* to dismiss someone or something as worthless, verbally. ☐ *Walter thumbed his nose at Fred and asked the gang to send someone else to do the job.* ☐ *She thumbed her nose at the whole idea.*

thumb through something and **leaf through** something to look through a book, magazine, or newspaper, without reading it carefully. ☐ *I've only thumbed through this book, but it looks very interesting.* ☐ *I leafed through a magazine while waiting to see the doctor.*

a **thumbnail sketch** a brief or small picture or description. ☐ *The manager gave a thumbnail sketch of her plans.* ☐ *The student wrote a thumbnail sketch of his project.*

thumbs down 1. a sign of disapproval. ☐ *The board gave our proposal a thumbs down.* ☐ *The administration's tax bill got a thumbs down in Congress.* **2.** disapproving; negative. ☐ *It was thumbs down, and I was disappointed.* ☐ *The thumbs-down decision was a victory for good sense.*

thumbs up 1. a sign of approval. ☐ *It was a thumbs up on the new filtration plant at Thursday's village board meeting.* ☐ *There was no thumbs up for the mayor as she faced certain defeat in today's balloting.* **2.** approving; positive. ☐ *The new filtration plant got a thumbs-up decision at the board meeting.* ☐ *A thumbs-up vote assured another three years of financial assistance.*

thump on someone or something to pound on someone or something. ☐ *Tim was angry with Roger and thumped on him a little, but decided to forgive him.* ☐ *Andy thumped on the bass drum for an hour.*

thump something **down**† to throw something down so it makes a pounding noise. ☐ *Nancy thumped the parcel down and caught her breath.* ☐ *She thumped down the parcel.*

thump something **out**† **(on the piano)** to pound out music on a piano. ☐ *Joel thumped a happy tune out on the piano.* ☐ *He thumped out a well-known tune.*

thunder across something *Fig.* to move across something, making a rumbling sound. ☐ *The jets thundered across the sky, heading for their home base.* ☐ *As the race car thundered across the track, people strained to get a better view.*

thunder past someone or something *Fig.* to move past someone or something, rumbling. ☐ *As the traffic thundered past, I wondered why there was so much of it.* ☐ *The train thundered past the sleeping town.*

thunder something **out**† *Fig.* to respond with words spoken in a voice like thunder. ☐ *He thundered the words out so everyone could hear them.* ☐ *He thundered out the words.*

tick away [for seconds or minutes] to go by as the clock ticks. ☐ *The seconds ticked away as the fateful time got closer.* ☐ *As time ticked away, the surgeons worked feverishly to repair the walls of Roger's heart.*

tick someone **off**† to make someone angry. ☐ *That really ticks me off!* ☐ *Doesn't that tick off everyone?*

ticked (off) angry. ☐ *Wow, was she ticked off!* ☐ *Kelly was totally ticked.*

ticket someone **for** some place to supply a ticket for someone to go to some place. ☐ *The airlines clerk ticketed me for Houston and checked in my baggage.* ☐ *I was ticketed for both flights, saving me some time.*

tickle someone **pink** *Fig.* to please or entertain someone very much. ☐ *Bill told a joke that really tickled us all pink.* ☐ *I know that these flowers will tickle her pink.*

tickle someone's **fancy** to interest someone; to make someone curious. ☐ *I have an interesting problem here that I think will tickle your fancy.* ☐ *This doesn't tickle my fancy at all. This is dull and boring.*

tickle someone **to death 1.** *Fig.* to tickle someone a great deal. ☐ *Bobby nearly tickled Tim to death. Tim was left breathless.* ☐ *We got him down and tickled him to death.* **2.** and **tickle** someone **to pieces** *Fig.* to please someone a great deal. (See also tickle someone pink.) ☐ *What you told her just tickled her to death!* ☐ *That story just tickles me to pieces.*

tickle someone **to pieces** Go to previous.

tickle the ivories to play the piano. ☐ *I used to be able to tickle the ivories real nice.* ☐ *She sat down to tickle the ivories for a while.*

tickled pink *Fig.* very much pleased or entertained. ☐ *I was tickled pink to have you visit us.* ☐ *We were tickled pink when your flowers arrived.*

tide someone **over**† **(until** something**)** to supply someone until a certain time or until something happens. ☐ *Will this amount tide us over until next week?* ☐ *There is enough food here to tide over the entire camp until next month.* ☐ *Yes, this will tide us over.*

the **tide turned 1.** *Lit.* the tide changed from high tide to low tide or vice versa. ☐ *The tide turned before the ship had sailed out of the harbor.* **2.** *Fig.* the trend changed from one thing to another. ☐ *We planned our investments to take advantage of the growth of the stock market. Then the tide turned and we lost buckets of money.*

tidy something **up**† to clean something up; to make something more orderly. ☐ *Please tidy this room up.* ☐ *I'll tidy up the kitchen later.*

tidy up to clean up [oneself or a place]. ☐ *Please tidy up. This place is a mess.* ☐ *Please tidy up. You are a mess.*

tie in (with someone or something**)** to join with someone or something; to connect with someone or something. (See also tie in with something.) ☐ *I would like to tie in with you and see if we can solve this together.* ☐ *We would like for you to tie in and share your expertise.*

tie in with something [for a piece of information] to complement other information. ☐ *These figures tie in with what I just said.* ☐ *The crime lab report ties in with our current theory.*

tie in(to something**)** to fasten or connect to something. ☐ *Can you fix it so my computer can tie into Rachel's?* ☐ *This one will not tie into her computer.*

tie it on Go to tie one on.

tie on the nose-bag Go to put the feed bag on.

tie one on and **hang one on; lay one on; tie it on** *Sl.* to get drunk. ☐ *The boys went out to tie one on.* ☐ *They laid one on, but good.*

tie someone **down (to** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to encumber something with someone or something; to make someone responsible to or for someone or something. ☐ *Please don't tie me down to your uncle. Let your sister help out.* ☐ *Yes, don't tie me down all week.*

tie someone or something **down**† to fasten someone or something down by tying or binding. ☐ *The robbers tied Gary down so he couldn't get up and get away.* ☐ *They tied down Gary.*

tie someone or something **into** something and **tie** someone or something **in**† to seek to establish a connection between someone or something and something. ☐ *The police tried to tie Sarah into the crime.* ☐ *They tried to tie in Liz, too.*

tie someone or something **to** something to bind someone or something to something. ☐ *The robber tied the clerk to a chair.* ☐ *I tied colored yarn to the birthday present.*

tie someone or something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to bind someone or something securely. ☐ *The sheriff tied the crooks up and took them to a cell.* ☐ *He tied up the bandit.* ☐ *I tied the package up and put a label on it.* **2.** *Fig.* to keep someone or something busy or occupied. ☐ *Sally tied up the photocopy machine all afternoon.* ☐ *The meeting tied me up all afternoon.*

tie someone's **hands 1.** *Lit.* to use rope or string to tie someone's hands together. ☐ *The robber tied my hands and I couldn't call the police.* **2.** *Fig.* to prevent someone from doing something. ☐ *I'd like to help you, but my boss has tied my hands.* ☐ *Please don't tie my hands with unnecessary restrictions. I'd like the freedom to do whatever is necessary.*

tie someone **to** something *Fig.* to associate someone with something; to make a connection between someone and something. ☐ *The police are trying to tie Lefty to the burglary.* ☐ *They'll never tie me to that bunch of crooks!*

tie someone **(up) in knots** *Fig.* to become anxious or upset. ☐ *John tied himself in knots worrying about his wife during her operation.* ☐ *This waiting and worrying really ties me up in knots.*

tie something **back**† to bind or fasten something back out of the way. ☐ *George tied the curtains back to let a little more light in.* ☐ *Let me tie back the vines out of the way.*

tie something **in a knot** to bend something, such as a rope, upon itself to make a knot. ☐ *I ended up tying the rope in a knot.* ☐ *The rope was tied in a knot and no one could get it undone.*

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tie something **off**† to tie the ends of something losing fluid, as blood vessels to prevent bleeding. ☐ *The surgeons tied all the blood vessels off—one by one—as they were exposed.* ☐ *They tied off all the vessels very quickly.*

tie something **onto** someone or something and **tie** something **on**† to attach something to someone or something by tying or binding. ☐ *I tied his house key onto him so he wouldn't lose it.* ☐ *I tied on his gloves so he would not lose them.*

tie something **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to tie strings or cords on something in order to close or contain it. ☐ *Please tie this pack-*

age up securely so I can mail it. ☐ *Tie up your shoes!* **2.** *Fig.* to conclude and finalize something. (See also **tie** someone or something **up**.) ☐ *Let's try to tie up this deal by Thursday.* ☐ *We'll manage to tie our business up by Wednesday at the latest.* **3.** *Fig.* to block or impede something, such as traffic or progress. ☐ *The stalled bus tied traffic up for over an hour.* ☐ *The stalled bus tied up traffic.*

tie the knot 1. *Fig.* to marry a mate. ☐ *We tied the knot in a little chapel on the Arkansas border.* ☐ *They finally tied the knot.* **2.** *Fig.* [for a cleric or other authorized person] to unite a couple in marriage. ☐ *It was hard to find somebody to tie the knot at that hour.* ☐ *It only took a few minutes for the ship's captain to tie the knot.*

tie traffic up† *Fig.* to cause road traffic to stop. ☐ *If you tie traffic up for too long, you'll get a traffic ticket.* ☐ *Please don't stop on the roadway. It'll tie up traffic.*

tie up (some place**)** [for a skipper] to moor a ship or boat some place. ☐ *We need to tie up some place for the night.* ☐ *The captain tied up at the dock and sent the first mate for fuel.*

tie (with someone**) (for** something**)** to have the same score as someone for the prize in some contest. ☐ *I tied with Joel for first place.* ☐ *I tied for the trophy with Joel.*

tied down *Fig.* restricted by responsibilities. ☐ *I love my home, but sometimes I don't like being tied down.* ☐ *I don't feel tied down, even though I have a lot of responsibility.*

tied to one's **mother's apron strings** *Fig.* dominated by one's mother; dependent on one's mother. ☐ *Tom is still tied to his mother's apron strings.* ☐ *Isn't he a little old to be tied to his mother's apron strings?*

tied up *Fig.* busy. ☐ *How long will you be tied up?* ☐ *I will be tied up in a meeting for an hour.*

***tight as a drum 1.** stretched tight. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Julia stretched the upholstery fabric over the seat of the chair until it was as tight as a drum.* ☐ *The skin on his scalp is tight as a drum.* **2.** sealed tight. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Now that I've caulked all the windows, the house should be tight as a drum.* ☐ *Your butterfly died because the jar is as tight as a drum.* **3.** and ***tight as Midas's fist** very stingy. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *He won't contribute a cent. He's as tight as a drum.* ☐ *Old Mr. Robinson is tight as Midas's fist. Won't spend money on anything.*

***tight as a tick 1.** very tight. (Fig. on the image of a tick swollen tight with blood or of a tick stuck tightly in someone's skin. *Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *This lid is screwed on tight as a tick.* ☐ *The windows were closed—tight as a tick—to keep the cold out.* **2.** intoxicated. (Fig. on **full as a tick**. *Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *The old man was tight as a tick but still lucid.* ☐ *The host got tight as a tick and fell in the pool.* **3.** [of a race] close, as if the racers are moving very closely together. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *This election is as tight as a tick.* **4.** very friendly and close; as thick as thieves. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Those two are tight as a tick. They are always together.*

***tight as Dick's hatband** *Fig.* very tight. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *I've got to lose some weight. My belt is as tight as Dick's hatband.* ☐ *This window is stuck tight as Dick's hatband.*

tight as Midas's fist Go to **tight as a drum**.

a **tight race** a close race. ☐ *It was a tight race right up to the final turn when my horse pulled ahead and won easily.*

tighten one's **belt** *Fig.* to manage to spend less money; to use less of something. (See also **take** one's **belt in (a notch)**.) ☐ *Things are beginning to cost more and more. It looks like we'll all have to tighten our belts.* ☐ *Times are hard, and prices are high. I can tighten my belt for only so long.*

tighten something **on(to)** something to make something more tightly attached to something. ☐ *Will you please tighten this nut onto the bolt?* ☐ *I tightened the lid on the pickle jar.*

tighten something **up†** to make something tighter. ☐ *Tighten your seat belt up. It looks loose.* ☐ *Can you tighten up all the bolts?*

tighten up 1. *Lit.* [for something] to get tighter. ☐ *The door hinges began to tighten up, making the door hard to open and close.* ☐ *His grip around the handle tightened up and he refused to let go.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone or a group] to become miserly. ☐ *The government tightened up and our budget was slashed.* ☐ *We almost went out of business when we couldn't get credit because the bank tightened up.* **3.** *Fig.* [for someone or something] to become more restrictive. ☐ *The boss is tightening up on new hiring.* ☐ *There are more rules and the people who enforce them are tightening up.*

tightfisted (with money) and **closefisted (with money)** *Fig.* very stingy with money. ☐ *The manager is very closefisted with expenditures.* ☐ *My parents are very tightfisted with money.*

till all hours (of the day and night) Go to **all hours (of the day and night)**.

till hell freezes over *Inf.* forever. (Use caution with *hell*.) ☐ *That's all right, boss; I can wait till hell freezes over for your answer.* ☐ *I'll be here till hell freezes over.*

till kingdom come *Fig.* until the end of the world; forever. ☐ *Do I have to keep assembling these units till kingdom come?* ☐ *I'll hate her guts till kingdom come.*

Till next time. Go to **Good-bye for now**.

till the bitter end Go to **to the bitter end**.

till the fat lady sings and **when the fat lady sings** *Fig.* at the end; a long time from now. (Supposedly from a tale about a child—sitting through an opera—who asks a parent when it will be over. "Not until the fat lady sings" is the answer.) ☐ *Relax. It won't be over till the fat lady sings.* ☐ *We can leave with everybody else when the fat lady sings.*

Till we meet again. Go to **Good-bye for now**.

tilt at windmills *Fig.* to fight battles with imaginary enemies; to fight against unimportant enemies or issues. (As with the fictional character, Don Quixote, who attacked windmills.) ☐ *Aren't you too smart to go around tilting at windmills?* ☐ *I'm not going to fight this issue. I've wasted too much of my life tilting at windmills.*

tilt something **back†** to move something so it leans back. ☐ *Alice tilted her chair back and nearly fell over.* ☐ *She tilted back her chair and relaxed.*

tilt to something to lean or slant toward something or in a particular direction. ☐ *The picture tilts to the left.* ☐ *Her head was tilted to the left because she was trying to see around the corner.*

tilt toward someone or something **1.** *Lit* to lean toward someone or something. ☐ *The table is tilting toward Roger.* ☐ *The old shed tilted toward the west.* **2.** *Fig.* to favor choosing someone or something; to **lean toward** doing something. ☐ *I am tilting toward Roger for my assistant.* ☐ *I am tilting toward the red car, not the black one.*

time after time and **time and (time) again** repeatedly; **over and over (again).** ☐ *You've made the same error time after time! Please try to be more careful!* ☐ *I've told you time and again not to do that.* ☐ *You keep saying the same thing over and over, time and time again. Stop it!*

Time and tide wait for no man. *Prov.* Things will not wait for you when you are late. ☐ *Hurry up or we'll miss the bus! Time and tide wait for no man.* ☐ *Ellen: It's time to leave. Aren't you finished dressing yet? Fred: I can't decide which necktie looks best with this shirt. Ellen: Time and tide wait for no man, dear.*

time and (time) again Go to **time after time.**

time flies (when you're having fun) *Fig.* time passes very quickly. (From the Latin *tempus fugit.*) ☐ *I didn't really think it was so late when the party ended. Doesn't time fly?* ☐ *Time simply flew while the old friends exchanged news.*

***time for** someone or something the time to deal with someone or something. (Often with the negative. *Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~; make ~; find ~.**) ☐ *I'm sorry, I don't have time for you today.* ☐ *I don't think I have time for a game of chess.* ☐ *I have time for one short game.*

Time hangs heavy on someone's **hands.** *Prov.* Time seems to go slowly when one has nothing to do. (Note the variations in the examples.) ☐ *I don't like it when time hangs so heavily on my hands.* ☐ *John looks so bored. Time hangs heavy on his hands.*

time in to record one's arrival time. ☐ *Did you remember to time in this morning?* ☐ *When did she time in?*

Time is a great healer. *Prov.* Emotional pain will grow less as time passes. ☐ *You may think your heart is broken and you can never possibly love again, but time is a great healer.*

Time is money. (My) time is valuable, so don't waste it. ☐ *I can't afford to spend a lot of time standing here talking. Time is money, you know!* ☐ *People who keep saying time is money may be working too hard.*

Time is of the essence. Timing and meeting all the deadlines are essential and required. (Often seen in contractual agreements.) ☐ *The final payment is due on the first day of December, by midnight. Time is of the essence.*

The **time is ripe.** *Prov.* It is the most favorable time to do something. ☐ *You ought to buy a house this year. Prices are so low, and you have enough money saved for a down payment. The time is ripe.* ☐ *Since Joe was in a good mood, I judged that the time was ripe to ask him for the favor I needed.*

Time is up. *Fig.* The allotted time has run out. ☐ *You must stop now. Your time is up.* ☐ *Time's up! Turn in your tests whether you're finished or not.*

***time off** a period of time that is free from employment. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~; take (some) ~.**) ☐ *I'll have to get time off for jury duty.* ☐ *I have time off to go downtown and shop.*

***time off for good behavior 1.** *Lit.* a reduction in one's prison sentence because of good behavior. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~.**) ☐ *Bob will get out of jail tomorrow rather than next week. He got time off for good behavior.* **2.** *Fig.* a shortened time period—such a meeting, period of punishment, school class, etc. (Jocular. *Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~.**) ☐ *They let me out of the meeting early. They said I got time off for good behavior.*

Time (out)! Stop everything for just a minute! ☐ *"Hey, stop a minute! Time out!" yelled Mary as the argument grew in intensity.* ☐ *Right in the middle of the discussion, Alice said, "Time!" Then she announced that dinner was ready.*

time out 1. to record one's departure time. ☐ *Did you remember to time out when you left work?* ☐ *I timed out at the regular time.* **2.** a call for officially stopping the clock in a game. ☐ *Time out! Wally is injured!*

time's a-wastin' *Rur.* Time is running out.; It is getting late. ☐ *Hurry up! Time's a-wastin'!* ☐ *How come you're still in bed? Time's a-wastin'!*

time someone **in**† to record someone's arrival time. ☐ *I timed you in at noon. Where were you?* ☐ *My job is to time in people.*

time someone **out**† to record someone's departure time. ☐ *Harry had to time everyone out because the time clock was broken.* ☐ *I had to time out everyone.*

Time to call it a day. It's time to quit for the day. ☐ *Jane: Well, I'm done. Time to call it a day. Sue: Yes, let's get out of here.* ☐ *Jane: Well, I've finished all my work. Sue: Yes, it's late. Time to call it a day.*

Time to call it a night. It's time to quit one's activities for the night. (Can refer to work or partying.) ☐ *Bob: Wow, it's late! Time to call it a night. Mary: Yes, it's really dark! Good night.* ☐ *Fred: Gee, I'm tired. Look at the time! Jane: Yes, it's time to call it a night.*

***time to catch** one's **breath** *Fig.* enough time to relax or behave normally. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** one **~.**) ☐ *When things slow down around here, I'll get time to catch my breath.* ☐ *Sally was so busy she didn't even have time to catch her breath.*

time was (when) there was a time when; at a time in the past. ☐ *Time was when old people were taken care of at home.* ☐ *Time was when people didn't travel around so much.*

Time will tell. Something will become known in the course of time. ☐ *I don't know if things will improve. Time will tell.* ☐ *Who knows what the future will bring? Only time will tell.*

Time works wonders. *Prov.* The passing of time can resolve many problems. ☐ *I thought I would never forgive my ex-husband for leaving me, but now, ten years later, I feel pretty well disposed toward him. Time works wonders.* ☐ *You'll change your mind eventually. Time works wonders.*

Times are changing. a response to a surprising piece of news from someone. ☐ *Sue: They paid nearly five hundred thousand for their first house! Rachel: Well, I shouldn't be so surprised. Times are changing, I guess.* ☐ *"Times are*

changing," warned Mary. "You can't expect the world to stand still."

Times change and we with time. *Prov.* As time passes, people and situations change. ☐ *Jill: Linda was such a conservative when we were in school; I don't understand how she can be so liberal now. Jane: Times change and we with time.*

Times change(, people change). *Prov.* As time passes, different things become acceptable. ☐ *Grandmother: In my day, no decent young woman would wear anything as immodest as what you've got on. Granddaughter: Times change, Grandma.* ☐ *Alan: When I was in business school, the practices you call good business were called dishonest. Fred: Yeah, well, times change, people change.*

a **tin ear** *Fig.* a poor ear for music; a poor hearing ability when it comes to music and distinguishing pitches. ☐ *I think I had better not try to sing along with you. I have a tin ear and would ruin your performance.*

tinge something **with** something to give something a bit of the character, color, state of mind, light, etc., of something. ☐ *The dust in the air had tinged the sunset with orange.* ☐ *The evening air was tinged with the smell of jasmine.*

tinker (around) (with something**)** to meddle with something; to play with something, trying to get it to work or work better. ☐ *Let me tinker around with it for a while and see if I can get it to work.* ☐ *Please don't tinker with the controls.*

the **tip of the iceberg** *Fig.* only the part of something that can be easily observed, but not the rest of it, which is hidden. (Referring to the fact that the majority of an iceberg is below the surface of the water.) ☐ *The problems that you see here now are just the tip of the iceberg. There are numerous disasters waiting to happen.*

tip one's **hand** to reveal what one is going to do; to reveal one's secrets. (From card playing.) ☐ *I didn't tip my hand at all. I left them guessing.* ☐ *They tried to get me to tip my hand.*

tip over to topple over and fall. ☐ *Roger shook the table slightly, and the vase tipped over.* ☐ *The truck was overloaded and looked so heavy that I thought it would tip over.*

tip someone **off**† **(about** someone or something**)** and **tip** someone **off (on** someone or something**)** to give someone a valuable piece of news about someone or something. ☐ *I tipped the cops off about Max and where he was going to be that night.* ☐ *I tipped off the mayor about the financial crisis.*

tip someone **over** to cause someone to fall. ☐ *Oh! You almost tipped me over!* ☐ *Todd fell against Maggie and tipped her over.*

tip someone **with** something to pay a tip of a certain amount to someone. ☐ *I tipped the headwaiter with a twenty or we would still be waiting.* ☐ *How much did you tip the waitress with?*

tip something **over**† to cause something to fall over. ☐ *Did you tip this chair over?* ☐ *Who tipped over the chair?*

tip something **up**† to tilt something so it dumps. ☐ *Jason tipped the wheelbarrow up and dumped the dirt out.* ☐ *He tipped up the glass, dumping the orange juice on the table.*

tip the scales at something to weigh a particular weight. ☐ *Albert tips the scales at nearly 200 pounds.* ☐ *The champ weighed in and tipped the scales at 180.*

tire of someone or something to grow weary of someone or something. ☐ *She tired of him and left him.* ☐ *I am beginning to tire of the furniture in the living room.*

tire out to become exhausted. ☐ *I tire out easily.* ☐ *When I had the flu, I found that I tired out easily.*

tire someone **out**† to exhaust someone. ☐ *The extra work tired him out a lot.* ☐ *Too much work will tire out the horses.*

'Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all. *Prov.* Love is such an important experience that even the pain of losing someone you love is better than not having loved that person. (A line from Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem, "In Memoriam A. H. H.") ☐ *Tom: I've been so miserable since Nancy and I broke up. I wish I'd never met her. Fred: Come on, now—'tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.*

tits and ass a public display of [the human female] breasts and buttocks. (Referring to television, film, and stage performances in which women breasts and buttocks or in which these body parts are emphasized or made prominent. Use caution with the expression. Fixed order.) ☐ *We have a really fine choice on television tonight. There is brutal violence on channel 2, bloody horror on channel 5, and tits and ass on channel 10.* ☐ *Without tits and ass, many Broadway musicals would flop.*

to a great extent *Cliché* mainly; largely. ☐ *To a great extent, Mary is the cause of her own problems.* ☐ *I've finished my work to a great extent. There is nothing important left to do.*

to and fro [of movement] toward and away from something. ☐ *The puppy was very active—running to and fro—wagging its tail.* ☐ *The lion in the cage moved to and fro, watching the people in front of the cage.*

to be on the safe side to be safe; to be cautious; [to do something just] in case it is necessary; to be very well prepared. ☐ *To be on the safe side, carry some extra money in your shoe.* ☐ *I like to be on the safe side and stay in my hotel room at night.*

to be safe to be cautious; to be careful; [to do something just] in case it is necessary; to be very well prepared. ☐ *Just to be safe, you should take some extra water with you.* ☐ *Other people like to drive over the speed limit, but I prefer to be safe.*

to beat the band very briskly; very fast. ☐ *He's selling computers to beat the band since he started advertising.* ☐ *She worked to beat the band to get ready for this.*

to boot in addition. ☐ *For graduation, I got a new suit and a coat to boot.* ☐ *She got an F on her term paper and flunked the final to boot.*

to date up to the present time. ☐ *How much have you accomplished to date?* ☐ *I've done everything I'm supposed to have done to date.*

to die for *Sl.* important or desirable enough to die for; worth dying for. ☐ *This chocolate cake is to die for!* ☐ *We had a beautiful room at the hotel and the service was to die for.*

To each his own. *Prov.* Each person has the right to make choices. □ *A: Bob likes chopped prunes on ice cream! B: To each his own.*

To err is human(, to forgive divine). *Prov.* You should not be too harsh with someone who makes a mistake, because all human beings make mistakes. (Often used as a roundabout way to ask someone to forgive you for making a mistake.) □ *Jill: How could you let my dog get out when I told you a hundred times that he should stay in the house! Ellen: To err is human, to forgive divine.*

***to go 1.** [of a purchase of cooked food] to be taken elsewhere to be eaten. (*Typically: **buy** some food **~; get** some food **~; have** some food **~; order** some food **~**.) □ *Let's stop here and buy six hamburgers to go.* □ *I didn't thaw anything for dinner. Let's stop off on the way home and get something to go.* **2.** [of a number or an amount] remaining; yet to be dealt with. □ *I finished with two of them and have four to go.*

to have a hollow leg *Fig.* to have a great capacity or need for food or drink. □ *Bobby can drink more beer than I can afford. I think he has a hollow leg!*

to hell and gone 1. *Inf.* very much gone; lost completely. (Use *hell* with caution.) □ *All my hard work is to hell and gone.* □ *When you see everything you've planned to hell and gone, you get kind of angry.* **2.** Go to all over creation.

(To) hell with that! *Inf.* I reject that! (Very stern or angry. Use *hell* with caution.) □ *Mary: I think we ought to go to the dance Friday night. Tom: To hell with that!* □ *Fred: Don't you want to drive me down to school? John: To hell with that!*

to no avail and **of no avail** *Cliché* with no effect; unsuccessful. □ *All of my efforts were to no avail.* □ *Everything I did to help was of no avail. Nothing worked.*

to one's **heart's content** *Fig.* as much as one wants. □ *John wanted a week's vacation so he could go to the lake and fish to his heart's content.* □ *I just sat there, eating chocolate to my heart's content.*

to put it another way and **put another way** a phrase introducing a restatement of what someone, usually the speaker, has just said. □ *Father: You're still very young, Tom. To put it another way, you don't have any idea about what you're getting into.* □ *John: Could you go back to your own room now, Tom? I have to study. Put another way, get out of here! Tom: Okay, okay. Don't get your bowels in an uproar!*

to put it mildly and **put it mildly** to understate something; to say something politely. (Note the variation in the examples.) □ *She was angry at almost everyone—to put it mildly.* □ *To say she was angry is putting it mildly.* □ *To put it mildly, she was enraged.*

to say nothing of someone or something not to even mention the importance of someone or something. □ *John and Mary had to be taken care of, to say nothing of Bill, who would require even more attention.* □ *I'm having enough difficulty painting the house, to say nothing of the garage that is very much in need of paint.*

to say the least at the very least; without overemphasizing the subject; to put it mildly. □ *We were not at all pleased with her work—to say the least.* □ *When they had an accident, they were upset to say the least.*

to some extent to some degree; in some amount; partly. □ *I've solved this problem to some extent.* □ *I can help you understand this to some extent.*

to someone's **liking** fitting someone's personal preferences. □ *I had my house painted, but the job was not to my liking.* □ *Large meals with lots of fat are not to Bob's liking.*

to someone's **way of thinking** in someone's opinion. □ *This isn't satisfactory to my way of thinking.* □ *To my way of thinking, this is the perfect kind of vacation.*

to the best of one's **ability** as well as one is able. □ *I did the work to the best of my ability.* □ *You should always work to the best of your ability.*

to the best of one's **knowledge** Go to as far as anyone knows.

to the bitter end and **till the bitter end** *Fig.* to the very end. (Originally nautical. This originally had nothing to do with bitterness.) □ *I'll stay till the bitter end.* □ *It took me a long time to get through school, but I worked hard at it all the way to the bitter end.*

to the contrary and **on the contrary** as the opposite of what has been stated; contrary to what has been stated. □ *The brown horse didn't beat the black horse. To the contrary, the black one won.* □ *Among spiders, the male is not the larger one. On the contrary, the female is larger.*

to the core all the way through; basically and essentially. (Usually with some negative sense, such as *evil, rotten,* etc.) □ *Bill said that John is evil to the core.* □ *This organization is rotten to the core.*

to the ends of the earth *Fig.* to the remotest and most inaccessible points on the earth. □ *I'll pursue him to the ends of the earth.* □ *We've explored almost the whole world. We've traveled to the ends of the earth trying to learn about our world.*

to the last to the very end; to the conclusion. □ *All of us kept trying to the last.* □ *It was a very boring play, but I sat through it to the last.*

to the letter exactly as instructed; exactly as written. □ *I didn't make an error. I followed your instruction to the letter.* □ *We didn't prepare the recipe to the letter, but the cake still turned out very well.*

to the max *Sl.* as much as possible, maximally. □ *She is happy to the max.* □ *They worked to the max their whole shift.*

to the nth degree to the maximum amount. □ *Jane is a perfectionist and tries to be careful to the nth degree.* □ *This scientific instrument is accurate to the nth degree.*

to the tune of some amount of money *Fig.* to a certain amount of money. □ *My checking account is overdrawn to the tune of $340.* □ *My wallet was stolen, and I'm out to the tune of $70.*

To the victors belong the spoils. *Prov.* The winners achieve power over people and property. □ *The mayor took office and immediately fired many workers and hired new ones. Everyone said, "To the victors belong the spoils."*

to whom it may concern *Cliché* to the person to whom this applies. (A form of address used when you do not know the name of the person who handles the kind of business you are writing about.) □ *The letter started out,*

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"To whom it may concern." ☐ *When you don't know who to write to, just say, "To whom it may concern."*

to wit namely; that is; that is to say. ☐ *The criminal was punished; to wit, he received a 20-year sentence.* ☐ *Many students, to wit Mary, Bill, Sue, and Anne, complained about their teacher.*

toady (up) to someone to fawn over someone; to try to flatter and impress someone. ☐ *Carl is always toadying up to people.* ☐ *He has never toadied to me!*

Today here, tomorrow the world. *Prov.* Successful in this location now, with later recognition in the rest of the world. (Describes something whose influence seems certain to spread. The name of an appropriate locality is usually substituted for *here.*) ☐ *I thought that silly fashion in clothes was unique to California, but it seems to be spreading. Today Los Angeles, tomorrow the world.*

toddle along 1. to walk along in an unconcerned manner. ☐ *Kathleen was just toddling along, minding her own business.* **2.** to walk away. ☐ *Why don't you toddle along now and let me get some work done?*

toddle away and **toddle off** to walk away. ☐ *Not even noticing what had happened, the old lady got up and toddled away.* ☐ *Sam toddled away, leaving us behind to explain things to the boss.* ☐ *Wally toddled off, leaving his dinner untouched.* ☐ *Don't just toddle off when I'm talking to you!*

toddle off Go to previous.

toe the line Go to next.

toe the mark and **toe the line** *Fig.* to do what one is expected to do; to follow the rules. ☐ *You'll get ahead, Sally. Don't worry. Just toe the mark, and everything will be okay.* ☐ *John finally got fired. He just couldn't learn to toe the line.*

toil for someone **1.** to work on behalf of someone or for someone's benefit. ☐ *I don't mind toiling for her as long as she thanks me.* ☐ *I don't know why I toil for you. You are totally ungrateful.* **2.** to do someone else's work. ☐ *I don't know why I should have to toil for you. Do your own work!* ☐ *I won't toil for him. He can do his own work.*

toil for something **1.** to work toward a particular goal or ideal. ☐ *I am willing to toil for something I believe in.* ☐ *She spent the afternoon toiling for her favorite charity.* **2.** to work for a certain rate of pay. ☐ *It's hard to toil for slave's wages.* ☐ *Do you expect me to toil endlessly for such low pay?*

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toil over someone or something to work hard on someone or something. ☐ *The doctors toiled over the patient for hours.* ☐ *Ken toiled over his model plane well into the night.*

toil up something to work hard to climb something steep. ☐ *The hikers toiled up the slope slowly.* ☐ *As the bus toiled up the hill, we worried that the engine might be overheating.*

toing and froing (on something**)** moving back and forth on an issue, first deciding one way and then changing to another. ☐ *The boss spent most of the afternoon toing and froing on the question of who was to handle the Wilson account.* ☐ *I wish you would stop toing and froing and make up your mind.*

a **token gesture** an action or a decision that is so small or inconsequential as to be only symbolic. ☐ *Offering to pay for my dinner was only a token gesture. That does little to make up for my inconvenience.*

tol(er)able (well) *Rur.* pretty well; okay. ☐ *Tom: How are you feeling? Jane: Tolerable well.* ☐ *Charlie: How's the work coming? Tom: Tolable well.* ☐ *Mary: How's your aunt after her surgery? Jane: She's getting along tolable.*

toll for someone [for a bell] to ring for someone. ☐ *Who are the bells tolling for?* ☐ *The bells are tolling for Mr. Green, who died last night.*

Tomorrow is another day. *Prov.* Things may improve tomorrow; tomorrow you will have a chance to solve the problems that are upsetting you today. (Often used to encourage someone to relax and wait until tomorrow to do or worry about something.) ☐ *Child: This math homework is horrible! I can't do it! Mother: Put it away for tonight and go to bed. You'll be able to think more clearly when you've had some sleep, and tomorrow is another day.*

Tomorrow never comes. *Prov.* When the day arrives that you are now calling "tomorrow," you will call that day "today" and a different day will be called "tomorrow." (Therefore, you should not resolve to do something tomorrow, since that day will never arrive.) ☐ *Jill: When are you going to go to lunch with me? Jane: Tomorrow. Jill: Tomorrow never comes.*

tone someone or something **up**† to make someone or something stronger or more fit, muscularly. ☐ *I suggested an exercise that would tone him up and make him feel better.* ☐ *The exercises toned up his tummy muscles.* ☐ *I need to get busy and tone myself up.*

tone something **down**† to cause something to have less of an impact on the senses of sight or sound; to lessen the impact of something prepared for public performance or consumption. ☐ *This is rather shocking. You had better tone it down a bit.* ☐ *Tone down this paragraph.*

tongue-in-cheek *Fig.* insincere; joking. ☐ *Ann made a tongue-in-cheek remark to John, and he got mad because he thought she was serious.* ☐ *The play seemed very serious at first, but then everyone saw that it was tongue-in-cheek, and they began laughing.*

*a **tongue-lashing** *Fig.* a severe scolding. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I really got a tongue-lashing when I got home.* ☐ *Ted will have a tongue-lashing at home.*

tons of something lots of something. ☐ *We got tons of fried chicken, so help yourself.* ☐ *You are in tons of trouble.*

too big for one's **britches** *Rur.* too haughty for one's status or age. ☐ *Bill's getting a little too big for his britches, and somebody's going to straighten him out.* ☐ *You're too big for your britches, young man! You had better be more respectful.*

too close for comfort *Cliché* [for a misfortune or a threat] to be dangerously close. ☐ *That car nearly hit me! That was too close for comfort.* ☐ *When I was in the hospital, I nearly died from pneumonia. Believe me, that was too close for comfort.*

***too funny for words** extremely funny. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Tom is usually too funny for words at parties.* ☐ *The joke Tom told was really too funny for words.*

***too good to be true** almost unbelievable; so good as to be unbelievable. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~; get ~**.) ☐ *The news was too good to be true.* ☐ *When I finally got a big raise, it was too good to be true.*

too little, too late *Prov.* Not enough help to save the situation, and arriving too late. ☐ *After a lifetime of bad diet and no exercise, Lorna tried to save her health by improving her habits, but it was too little, too late.* ☐ *Fred: I know how to keep my business from going bankrupt. I'll invest all my savings in it. Bill: I'm sorry, Fred; even that much would be too little, too late.*

Too many chiefs and not enough Indians. *Prov.* Too many people want to be the leader, and not enough people are willing to follow to do the detail work. ☐ *Everyone on that committee wants to be in charge. Too many chiefs and not enough Indians.* ☐ *We'll never finish this project if everyone keeps trying to give orders. There are too many chiefs and not enough Indians.*

Too many cooks spoil the broth. Go to next.

Too many cooks spoil the stew. and **Too many cooks spoil the broth.** *Prov. Cliché* Too many people trying to manage something simply spoil it. ☐ *Let's decide who is in charge around here. Too many cooks spoil the stew.* ☐ *Everyone is giving orders, but no one is following them! Too many cooks spoil the broth.*

***too much** overwhelming; excellent. (*Typically: **be ~; get to be ~**.) ☐ *It's wonderful. It's just too much!* ☐ *You are so kind. This is too much.*

too much of a good thing more of a thing than is good or useful. ☐ *I usually take short vacations. I can't stand too much of a good thing.* ☐ *Too much of a good thing can make you sick, especially if the good thing is chocolate.*

too rich for someone's **blood 1.** too expensive for one's budget. ☐ *This hotel is too rich for my blood.* ☐ *Europe is getting too rich for our blood.* **2.** too high in fat content for one's diet. ☐ *This dessert is too rich for my blood.* ☐ *Most ice cream is too rich for my blood.*

tool around (in something**)** to go around in a car; to speed around in a car. ☐ *Who is that kid tooling around in that souped-up car?* ☐ *Ann spends a lot of time tooling around in her new car.*

tool something **up**† to equip a factory or production line with particular tools and machines, as for new products. ☐ *The manager closed down the factory so she could tool it up for the new models.* ☐ *She tooled up the factory in record time.*

tool up to become equipped with tools. ☐ *I need some money so I can tool up to do the job.* ☐ *The factory tooled up to make the new cars in only two weeks.*

toot one's **own horn** Go to blow one's own horn.

top brass the highest leader(s); the boss(es). (Originally military.) ☐ *The top brass turned thumbs down on the proposal.* ☐ *You'll have to check it out with the top brass. She'll be home around five.*

top notch the absolute best. (Hyphenated before a nominal.) ☐ *Julie's singing in the musical is top notch.* ☐ *He prepared a top-notch meal before the movie and dessert for afterward.*

the **top of the heap** *Fig.* a position superior to everyone else. ☐ *For some reason, Jerry has to be at the top of the heap.* ☐ *She fought her way to the top of the heap and means to stay there.*

top someone **or** something to do or be better than someone or something. ☐ *Ann has done very well, but I don't think she can top Jane.* ☐ *Do you think your car tops mine when it comes to gas mileage?*

top something **off** to add to the difficulty of something. ☐ *Jane lost her job, and to top that off, she caught the flu.* ☐ *I had a bad day, and to top it off, I have to go to a meeting tonight.*

top something **off**† **(with** something**) 1.** to end or terminate something with something; to put something on the top of something. ☐ *They topped the building off with a tall flagpole.* ☐ *He topped off each piece of pie with a heap of whipped cream.* **2.** to celebrate an end to something with something. ☐ *They topped the evening off with a bottle of champagne.* ☐ *They topped off the evening with a bottle of champagne.*

top something **up**† to add a bit of something to replenish the amount that was used. ☐ *Let me top your drink up.* ☐ *Can I top up your glass?*

top something **with** something to decorate or finish something by adding something. ☐ *They topped the new garage with a weather vane.* ☐ *Molly-Jo topped each sundae with a big red cherry.*

top story and **upper story** *Sl.* the brain; one's mind and intellect. ☐ *A little weak in the upper story, but other than that, a great guy.* ☐ *He has nothing for a top story.*

topple down [for a stack of something] to crumple and fall down. ☐ *The chimney toppled down in the earthquake.* ☐ *The woodpile toppled down during the night and scared us all to death.*

topple off (of) something and **topple from** something to fall off the top of something very tall. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Careful there! You might topple off of that wall.* ☐ *I didn't get too close to the edge, because I was afraid of toppling off.* ☐ *She toppled off the wall.* ☐ *The vase toppled from its shelf in the quake.*

topple over [for something very tall] to fall over. ☐ *I was afraid that Jimmy's stack of blocks would topple over.* ☐ *The stack of books toppled over and ended up as a jumbled mess on the floor.*

topple something **down**† to cause a stack of something to crumple and fall down. ☐ *The earthquake toppled the chimney down.* ☐ *The hurricane toppled down the weakest buildings.*

tore (up) and **torn (up) 1.** *Sl.* distraught; emotionally upset. ☐ *I knew you'd be tore up.* ☐ *Fred's really torn up about the accident.* **2.** *Sl.* intoxicated. ☐ *He wasn't just drunk—he was massively tore up.* ☐ *Boy, was she torn.*

torment someone **into** doing something to force someone to agree to do something through threats or maltreatment. ☐ *You can't torment me into doing something I don't want to do!* ☐ *Alice was tormented into going on the picnic.*

torn between someone **and** someone else and **torn between** something **and** something else *Fig.* uncertain whether to choose one or the other. ☐ *I don't know which*

to take. I'm torn between Fred and Alice. ☐ *I'm torn between red and green.*

torn (up) Go to tore (up).

torture someone **into** something to force someone to do something through the use of torture. (More severe than torment someone into something.) ☐ *The agents threatened to torture me into telling the secrets, so I gave in immediately, of course.* ☐ *Max tried to torture the old prospector into telling where the gold was hidden.*

toss a salad to mix various salad ingredients together. ☐ *The chef tossed the salad.* ☐ *I tossed the salad just before my guests arrived.*

toss in the sponge Go to throw in the towel.

toss one's **cookies** *Sl.* to vomit. ☐ *Don't run too fast after you eat or you'll toss your cookies.* ☐ *Oh, I feel terrible. I think I'm going to toss my cookies.*

toss one's **hat into the ring** and **throw** one's **hat in the ring** *Fig.* to announce that one is running for an elective office. ☐ *Jane wanted to run for treasurer, so she tossed her hat into the ring.* ☐ *I won't throw my hat into the ring until the last minute.*

toss (someone**) for** something *Fig.* to decide with someone, by tossing a coin, who will get or do something. ☐ *Let's see who gets to go first. I'll toss you for it.* ☐ *I'll toss for it.* ☐ *Let's toss for it.*

toss someone or something **around**† to throw someone or something around. ☐ *The waves tossed him around and almost dashed him on the rocks.* ☐ *The waves tossed around all the little boats.*

toss someone or something **aside**† to throw someone or something aside or out of the way. ☐ *The kidnapper tossed the child aside and reached for his gun.* ☐ *The soldier tossed aside the helpless civilian and ran into the house.* ☐ *Fred tossed the can aside and Alice picked it up.*

toss someone or something **away**† to throw someone or something away; to discard someone or something. ☐ *You can't just toss me away! I'm your husband!* ☐ *She tossed away her husband of twenty years.* ☐ *She tossed the cigarette away.*

toss someone or something **back**† **1.** to throw or force someone or something backward. ☐ *The blast tossed me back into the room.* ☐ *The blast tossed back the emergency personnel.* **2.** to throw someone or something back to where someone or something came from. ☐ *My father always threatened to toss me back where I came from, the way a fish is returned to the water.* ☐ *I will toss back all the undersize fish.*

toss someone or something **off (of)** something and **toss** someone or something **off**† to hurl someone or something from something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *The gigantic ape was going to toss the woman off of the Empire State Building.* ☐ *The ape did not toss off the woman.*

toss someone or something **out of** something and **toss** someone or something **out**† to discard someone or something; to throw someone or something out of something or some place. ☐ *The bartender tossed Walter out of the bar.* ☐ *The litterbug tossed out the empty can.*

toss something† Go to toss something into something.

toss something **around**† *Fig.* to discuss something. ☐ *I have a few things to discuss. Can we meet later and toss them around?* ☐ *We tossed around a few ideas after dinner.*

toss something **at** someone or something to throw something at someone or something. ☐ *Jimmy tossed an apple at Sarah to see what she would do.* ☐ *John tossed a stone at the wall.*

toss something **back and forth 1.** *Lit.* [for two or more people] to toss something to each other alternately. ☐ *Carol and Kelly tossed the ball back and forth for a few minutes.* ☐ *We will toss the ball back and forth until we get tired.* **2.** *Fig.* to trade remarks, quips, insults, etc. ☐ *They tossed insulting remarks back and forth.* ☐ *Walter and David spent the evening tossing quips back and forth.*

toss something **down**† *Fig.* to drink down a drink quickly. ☐ *He tossed a beer down and left the bar.* ☐ *Sam tossed down a couple of shots.*

toss something **into** something and **toss** something† to cast or throw something into something. ☐ *Frank tossed the wood into the fire.* ☐ *He tossed in the wood.*

toss something **off**† **1.** *Lit.* to throw something off (of oneself). ☐ *Bob coughed so hard he tossed his blanket off.* ☐ *Tom tossed off his jacket and sat down to watch television.* **2.** *Fig.* to ignore or resist the bad effects of something. ☐ *John insulted Bob, but Bob just tossed it off.* ☐ *If I couldn't toss off insults, I'd be miserable.* **3.** *Fig.* to produce something easily or quickly. ☐ *I tossed that article off in only an hour.* ☐ *Joe just tossed off a few words and left the room.* **4.** *Fig.* to drink a drink very quickly. ☐ *He tossed a few beers off and left.* ☐ *He tossed off a beer.*

toss something **together** to assemble something hastily. (See also throw something together.) ☐ *This report is useless. You just tossed it together!* ☐ *This meal was just tossed together, but it was delicious.*

toss something **up**† to throw something upward to a higher place or up into the air. ☐ *He tossed the coin up, calling "heads" and hoping for the best.* ☐ *He tossed up the coin.*

total something **up**† to add up the total of something. ☐ *Please total the bill up and let me see the cost.* ☐ *Total up the bill and give it to me.*

a **total stranger** Go to a perfect stranger.

totally awesome *Sl.* very, very impressive. ☐ *His motorcycle is totally awesome. It must have cost a fortune.*

tote something **up**† to add something up. ☐ *The clerk toted the bill up and asked for an enormous sum.* ☐ *Tote up your expense report quickly and submit it to accounts payable.*

touch a sore point Go to next.

touch a sore spot and **touch a sore point** *Fig.* to refer to a sensitive matter that will upset someone. (Fig. on the notion of touching an injury and causing pain.) ☐ *I seem to have touched a sore spot. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to upset you.* ☐ *When you talk to him, avoid talking about money. It's best not to touch a sore point if possible.*

touch at some place *Fig.* [for a ship or an airplane] to visit or call at a port. ☐ *We touched at Aruba for about an hour.* ☐ *Our little boat touched at a number of different islands during the two-week cruise.*

touch base (with someone**)** to talk to someone; to confer with someone briefly. ☐ *I need to touch base with John*

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on this matter. ☐ *John and I touched base on this question yesterday, and we are in agreement.*

touch down [for an airplane] to come in contact with the ground; to land. ☐ *Flight twelve is due to touch down at midnight.* ☐ *When will this plane touch down?*

a **touch of** something **1.** a mild case of some illness. ☐ *I have a touch of the flu and need some more bed rest.* **2.** a little bit of something, particularly a small helping of food or drink. ☐ *A: How about some more? What do you need? B: I'll have just a touch of that meatloaf if there's enough to go around.*

touch on something *Fig.* to mention something; to talk about something briefly. ☐ *In tomorrow's lecture I'd like to touch on the matter of taxation.* ☐ *The teacher only touched on the subject. There wasn't time to do more than that.*

touch someone or something **off**† *Fig.* to ignite or excite someone or something; to excite anger or chaos. ☐ *She is very excitable. The slightest thing will touch her off.* ☐ *The appearance of the fox touched off a furor in the henhouse.*

touch someone or something **with** something to bring something into contact with someone or something. ☐ *Don't touch me with that filthy stick!* ☐ *I touched the snake with a stick to make sure it was dead.* ☐ *Wherever he touched himself with the leaf, his skin blistered.*

touch someone **(up) for** something *Fig.* to approach someone and ask for something; to beg or borrow something from someone. ☐ *Jerry tried to touch me for twenty bucks, but I didn't have it.* ☐ *It won't do any good to touch me up for money. I don't have any.*

touch something **to** something to bring something into contact with something. ☐ *She touched her hand to her ear to indicate to the speaker to talk louder.* ☐ *The magician touched his wand to the hat and a rabbit jumped out.*

touch something **up**† to fix up the minor flaws in something; to repair a paint job on something. ☐ *It's only a little scratch in the finish. We can touch it up easily.* ☐ *Tom touched up the scrape with a little paint.*

touch (up)on something *Fig.* to mention something; to talk about something briefly. ☐ *In tomorrow's lecture I'd like to touch on the matter of taxation.* ☐ *The teacher only touched upon the subject. There wasn't time to do more than that.*

touch-and-go very uncertain or critical. ☐ *Things were touch-and-go at the office until a new manager was hired.* ☐ *Jane had a serious operation, and everything was touch-and-go for two days after her surgery.*

touched by someone or something *Fig.* emotionally affected or moved by someone or something. ☐ *Sally was very nice to me. I was very touched by her.* ☐ *I was really touched by your kind letter.*

touched (in the head) *Rur.* crazy. ☐ *Sometimes Bob acts like he's touched in the head.* ☐ *In fact, I thought he was touched.*

a **tough act to follow** and a **hard act to follow** *Fig.* a difficult presentation or performance to follow or improve upon with one's own performance. ☐ *Bill's speech was excellent. It was a tough act to follow, but my speech was good also.* ☐ *In spite of the fact that I had a tough act to follow, I did my best.*

***tough as an old boot** and ***tough as old (shoe) leather 1.** [of meat] very tough. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *This meat is tough as an old boot.* ☐ *Bob couldn't eat the steak. It was as tough as an old boot.* **2.** [of someone] very strong willed. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *When Brian was lost in the mountains, his friends did not fear for him; they knew he was tough as leather.* ☐ *My English teacher was as tough as an old boot.* **3.** [of someone] not easily moved by feelings such as pity. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *She doesn't care. She's as tough as old shoe leather.* ☐ *He was born tough as an old boot and has only grown more rigid.*

tough as old (shoe) leather Go to previous.

a **tough break** a bit of bad fortune. ☐ *I'm sorry to hear about your accident. Tough break.* ☐ *John had a lot of tough breaks when he was a kid, but he's doing okay now.*

a **tough call** a difficult judgment to make. ☐ *It's a tough call, but I choose Fred and Mary. Sorry Tom and Carole.* ☐ *We're still undecided on whether to buy a place or rent—it's a tough call.*

a **tough cookie** a person who is difficult to deal with. ☐ *He's a tough cookie, but I can handle him.* ☐ *There was a tough cookie in here this morning who demanded to see the manager.*

tough cookies Go to tough luck.

a **tough customer** someone who is difficult to deal with. ☐ *Some of those bikers are really tough customers.* ☐ *Walt is a tough customer. Just keep away from him.*

tough going progress that is difficult. ☐ *It was tough going for the first few miles, but the trail became much easier as we got farther into the forest.*

tough guy a strong and severe man; a man who might be part of the underworld. ☐ *He was your typical tough guy—jutting chin, gruff voice—but he was just our decorator checking up on the drapes.* ☐ *So, you want to be a tough guy, huh?*

tough luck and **tough cookies** That is too bad. (Said as a reply to someone relating an unfortunate situation.) ☐ *Tough luck, but that's the way the cookie crumbles.* ☐ *That's too bad, tough cookies.*

a **tough nut to crack** Go to a hard nut to crack.

***tough on** someone severe and demanding in dealing with someone. (*Typically: **act ~; be ~; become ~; get ~**.) ☐ *My boss is very tough on me, but I need the structure and discipline.*

a **tough row to hoe** and a **hard row to hoe** *Fig.* a difficult task to carry out; a heavy set of burdens. ☐ *It's a tough row to hoe, but hoe it you will.* ☐ *This is not an easy task. This is a hard row to hoe.*

tough sledding Go to hard sledding.

tough something **out** to carry on with something despite difficulties or setbacks. ☐ *Sorry, you'll just have to tough it out.* ☐ *I think I can tough this job out for another month.*

tough times Go to bad times.

toughen someone or something **up**† to cause someone or something to be stronger, more uncompromising, or more severe. ☐ *A few days behind the service counter at the dis-*

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count store will toughen her up quickly. ☐ *Having to deal with complaints toughened up the clerk quickly.* ☐ *She tried to toughen the skin on her palms up.*

toughen up to become tougher, stronger, or more severe. ☐ *She will toughen up after a while. You have to be tough around here to survive.* ☐ *You are going to have to toughen up if you want to play on the team.*

tout someone or something **around** to promote and boost someone or something publicly. ☐ *He is touting his favorite candidate around, hoping to get a few votes for her.* ☐ *Roger is touting his book around, trying to boost sales.*

tout someone or something **as** something to present someone or something as a beneficial type of person or something. ☐ *Joel touted his candidate as the best of all.* ☐ *Ann touted her medicine as a cure-all.*

tout suite! right away; with all haste. (Pronounced "toot sweet." From French *toute de suite.*) ☐ *John: Come on, get this finished! Bob: I'm trying. John: Tout suite! Get moving!* ☐ *"I want this mess cleaned up, tout suite!" shouted Sally, hands on her hips and steaming with rage.*

tow someone or something **away**† to pull something, such as a car or a boat, away with another car, boat, etc. (The *someone* refers to the property of someone, not the person.) ☐ *If I don't get back to my car, they will tow me away.* ☐ *The truck towed away my car.* ☐ *A big truck came and towed the illegally parked car away.*

tow someone or something **into** something and **tow** someone or something **in**† to pull something, such as a car or a truck, into something, such as a garage. (The *someone* refers to the property of someone, not the person.) ☐ *They had to tow my car into the garage to be repaired.* ☐ *They towed in my car.*

tow someone or something **out (of** some place**)** to pull something, such as a car, out of something, such as a ditch. (The *someone* refers to the property of someone, not the person.) ☐ *The farmer used his tractor to tow Andrew out of the ditch.* ☐ *He towed the car out of the ditch.*

tow someone or something **out (to** something**)** to pull something, such as a boat, or someone in or on something out in the water, to something. (The *someone* refers to the property of someone, not the person.) ☐ *Frank, who was on his surfboard, asked Tony to tow him out to the little island.* ☐ *We towed the raft out where the water is deep.*

towel someone or something **down**† to rub someone or something dry with a towel. ☐ *The mother toweled her child down and dressed her in clean clothes.* ☐ *She toweled down the child gently.* ☐ *Towel down the dog. He's wet and shaking.*

towel someone or something **off**† to dry someone or something with a towel. ☐ *The young mother toweled the baby off with a soft, warm towel.* ☐ *She toweled off the baby.*

tower above someone or something to stand or be much taller than someone or something. (Often used in exaggeration.) ☐ *The basketball player towered above everyone else in the room.* ☐ *The new building towered above all the others in town.*

tower head and shoulders above someone or something **1.** *Lit.* [for someone] to stand much taller than someone or something. (Often used in exaggeration.) ☐ *Bob towers head and shoulders above both his parents.* ☐ *The boys towered head and shoulders above the walls of the maze. They found their way around easily.* **2.** *Fig.* to be far superior to someone or a group. ☐ *The new vice president towers head and shoulders above the old one.* ☐ *The chairman towered head and shoulders above the rest of the committee.*

a **tower of strength** *Fig.* a person who can always be depended on to provide support and encouragement, especially in times of trouble. ☐ *Mary was a tower of strength when Jean was in the hospital. She looked after her whole family.* ☐ *Jack was a tower of strength during the time that his father was unemployed.*

tower over someone or something to stand much taller than someone or something. ☐ *Tom towers over his older brother, Stan.* ☐ *Tom towered over the little desk he had been assigned to.*

town-and-gown the relations between a town and the university located within the town; the relations between university students and the nonstudents who live in a university town. (Usually in reference to a disagreement. Fixed order.) ☐ *There is another town-and-gown dispute in Adamsville over the amount the university costs the city for police services.* ☐ *There was more town-and-gown strife reported at Larry's Bar and Grill last Saturday night.*

toy with someone to tease someone; to deal lightly with someone's emotions. ☐ *Ann broke up with Tom because he was just toying with her. He was not serious at all.* ☐ *Don't toy with me! I won't have it!*

toy with something to play with something; to fiddle with something. ☐ *You are just toying with me!* ☐ *Please don't toy with the stereo controls.*

trace around something to press something against paper and draw a line around the edges that are in contact with the paper. ☐ *Trace around this piece of material and cut out a new pattern.* ☐ *If you trace around the edges carefully, you will end up with a good drawing of the outline.*

trace over something **1.** to draw over something lightly. ☐ *Trace over the drawing to make it a little darker.* ☐ *I had to trace over it twice to make it visible.* **2.** to copy something by placing a thin sheet of paper over it and drawing an outline of the thing to be copied. ☐ *Trace over this picture and then photocopy about ten copies for us all.* ☐ *This needs to be traced over again.*

trace someone or something **(back†) (to** someone or something**)** to trail or track the origin of someone or something back to someone or something. ☐ *We traced her back to the car she had ridden in, but lost her trail at that point.* ☐ *We traced the letter back to her.* ☐ *See if you can trace back the check to its writer.*

track someone or something **down**† to search out where someone or something is. ☐ *I don't know where Anne is. I'll try to track her down.* ☐ *I'll track down Anne for you.*

track something **(all) over** something to spread something everywhere in a place from the bottom of one's shoes or feet. ☐ *You're tracking mud all over my house!* ☐ *Who tracked stuff over my carpet?*

track something **into** some place and **track** something **in**† to bring something, such as mud, into a place on the bottom of one's shoes or feet. ☐ *Please don't track mud into the office.* ☐ *Don't track in any mud!*

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track something **up†** to mess something up by spreading around something dirty or messy with one's shoes or feet. ☐ *Please don't track the floor up!* ☐ *Claire tracked up the floor.*

trade at some place to buy and sell at some place; to shop at someplace. ☐ *Do you trade at that store anymore?* ☐ *We don't trade there because their prices are too high.*

trade insults (with someone**)** to take turns with someone in mutual insulting. ☐ *We traded insults with each other for a while and then settled down to some serious discussions of our differences.*

trade on something to use a fact or a situation to one's advantage. ☐ *Tom was able to trade on the fact that he had once been in the army.* ☐ *John traded on his poor eyesight to get a seat closer to the stage.*

a **trade secret 1.** *Lit.* a secret way of making or selling a product; a business secret. ☐ *The exact formula of the soft drink is a trade secret.* **2.** *Fig.* any secret method. (Jocular.) ☐ *A: How do you manage to sell so many of these each month? B: It's a trade secret.*

trade someone or something **for** someone or something to exchange someone or something for someone or something. ☐ *I will trade you our shortstop for your catcher and two additional promising ball players.* ☐ *I will trade you my office desk for a conference table.*

trade something **in† (for** something**)** and **trade something in† (on** something**)** to return something, such as a car, to a place where cars are sold as partial payment on a new car. ☐ *I traded my old car in on a new one.* ☐ *I traded in my old jalopy for a newer car.*

trade something **off† 1.** *Lit.* to get rid of something in an exchange. ☐ *I traded my car off.* ☐ *I traded off my old car for a new one.* **2.** *Fig.* to sacrifice something in an exchange. ☐ *You may end up trading job security off for more money.* ☐ *Don't trade off your job security.*

trade something **with** someone to exchange something with someone. ☐ *Would you trade seats with me? I want to sit there.* ☐ *Can I trade books with you? This one is dull.*

trade up from something to exchange a specific lower-level product for a higher-level product. ☐ *I decided to trade up from my little car to a much larger one.* ☐ *I can't afford what I have, let alone be able to trade up to anything.*

trade up (to something**)** to exchange a lower-level product for a specific higher-level product. ☐ *I would like to trade up to a more luxurious model.* ☐ *I would like to trade up.*

trade with someone or something to do business with someone or something. ☐ *I don't like the owner of that shop. I won't trade with him anymore.* ☐ *Thank you for trading with us all these years.* ☐ *We don't trade with that company because their prices are too high.*

traffic in something to deal in something; to trade in something, usually something illegal. ☐ *Max had been trafficking in guns for years before they caught him.* ☐ *The president of the country was trafficking in drugs for years.*

a **traffic jam** vehicle traffic that is so heavy and slow that it can no longer move. ☐ *Going to the airport, we got stuck in a traffic jam for nearly and hour and missed our plane.*

trail (along) (after someone or something**) 1.** to drag along after someone or something. ☐ *His pants were torn, and a piece of his trouser leg trailed along after him.* ☐ *His trouser leg trailed after him.* **2.** to follow along after someone or something. ☐ *A little dog trailed along after Mary and Karen.* ☐ *Is that your dog trailing along?*

trail away Go to **trail off**.

trail behind (someone or something**) 1.** to follow or drag along behind someone or something. ☐ *A long satin train trailed behind the bride.* ☐ *A long train trailed behind.* **2.** to move along behind someone or a group in a competition. ☐ *Sally trailed behind the rest of the marathon runners.* ☐ *Roger trailed behind Dave during most of the race.*

trail off and **trail away** to fade away, as with speech, words, singing, etc. ☐ *Her voice trailed off as she saw who was waiting at the door.* ☐ *Ken's words trailed away as he passed out.*

trail over something to lie behind, flowing out over something. ☐ *Her long gown trailed over the marble floor.* ☐ *The flowering vine trailed over the wall, making a lovely little garden area.*

trail someone or something **by** something to have a smaller score than someone or something by a specific number of points. ☐ *Our team trails the visiting team by only six points.* ☐ *I trailed her by only a few points.*

train for something to practice or drill for some task. ☐ *I am training for the marathon.* ☐ *We all have to train for the upcoming football season.*

train one's **sights on** something and **have** one's **sights trained on** something *Fig.* to have something as a goal; to direct something or oneself toward a goal. (Alludes to someone using the sights of a gun to aim it. Note plural use of *sights*.) ☐ *You should train your sights on getting a promotion in the next year.* ☐ *Lisa has her sights trained on a new car.*

train someone **in** something to drill and practice someone in a particular skill or body of knowledge. ☐ *Her mentor trained her in the art of argumentation.* ☐ *I will try to train you in the skills needed to perform this task.*

train someone **on** something to educate someone in the use of something. ☐ *We trained him on the high diving board, but he isn't ready for competition yet.* ☐ *She trained herself on the computer so she could write a book.*

train someone or an animal **as** something to educate someone or an animal to serve in a particular way. ☐ *We trained him as a first-rate mechanic.* ☐ *I trained my cocker spaniel as a moderately effective watchdog.*

train someone or an animal **for** something to educate someone or an animal for some purpose. ☐ *His parents trained him for work in the family business.* ☐ *He was trained for factory work.*

train something **on** someone, something, or an animal to aim something at someone, something, or an animal. ☐ *Dave trained the spotlight on Fred, who was just coming out of the building.* ☐ *Train your lens on that bush. There is a deer back there.*

train up to something to practice or drill up to a certain level of proficiency. ☐ *I don't have enough stamina for the*

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marathon now, but I am training up to it. ☐ *Alice trained up to the long-distance swim for years.*

traipse around (some place**)** to walk or travel around some place. ☐ *I spent all afternoon traipsing around town looking for just the right gift for Roger.* ☐ *She has been traipsing around all day.*

traipse over and **traipse in** to go or arrive carelessly or thoughtlessly. ☐ *He traipsed over and invited himself in.* ☐ *She came traipsing in at about midnight.*

tramp across something to march or stamp across an area. ☐ *The kids tramped across the yard and wore a path.* ☐ *Please don't tramp across my garden.*

tramp through something to march or stamp a passage through something. ☐ *The kids tramped through every puddle in town on their way to school.* ☐ *Don't tramp through every mud puddle you see.*

trample someone or something **down**† to crush down someone or something with the feet. ☐ *Stay out of crowds at rock concerts. Those kids will trample you down if they get excited.* ☐ *The cows trampled down the stalks of corn.*

trample someone or something **to** something to stomp or crush someone or something underfoot to the point of death or destruction. ☐ *The elephant trampled the photographer to death.* ☐ *All the joggers trampled the grass to a muddy mess.*

trample something **out**† to create a pathway by marching or stamping the same trail over and over. ☐ *The mail carriers have trampled a path out through my marigolds!* ☐ *Jim trampled out a path in my garden.*

trample (up)on someone or something to crush someone or something underfoot. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Please don't trample upon the flowers!* ☐ *The bulls running through the streets trampled on some of the bystanders.*

transcribe something **from** someone or something to write something down from an audible source. ☐ *We transcribed the folktales from authentic storytellers.* ☐ *I transcribed the tale from an old phonograph recording.*

transcribe something **in** something **1.** to transliterate one alphabet into another. ☐ *Can you translate these romanized Korean words into the Korean script?* ☐ *We had to transcribe the entire novel into Cyrillic.* **2.** to represent speech sounds in a phonetic transcription. ☐ *The editor wanted the pronunciation transcribed in dictionary-style phonetics.* ☐ *It is much easier to transcribe the material in the International Phonetic Alphabet.* **3.** to write something down in something. ☐ *Please transcribe this list of names in your notebook.* ☐ *I can't read what is transcribed in my book.*

transfer someone or something **(from** some place**)** **(to** some place**)** to move or relocate someone or something from one place to another. ☐ *Her company transferred her from Houston to Los Angeles.* ☐ *We transferred the boxes from one place to another.*

transfer someone or something **to** someone to reassign someone or something to someone. ☐ *I transferred my secretary to Joel, who can get along with almost anyone.* ☐ *Ann transferred her car registration to her sister.*

transfer something **(from** someone**)** **(to** someone else**)** to reassign something from one person to another. ☐ *I have to transfer ownership of this car to my daughter.* ☐ *The title of the car was transferred from me to someone else.*

transfer to something to have oneself reassigned to something. ☐ *I am transferring to the accounting department.* ☐ *Andy wanted to transfer to a different school.*

transform someone or something **(from** someone or something**)** **(in)to** someone or something to change someone or something from someone or something into someone or something else. ☐ *Time had transformed gangly little Rachel into a lovely young woman.* ☐ *Manners transformed Tom from a pest into a prince.*

transgress against someone or something to make an offense against someone or something. (Stilted and formal.) ☐ *I did not mean to transgress against you.* ☐ *We did not transgress against the rules of the college.*

translate something **(from** something**)** **((in)to** something**)** to decode something from something, such as a language, to another. ☐ *Will you please translate this from Russian into English?* ☐ *I can translate it into Russian from any Romance language.*

transliterate something **(from** something**)** **((in)to** something**)** to decode something from one set of symbols to another. ☐ *Donald transliterated the tale from Cyrillic script into Roman letters and still couldn't read it aloud.* ☐ *Can you transliterate this from the original Bengali script into the Roman alphabet?* ☐ *I will transliterate this into Cyrillic.*

transmit something **(from** some place**)** **(to** some place**)** to send or dispatch something from one place to another. ☐ *Can you transmit a fax from your hotel to your office?* ☐ *I can transmit it to any place in the world.*

transmit something **to** someone or something to send or dispatch something to someone or something. ☐ *Please transmit this message to Rachel.* ☐ *I will transmit the message to my office.*

transmute something **(from** something**)** **((in)to** something**)** to change something from one thing into another. ☐ *Do you believe that it is possible to transmute gold into lead?* ☐ *No, you cannot transmute one metal into another.*

transport someone or something **(from** some place**)** **(to** some place**)** to move or convey someone or something from one place to another. ☐ *In his car, he transported us from our home to the airport.* ☐ *Please see that this box gets transported from here to the loading dock.*

transpose something **(from** something**)** **((in)to** something**)** to change something, usually in music, from one musical key to another. ☐ *Can you transpose this from F-sharp to a higher key?* ☐ *It would be easy to transpose it into a higher key.*

trap someone **in** something to catch someone in an inconsistency or contradiction. ☐ *The lawyer trapped the witness in his inconsistencies.* ☐ *She trapped herself in her own argument.*

trap someone **into** something to get one into such a position that one has little choice but to do something unwanted. ☐ *You'll never trap me into going out with Roger!* ☐ *I was trapped into going there.*

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trap someone or something **in** something to catch someone or something in a trap. ☐ *Jed accidentally trapped Tex in his bear trap.* ☐ *Jerry trapped a rabbit in his trap.*

travel a mile a minute Go to a **mile a minute.**

travel across something to make a journey across something or some place. ☐ *We have to travel across the desert to get there.* ☐ *I do not want to travel across that rickety bridge on the way back.*

travel at a fast clip Go to **at a fast clip.**

travel at a good clip Go to **at a good clip.**

Travel broadens the mind. *Prov.* When you travel, you learn things about the people and places you see. ☐ *Marie: I never realized how well-off most Americans are until I visited India. Jane: So it's true that travel broadens the mind, huh?* ☐ *Everyone who gets the chance should go abroad. Travel broadens the mind.*

travel by something **1.** to make a journey, using a particular conveyance. ☐ *I will go by train, since I don't like to travel by plane.* ☐ *We traveled by car, since that is the cheapest.* **2.** to make a journey under particular conditions. ☐ *I don't ever travel by night.* ☐ *We like to travel by day so we can see the scenery.*

travel for someone or something to go from place to place selling for someone or a company. ☐ *Walter travels for his uncle, who runs a toy factory.* ☐ *She travels for a company that makes men's clothing.*

travel in a body Go to **in a body.**

travel off the beaten path Go to **off the beaten track.**

travel on something **1.** to make a journey on a particular conveyance. ☐ *Do you like to travel on the train?* ☐ *I do not care to travel on the bus.* **2.** to travel having certain bodily states, such as on an empty stomach, on a full stomach. ☐ *I hate traveling on a full stomach.* ☐ *I can't stand to travel on a full stomach.*

travel over something **1.** to go over something as part of a journey. ☐ *We had to travel over an old bridge over the Mississippi to get to my sister's house.* ☐ *We will travel over a long narrow strip of land to get to the marina.* **2.** to travel widely over a great area. ☐ *She spent the summer traveling over Europe.* ☐ *I have traveled over the entire country and never failed to find someone I could talk to.*

travel through something **1.** to make a journey through some area or country. ☐ *We will have to travel through Germany to get there.* ☐ *Do you want to travel through the desert or through the mountains?* **2.** to make a journey through some kind of weather condition. ☐ *I hate to travel through the rain.* ☐ *I refuse to travel through a snowstorm.*

travel with someone **1.** to associate with someone; to move about in association with someone. ☐ *She travels with a sophisticated crowd.* ☐ *I am afraid that Walter is traveling with the wrong group of friends.* **2.** to make a journey with someone. ☐ *Do you mind if I travel with you?* ☐ *Who are you going to travel with?*

travel with something to have something with one as one travels. ☐ *I always travel with extra money.* ☐ *I hate to travel with three suitcases. That is more than I can handle.*

a **travesty of justice** a miscarriage of justice; an act of the legal system that is an insult to the system of justice. ☐ *The jury's verdict was a travesty of justice.* ☐ *The lawyer complained that the judge's ruling was a travesty of justice.*

tread on someone's **toes** Go to **step on** someone's **toes.**

tread (up)on someone or something to walk or step on someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*. *Step* is more common than *tread*.) ☐ *Don't tread on Sam, who is napping under the tree.* ☐ *Please don't tread on the freshly shampooed carpeting on the stairs.*

treat a case of something Go to a **case of** something.

treat someone **(for** something**) (with** something**)** to attempt to cure someone's illness, injury, or disease with something. ☐ *The doctor treated me for the flu with aspirin. It didn't work, but it was cheap.* ☐ *They treated him for his broken bones.* ☐ *Ann treated him with the appropriate therapy.*

treat someone or something **as** something to deal with someone or something as something. ☐ *Please don't treat me as a guest.* ☐ *You treat the editorial board as a needless barrier.*

treat someone or something **like** someone or something to deal with someone or something as if the person or thing were really someone, a type of a person, or something. ☐ *I like him. He treats me like a king.* ☐ *He treats Jane like Mary—he ignores them both.*

treat someone **to** something to provide and pay for something for someone as a gift or as entertainment. ☐ *I will be delighted to treat you to dinner.* ☐ *After the play, they treated themselves to pie and coffee.*

The **tree is known by its fruit.** *Prov.* People judge your character by what you do. (Biblical.) ☐ *The politician may say she believes in more spending on child care, but the tree is known by its fruit; she hasn't voted for a single measure that would help.*

trek across something to hike or march across something. ☐ *The scouts trekked across the fields of the small farming community.* ☐ *I don't look forward to trekking across the desert.*

trek to some place to hike or march to some place. ☐ *I have to trek all the way to the store because my car is in the shop.* ☐ *We trekked to the cabin and made that our base camp for the whole two weeks.*

tremble at something to shake with fear or anticipation at the thought of something. ☐ *David trembled at the thought of having to go to Russia by himself.* ☐ *Carl trembled at the idea of winning first place.*

tremble from something to shake or vibrate in response to something like an explosion or an earthquake. ☐ *The house trembled from the blast.* ☐ *I could feel the bridge trembling from the minor earthquake that I was hearing about on the radio.*

tremble with something to tremble because of something. ☐ *The children trembled with fear during the storm.* ☐ *David trembled with rage when he saw his slashed tires.*

trend toward something to move gradually toward something. ☐ *Fashions are trending toward the gaudy and flamboyant.* ☐ *Attitudes are trending toward the more conservative.*

trespass (up)on something to intrude or encroach onto a restricted or private area. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on.*) ☐ *You had better not trespass upon Mr. Green's land.* ☐ *I wouldn't trespass on that fenced-off land!*

trial and error trying repeatedly for success. ☐ *I finally found the right key after lots of trial and error.* ☐ *Sometimes trial and error is the only way to get something done.*

trial balloon a test of someone's or the public's reaction. ☐ *It was just a trial balloon, and it didn't work.* ☐ *The trial balloon was a great success.*

trials and tribulations *Cliché* problems and tests of one's courage or perseverance. ☐ *I suppose I have the normal trials and tribulations for a person of my background, but some days are just a little too much for me.* ☐ *I promise not to tell you of the trials and tribulations of my day if you promise not to tell me yours!*

Trick or treat! Give me a treat of some kind or I will play a trick on you! (The formulaic expression said by children after they ring someone's doorbell and the door is answered on Halloween. It is now understood to mean simply that the child is requesting a treat of some kind—candy, fruit, popcorn, etc.) ☐ *"Trick or treat!" cried Jimmy when the door opened.* ☐ *Mr. Franklin opened the door to find four very small children dressed like flowers standing silently on his doorstep. After a moment, he said, "Isn't anyone going to say 'Trick or treat'?"*

trick someone **into (**doing**)** something to fool someone; to deceive someone; to cheat someone. ☐ *The thief tricked John into giving him $10.* ☐ *Mary tricked her friends into paying for her dinner.*

trick someone **out of** something and **trick** something **out of** someone to get something from someone by trickery. ☐ *You can't trick me out of my money. I'm not that dumb!* ☐ *Stay alert so that no one tricks you out of your money.* ☐ *They tricked the information out of Bob.*

trickle away [for a liquid] to seep or dribble away. ☐ *All the water trickled away down the drain.* ☐ *After the last of the spilled milk had trickled away, Timmy began to cry.*

trickle down (to someone or something**)** **1.** *Lit.* [for a liquid] to seep or dribble downward to reach someone or something. ☐ *The water trickled down the wall to the floor.* ☐ *It trickled down very slowly.* **2.** *Fig.* [for something] to be distributed to someone or something in little bits at a time. ☐ *The results of the improved economy trickled down to people at lower-income levels.* ☐ *Information about what happened finally trickled down to me.*

trickle in(to something**)** **1.** *Lit.* [for a liquid] to seep or dribble into something or a place. ☐ *Some of the rainwater trickled into my car through a leak.* ☐ *It trickled in during the night.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone or something] to come into something or a place, a few at a time. ☐ *The audience trickled into the hall little by little.* ☐ *They trickled in over a period of an hour or more.*

trickle out (of something**)** **1.** *Lit.* [for a liquid] to leak or dribble out of something or a place. ☐ *The oil trickled out of the engine little by little.* ☐ *It trickled out and made a puddle on the floor.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone or something] to go out of something or a place, a few at a time. ☐ *The dissatisfied members of the audience trickled out of the theater three and four at a time.* ☐ *They trickled out as the evening wore on.*

trickle through (something**)** **1.** *Lit.* [for a liquid] to seep through something. ☐ *The water trickled through the cracked windowpane.* ☐ *They taped the glass, but the water trickled through anyway.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone or something] to move through something little by little. ☐ *The people trickled through the door into the store in far smaller numbers than we had expected.* ☐ *They trickled through very slowly.*

*the **tricks of the trade** special skills and knowledge associated with any trade or profession. (*Typically: **know ~; learn ~; show** someone **~; teach** someone **~**.) ☐ *I know a few tricks of the trade that make things easier.* ☐ *I learned the tricks of the trade from my uncle.*

tried and true trustworthy; dependable. (Hyphenated before nominals.) ☐ *The method I use to cure the hiccups is tried and true.* ☐ *Finally, her old tried-and-true methods failed because she hadn't fine-tuned them to the times.*

trifle something **away† (on** someone or something**)** to waste something, such as money, on someone or something, little by little. ☐ *Don't trifle all your money away on your friends.* ☐ *Don't trifle away any more money on silly purchases.*

trifle with someone or something to act without seriousness or respect toward someone or something. ☐ *Don't talk that way to me! I am not to be trifled with.* ☐ *I wish that Ann wouldn't trifle with our efforts at reform.*

trigger someone **off†** to cause someone to become angry. (Fig. on **trigger** something **off**.) ☐ *Your rude comments triggered her off.* ☐ *Your comments triggered off Bob's temper.*

trigger something **off†** to set something off, such as an explosion. ☐ *We were afraid that the sparks from the engine would trigger an explosion off.* ☐ *The sparks triggered off an explosion.*

trim (oneself**) down** to take action to become slimmer or lose weight. ☐ *I need to trim myself down before I go on vacation.* ☐ *I decided to trim down, but I never got around to it.* ☐ *You really need to trim down and stay at a lower weight.*

trim something **away† (from** something**)** to cut something away (from something). ☐ *The butcher trimmed the fat away from the steak.* ☐ *Please trim away the fat from the meat.*

trim something **down†** to reduce the size of something. ☐ *You will have to trim the picture down to get it into the frame.* ☐ *Trim down the picture before you frame it.*

trim something **from** something to cut something away from something. ☐ *I trimmed the fat from the steaks.* ☐ *We had to trim a lot of the fat from the meat after we got it home.*

trim something **off (of)** someone or something and **trim** something **off†** to cut something off someone or something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *I asked the barber to trim the beard off of Ralph.* ☐ *The barber trimmed off Ralph's beard.*

trim something **with** something to decorate something with something. ☐ *She trimmed the dress with lace.* ☐ *Bobby and Timmy trimmed the tree with colorful ornaments.*

T

trip along to move along happily. □ *The kids tripped along on their way to school.* □ *We were just tripping along, not having any notion of what was about to happen.*

trip on someone or something and **trip over** someone or something to stumble on someone or something. □ *The place was filled with sleeping people. I tripped over perfect strangers on my way to the door.* □ *I tripped on a brick and fell into the wall.*

trip someone **up**† **1.** *Lit.* to cause someone to trip; to entangle someone's feet. (*Someone* includes *oneself.*) □ *The rope strewn about the deck tripped him up.* □ *The lines tripped up the crew.* **2.** *Fig.* to cause someone to falter while speaking, thinking, etc. □ *Mary came in while the speaker was talking and the distraction tripped him up.* □ *The noise in the audience tripped up the speaker.*

trip the light fantastic *Jocular* to dance. □ *Shall we go trip the light fantastic?*

triumph over someone or something to achieve victory over someone or something. □ *Our team triumphed over all the others.* □ *Our army triumphed over theirs.*

troop across someone or something [for a mass of creatures] to move across someone or something. □ *The huge herds of wildebeest began to troop across the plain in search of food.* □ *The ants trooped across Karen as she lay in the sand.*

troop in(to something**)** to flock or march into something or some place in numbers. □ *The scouts trooped into the mess hall and sat down.* □ *They trooped in and sat down.*

trot after someone to follow along after someone, as done by a small dog. □ *The puppy trotted along after the kids wherever they went.* □ *My little brother would always come trotting after us, annoying us a lot.*

trot along to step along in a lively fashion. □ *The horses trotted along in time with the music.* □ *The horses were trotting along, going exactly where we led them.*

trot someone or something **out**† to bring out and display someone or something. □ *The boss trotted the new vice president out for us to meet.* □ *The boss trotted out his daughter and introduced her as a new vice president.* □ *Fred trotted out his favorite project for everyone to see.*

trot something **out**† *Fig.* to mention something regularly or habitually, without giving it much thought. (Fig. on the image of trotting out a pony for display.) □ *When James disagreed with Mary, she simply trotted her same old political arguments out.* □ *Bob always trots out the same excuses for being late.*

Trouble is brewing. and **There is trouble brewing.** *Fig.* Trouble is developing. □ *Trouble's brewing at the office. I have to get there early tomorrow.* □ *There is trouble brewing in the government. The prime minister may resign.*

trouble one's **head about** someone or something to worry about someone or something. □ *Please don't trouble your head about me. I'll get along.* □ *I wish you wouldn't trouble your head about the problem. We can solve it.*

trouble oneself **about** someone or something to worry oneself about someone or something. (Usually in the negative.) □ *Please don't trouble yourself about me. I'm doing fine.* □ *I can't take time to trouble myself about this matter. Do it yourself.*

trouble oneself **(to** do something**)** to bother oneself to do something. □ *He didn't even trouble himself to turn off the light when he left.* □ *No, thank you. I don't need any help. Please don't trouble yourself.*

A **trouble shared is a trouble halved.** *Prov.* If you tell someone about a problem you are having, or request someone's help with a problem, the problem will not seem so daunting. (Can be used to encourage someone to confide in you or ask for your help.) □ *Jill: Is something wrong? You've seemed so depressed lately. Jane: Oh, I wouldn't want to bother you with it. Jill: Don't be silly. A trouble shared is a trouble halved, remember.*

trouble someone **about** someone or something to bother someone by asking about someone or something. □ *Please don't trouble me about Larry.* □ *Can I trouble you about a billing problem?*

trouble someone **for** something to ask someone to pass something or give something. (Usually a question.) □ *Could I trouble you for the salt?* □ *Could I trouble you for some advice?*

trouble someone **to** do something to ask someone to do something. (Usually a question.) □ *Could I trouble you to pass the salt?* □ *Could I trouble you to give me some advice?*

trouble someone **with** something to bother someone with something, such as a question or a problem. □ *I hate to trouble you with this, but could you help me adjust my binoculars?* □ *Don't trouble yourself with this matter.*

trudge along to plod along on foot. □ *It seemed as if we trudged along for miles.* □ *As we trudged along, we forgot how cold it was.*

trudge through something **1.** *Lit.* to walk through snow, sand, or something similar. □ *We trudged through the hot sand all the way down the beach.* □ *I used to have to trudge through snow like this all winter to get to school.* **2.** *Fig.* to work one's way through something difficult. □ *I hate to have to trudge through these reports on the weekend.* □ *I have to trudge through a lot of work before I can go home.*

***true as steel** very loyal and dependable. (*Also: **as** ~.) □ *Through all my troubles, my husband has been as true as steel.* □ *Pedro was a staunch friend, true as steel.*

true something **up**† to straighten something up; to put something into true plumb. □ *Please true this door frame up better before you hang the door.* □ *Can you true up this wall a little?*

true to form exactly as expected; following the usual pattern. (Often with *running,* as in the example.) □ *As usual, John is late. At least he's running true to form.* □ *And true to form, Mary left before the meeting was adjourned.*

true to one's **word** keeping one's promise. □ *True to his word, Tom showed up at exactly eight o'clock.* □ *We'll soon know if Jane is true to her word. We'll see if she does what she promised.*

trump something **up**† **1.** to promote or boost something. □ *They think they have to trump something up to get people to see it.* □ *They trumped up the movie so much that many people were disappointed when it finally came out.* **2.** to think something up; to contrive something. □ *Do you just sit around trumping charges up against innocent people?* □ *They trumped up the charges in an effort to disgrace me.*

T

trumped up 1. heavily promoted; overly praised. (Hyphenated before nominal.) □ *I don't care for trumped-up stuff like that movie.* □ *That movie was so trumped up. I expected to see something much better than it turned out to be.* **2.** made-up; contrived. □ *They put Larry in the slammer on some trumped-up charge.* □ *It was a silly, trumped-up idea. Just forget it.*

truss someone or something **up**† to bind, tie, or bundle someone or something up. □ *The attendants trussed Walter up and took him to a padded cell.* □ *They trussed up Walter tightly.* □ *Ann trussed the bundle up and sent it off.*

trust in someone or something to believe in someone or something. □ *Trust in me. I know what I am saying.* □ *Can I trust in the figures in this report?*

Trust me! I am telling you the truth. Please believe me. □ *Tom said with great conviction, "Trust me! I know exactly what to do!"* □ *Mary: Do you really think we can keep this party a secret until Thursday? Sally: Trust me! I know how to plan a surprise party.*

trust someone **for** something to depend on someone for payment for something. □ *I will lend you one hundred dollars. I know I can trust you for it.* □ *I loaned Ted a lot of money. It's all right. I can trust him for it.*

trust someone or something **to** someone to leave someone or something in the possession of someone whom you assume will take good care of someone or something. □ *Can I trust my little Jimmy to you?* □ *I am perfectly comfortable trusting this money to you.*

trust someone **to** do something to believe that someone can be relied on to do something. □ *You can trust her to be here on time.* □ *I can't trust myself to eat wisely.*

trust someone **with** someone or something to leave someone in the care of someone or something. □ *Can I trust you with my uncle? He needs to have his medicine right on time.* □ *I am sure I can trust you with the money.* □ *Don't leave that cake with me. I can't trust myself with it.*

Truth is stranger than fiction. Go to Fact is stranger than fiction.

The **truth will out.** *Prov.* The truth will always be discovered. (Can be used to remark that someone who had been concealing the truth is now revealing it, as in the second example.) □ *The embezzler may think that someone else will be blamed for his crime, but the truth will out.* □ *Ellen: Remember last week, when I told you I bought some shoes? Fred: Yes. . . . Ellen: Well, before you look at the bill from the shoe store, I ought to tell you that I bought ten pairs. Fred: Aha. The truth will out.*

T

try as I may and **try as I might** *Cliché* a phrase that introduces an expression of regret or failure. □ *Bill: Try as I may, I cannot get this thing put together right. Andy: Did you read the instructions?* □ *Rachel: Wow! This place is a mess! Mother: Try as I might, I can't get Andrew to clean up after himself.*

try as I might Go to previous.

*a **try at** someone and *a **shot at** someone; *a **crack at** someone; *a **go at** someone *a **stab at** someone an attempt to convince someone of something; an attempt to try to get information out of someone; an attempt to try to train someone to do something. (The expressions with *shot* and *crack* are more informal than the main entry phrase. (*Typically: **take ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) □ *Let me have a crack at him. I can make him talk.* □ *Let the new teacher have a try at Billy. She can do marvels with unwilling learners.* □ *Give me a crack at him. I know how to make these bums talk.*

*a **try at** something and *a **shot at** something; *a **crack at** something; *a **go at** something; *a **stab at** something; *a **whack at** something to take a turn at trying to do something. (*Typically: **take ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) □ *All of us wanted to have a try at the prize-winning shot.* □ *Let Sally have a shot at it.* □ *If you let me have a crack at it, maybe I can be successful.*

try for something to try to win or achieve something. □ *I am going to try for the silver trophy in this year's race.* □ *Will you try for a place on the team?*

Try me. Ask me.; Give me a chance. □ *A: I don't suppose you know what the Achaean League is. B: Try me.*

try one's **hand (at** something**)** to take a try at something. □ *Someday I'd like to try my hand at flying a plane.* □ *Give me a chance. Let me try my hand!*

try one's **luck (at** something**)** to attempt to do something (where success requires luck). □ *My great-grandfather came to California to try his luck at finding gold.* □ *I went into a gambling casino to try my luck.*

try one's **wings (out**†**)** *Fig.* to try to do something one has recently become qualified to do. (Fig. on the image of a young bird trying to fly.) □ *I recently learned to snorkel, and I want to go to the seaside to try my wings.* □ *You've read about it enough. It's time to try out your wings.*

try out (for something**)** to audition for a part in some performance or other activity requiring skill. □ *I intend to try out for the play.* □ *I'm going to try out, too.*

try someone **back (again)** to try to return someone's telephone call again. □ *She's not in, so I'll try her back later.* □ *Jan will try her back.*

try someone **for** something to put someone through a court trial for some crime or wrongdoing. □ *The prosecutor wanted to try Harry for fraud.* □ *Anne was tried for shoplifting.*

try someone or something **out**† to test someone or something for a while; to sample the performance of someone or something. □ *We will try her out in the editorial department and see how she does.* □ *We will try out this employee in another department for a while.*

try someone's **patience** to strain someone's patience; to bother someone as if testing the person's patience. (*Try* means *test* here.) □ *My loud neighbors are trying my patience today.* □ *You really try my patience with all your questions!*

try something **(on**†**) (for size) 1.** *Lit.* to put on an article of clothing to see if it fits. □ *Here, try this on for size and see if it fits any better.* □ *Please try on this shirt for size.* **2.** *Fig.* to evaluate an idea or proposition. □ *Now, try on this idea.* □ *Try this plan for size. I think you'll like it.*

try something **on with** someone to get someone's opinion about an idea or plan. □ *Let me try this idea on with you.* □ *She tried the new idea on with the boss, but the response was not good.*

try something **out**† **on** someone to see how someone responds to something or some idea. ☐ *Let me try this idea out on you and see what you think.* ☐ *Let me try out this new medicine on her.*

trying times Go to **bad times**.

tub of lard a fat person. (Insulting.) ☐ *Who's that tub of lard who just came in?* ☐ *That tub of lard can hardly get through the door.*

tuck into something to begin eating something vigorously. ☐ *The kids really tucked into the stew.* ☐ *I could see from the way that they tucked into their meal that they were really hungry.*

tuck someone **in(to)** something and **tuck** someone **in**† to place someone into something carefully; to wrap someone in blankets or something similar. ☐ *Father tucked Jimmy into bed an hour later than he should have.* ☐ *Please tuck in Jimmy.*

tuck something **around** someone or something to wrap something snugly around someone or something. ☐ *I tucked crumpled newspapers around the cups in the box to keep them from breaking.* ☐ *Molly-Jo tucked the covers around the baby.*

tuck something **away**† **1.** *Lit.* to hide or store something away. ☐ *Tuck this away where you can find it later.* ☐ *Can you tuck away this money somewhere?* **2.** *Fig.* to eat something. ☐ *The boys tucked away three pizzas and an apple pie.* ☐ *When I was younger, I could tuck away my dinner in no time at all.*

tuck something **in(to)** something and **tuck** something **in**† to fold or stuff something into something. ☐ *Please tuck your shirttail into your pants.* ☐ *Tuck in your shirttail.* ☐ *When you make the bed, you have to tuck the sheets in.*

tuck something **up**† to raise up some part of one's clothing and attach it temporarily. ☐ *She tucked her skirt up and waded through the flooded basement.* ☐ *She tucked up her skirt.*

tuck something **up**† **(under** something**)** to place or push something, such as cloth, up under something. ☐ *Tuck the sheet up under the mattress when you make the bed.* ☐ *Tuck up the sheet under the mattress when you make the bed.*

tucker someone **out** to tire someone out. ☐ *All this work has tuckered me out.* ☐ *The heavy work tuckered the staff out early in the day.*

tug at someone or something to pull at someone or something. ☐ *Stop tugging at me! I'll talk to you in a minute.* ☐ *The dog tugged at my pants cuff.*

tug away (at something**)** to pull hard at something; to haul something. ☐ *She tugged away at the rope, but the anchor would not budge.* ☐ *No matter how much she tugged away, it didn't move.*

tumble along to roll or bounce along. ☐ *The ball tumbled along, across the lawn and into the street.* ☐ *As the boulder tumbled along, it crushed everything in its path.*

tumble down to fall down; to topple. ☐ *The old barn was so rickety that it almost tumbled down on its own.* ☐ *The pile of books tumbled down all over the floor.*

tumble from something to fall from something. ☐ *The food tumbled from the tray and fell to the floor.* ☐ *The books tumbled from the shelf during the earthquake.*

tumble into bed to get into or fall into bed. ☐ *Liz went home and tumbled into bed.*

tumble into someone or something to fall down and roll into someone or something. (Either accidentally or on purpose.) ☐ *Liz tripped and tumbled into the table.* ☐ *She tumbled into Ken.*

tumble out of something to fall, topple, or drop out of something. ☐ *Don't let the baby tumble out of the chair!* ☐ *The children tumbled out of the car and ran for the school building.*

tumble over to fall over. ☐ *The vase tumbled over and broke.* ☐ *I held Timmy up to keep him from tumbling over.*

tumble over someone or something to trip or stumble over someone or something and fall down. ☐ *I tumbled over Fred, who was napping under the tree.* ☐ *I tumbled over a chair and fell down.*

tumble over (something**)** to fall over the edge of something. ☐ *Stay away from the edge. I don't want any of you tumbling over it.* ☐ *Don't go too close. You'll tumble over.*

tumble someone or something **down** something to tip or push someone or something down something. ☐ *Timmy tumbled his brother down the hill.* ☐ *Ann tumbled her laundry down the chute.*

tune in (on someone or something**)** and **tune in (to** someone or something**) 1.** *Lit.* to adjust a radio or television set to receive a broadcast of someone or something. ☐ *Let's tune in on the late news.* ☐ *I don't want to tune in tonight.* **2.** and **tune in (to** something**)** *Fig.* to pay attention to someone or something. ☐ *I just can't tune in on these professors.* ☐ *I listen and I try, but I just can't tune in.*

tune in (to something**)** Go to **tune in (on** someone or something**)**.

tune out *Fig.* to cease paying attention to anything at all. ☐ *I wasn't interested, so I just tuned out.* ☐ *I think that most of the audience tuned out during the last part of the lecture.*

tune someone or something **out**† to put someone or something out of one's consciousness; to cease paying attention to someone or something. ☐ *I had to tune the radio out in order to concentrate.* ☐ *I tuned out what the speaker was saying and daydreamed for a while.*

tune something **in**† to adjust a radio or television set so that something can be received. ☐ *Could you tune the newscast in?* ☐ *Please tune in the station a little better.*

tune something **up**† *Fig.* to adjust an engine to run the best and most efficiently. ☐ *You need to tune this engine up.* ☐ *Please tune up this engine so it will run more economically.*

tune up [for one or more musicians] to bring their instruments into tune. ☐ *You could hear the orchestra behind the curtain, tuning up.* ☐ *We have to tune up before the concert.*

tuned in aware; up-to-date. ☐ *Jan is tuned in and alert to what is going on around her.* ☐ *Hey, Jill! Get tuned in, why don't you?*

tunnel through something to make a tunnel or passageway through something or a group of people. ☐ *Roger had to tunnel through the crowd to get to the rest room.* ☐ *The workers tunneled through the soft soil to reach the buried cable.*

T

tunnel under someone or something to dig a tunnel under someone or something. ☐ *All the time she was standing in the yard talking about the moles, they were tunneling under her.* ☐ *They took many months to tunnel under the English Channel.*

tunnel vision 1. *Lit.* a visual impairment wherein one can only see what is directly ahead of oneself. ☐ *I have tunnel vision, so I have to keep looking from side to side.* **2.** *Fig.* an inability to recognize other ways of doing things or thinking about things. ☐ *The boss really has tunnel vision about sales and marketing. He sees no reason to change anything.*

a **turkey's nest** Go to a **dust bunny.**

turn a blind eye (to someone or something**)** *Fig.* to ignore something and pretend you do not see it. ☐ *The usher turned a blind eye to the little boy who sneaked into the theater.* ☐ *How can you turn a blind eye to all those starving children?*

turn a deaf ear (to someone or something**)** to ignore what someone says; to ignore a cry for help. ☐ *How can you just turn a deaf ear to their cries for food and shelter?* ☐ *Jack turned a deaf ear to our pleading.*

turn a place **upside down** *Fig.* to search a place thoroughly. ☐ *The cops turned the whole house upside down but never found the gun.* ☐ *I had to turn the place upside down to find my car keys.*

turn a profit to earn a profit. ☐ *The company plans to turn a profit two years from now.*

turn a trick *Sl.* to perform an act of prostitution. (Use caution with the topic.) ☐ *She can turn a trick and be on the streets again in six minutes flat.* ☐ *She's upstairs, turning a trick.*

turn about Go to **turn around.**

turn against someone or something Go to **against** someone or something.

turn around and **turn about** to reverse direction; to face the opposite direction or turn completely. ☐ *The bus turned around and went the other way.* ☐ *Please turn around so I can see who you are.*

turn (away) (from someone or something**)** to turn oneself to avoid someone or something. ☐ *She turned away from me as I walked past, pretending not to see me.* ☐ *She turned from Ken and ran.*

turn back (from some place**)** to stop one's journey and return. ☐ *We turned back from the amusement park so we could go home and get the tickets we had forgotten.* ☐ *We turned back at the last minute.*

T

turn back the clock and **turn the clock back**

turn belly up and **go belly up 1.** *Sl.* to fail. (See also **turn turtle.**) ☐ *I sort of felt that the whole thing would go belly up, and I was right.* ☐ *The computer—on its last legs anyway—turned belly up right in the middle of an important job.* **2.** *Sl.* to die. (As a fish does when it dies.) ☐ *The cat was acting strangely for a while before she turned belly up.* ☐ *Every fish in Greg's tank went belly up last night.*

turn in 1. [for something] to fold or point inward. ☐ *Do my toes turn in too much?* ☐ *The legs of the table turned in at the bottom, giving a quaint appearance to the piece of furniture.* **2.** [for someone] to go to bed. ☐ *It's time to turn in. Good night.* ☐ *I want to turn in early tonight.*

turn in (up)on oneself to become introverted. ☐ *Over the years, she had turned in upon herself and was quiet and alone.* ☐ *The death of his wife caused Jed to turn in on himself.*

turn in((to) some place**)** to walk or steer one's vehicle into a place. ☐ *Turn into the next service station for some gas.* ☐ *I'll turn in for gas now.* ☐ *She walked down the street and turned into the drugstore.*

turn into someone or something to change into someone or something. ☐ *After work is over, he turns into a fairly nice person.* ☐ *The room turned into a very pleasant place when the lights were dimmed.*

a **turn of fate** Go to a **twist of fate.**

the **turn of the century** the time when the year changes to one with two final zeros, such as from 1899 to 1900. (Although technically incorrect—a new century begins with the year ending in 01—most people ignore this.) ☐ *My family moved to America at the turn of the century.* ☐ *My uncle was born before the turn of the last century.*

turn off [for something] to go off; to switch off. ☐ *All the lights turn off automatically.*

turn off something to walk or turn a vehicle one way or another so that one leaves the road or route to another. ☐ *You are supposed to turn off the highway at the yellow mailbox.*

turn off (something**) onto** something to walk or steer one's vehicle from one route to another. ☐ *I turned off the main highway onto a side road.* ☐ *Ann turned off onto the shoulder.*

turn off (something**) (**some place**)** to walk or steer one's vehicle off a route at a particular place. ☐ *Turn off the highway at the first exit after the city.* ☐ *Let's turn off here.* ☐ *We turned off the path just past the big oak tree.*

turn on 1. *Lit.* [for something] to switch on and start running. ☐ *The lights turned on right at dusk.* ☐ *At what time do the street lights turn on?* **2.** *Fig.* to become interested or excited. ☐ *He turns on when he sees the mountains.* ☐ *Ann will turn on if she hears this song.*

turn on a dime *Fig.* [for a vehicle] to turn in a very tight turn. ☐ *This car can turn on a dime.* ☐ *I need a vehicle that can turn on a dime.*

turn on someone to attack someone. ☐ *I thought the strange dog was friendly, but suddenly it turned on me and bit me.* ☐ *Bob knows a lot about lions, and he says that no matter how well they are trained, there is always the danger that they'll turn on you.*

turn on the waterworks *Fig.* to begin to cry. ☐ *Every time Billy got homesick, he turned on the waterworks.* ☐ *Sally hurt her knee and turned on the waterworks for about twenty minutes.*

Turn on, tune in, drop out. A slogan (popularized by Dr. Timothy Leary) promoting the use of LSD among young people. ☐ *The key phrase in the heyday of acid was "turn on, tune in, drop out."* ☐ *Millions heard "turn on, tune in, drop out" and did just that.*

turn one's **back (on** someone or something**) 1.** *Lit.* to turn one's body so that one's back faces someone or something. ☐ *I turned my back on the dead horse and walked slowly away.* ☐ *I turned my back on the shouting man and left the*

room. **2.** *Fig.* to abandon or ignore someone or something. ☐ *Don't turn your back on your old friends.* ☐ *Bob has a tendency to turn his back on serious problems.* ☐ *This matter needs your attention. Please don't just turn your back.*

turn one's **hand to** something to begin to or to be able to do something. ☐ *I would like to turn my hand to Chinese cooking.* ☐ *He gave up accounting and turned his hand to writing poetry.*

turn one's **nose up† at** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to raise one's head and therefore one's nose slightly as a sign of rejection. ☐ *I never turn my nose up at food.* ☐ *I never turn up my nose at dessert, no matter what it is.* **2.** *Fig.* to sneer at someone or something; to reject someone or something. ☐ *John turned his nose up at Ann, and that hurt her feelings.* ☐ *He turned up his nose.*

turn one hundred and eighty degrees Go to do a one-eighty.

turn onto something **1.** *Lit.* to walk or steer one's vehicle onto a road, highway, or path. ☐ *Turn onto the main road and go west about a mile.* ☐ *As she turned onto the familiar highway, she realized that she had left her purse in the store.* **2.** turn onto someone or something *Inf. Fig.* to become interested in someone or something. ☐ *Jeff turned onto electronics at the age of fourteen.* ☐ *I tried to get her to turn onto me, but she could only think of John.*

turn out [for something] to aim outward. ☐ *Her toes turned out just right for a ballet dancer.* ☐ *The legs of the chair turned out just a little, adding a bit of stability.*

turn out (all right) and **pan out; work out (all right)** to end satisfactorily. ☐ *I hope everything turns out all right.* ☐ *Oh, yes. It'll all pan out.* ☐ *Things usually work out, no matter how bad they seem.*

turn out (for something**)** [for people, especially an audience] to [leave home to] attend some event. ☐ *A lot of people turned out for our meeting.* ☐ *Almost all the residents turned out for the meeting.*

turn out somehow to end in a particular way, such as well, badly, all right, etc. ☐ *I hope everything turns out all right.* ☐ *The party did not turn out well.*

turn out (that) to happen; to end up; to result. ☐ *After it was all over, it turned out that both of us were pleased with the bargain.* ☐ *Have you heard how the game turned out?*

turn out to be someone or something to develop or become someone or something in the end. ☐ *In the end, he turned out to be a handsome prince in disguise.* ☐ *The previous prince turned out to be a frog.*

turn over 1. *Lit.* to rotate so that the side that was on the bottom is now on top. ☐ *The turtle turned over and crawled away.* ☐ *She turned over to get some sun on her back.* **2.** and **kick over** *Fig.* [for an engine] to start or to rotate. ☐ *My car engine was so cold that it wouldn't even turn over.* ☐ *The engine kicked over a few times and then stopped for good.* **3.** *Fig.* to undergo exchange; to be replaced. ☐ *The employees turn over pretty regularly in this department.*

turn over a new leaf *Fig.* to begin again, fresh; to reform and begin again. (Fig. on turning to a fresh page. The leaf is a page—a fresh, clean page.) ☐ *I have made a mess of my life. I'll turn over a new leaf and hope to do better.* ☐ *Why don't you turn over a new leaf and surprise everyone with your good characteristics?*

turn (over) in one's **grave** and **roll (over) in** one's **grave** *Fig.* to show enormous disfavor for something that has happened after one's death. ☐ *If our late father heard you say that, he'd turn over in his grave.* ☐ *Please don't change the place around too much when I'm dead. I do not wish to be rolling in my grave all the time.*

turn some place **inside out** *Fig.* to search some place thoroughly. ☐ *I will find that book if I have to turn this place inside out!* ☐ *I turned the room inside out and still didn't find it.*

turn someone **aside†** to divert someone from the flow of people. ☐ *The attendant turned the poorly dressed man aside.* ☐ *The attendant turned aside all the persons who arrived late.*

turn someone **down†** to issue a refusal to someone. ☐ *We had to turn Joan down, even though her proposal was okay.* ☐ *We turned down Joan, even though her credentials were good.*

turn someone **off†** to dull someone's interest in someone or something. ☐ *The boring prof turned me off to the subject.* ☐ *The preacher set out to turn off the congregation to sin.*

turn someone **on†** to excite or interest someone. ☐ *Fast music with a good beat turns me on.* ☐ *That stuff doesn't turn on anyone.*

turn someone or an animal **(away) (from** something**)** to cause someone or an animal to avoid moving toward something; to cause someone or an animal to avoid moving toward harm. ☐ *The police officer turned the pedestrians away from the scene of the accident.* ☐ *He turned the horses away from the gate.*

turn someone or an animal **out of** something and **turn** someone or an animal **out†** to eject someone or an animal from a place. ☐ *She turned her own son out of the house.* ☐ *You wouldn't turn a cat out on a night like this, would you?* ☐ *She actually turned out her own brother!*

turn someone or something **against** someone or something to cause someone to defy or revolt against someone or something; to make someone antagonistic toward someone or something. ☐ *He turned the whole board against Molly.* ☐ *She turned the city council against the proposed law.*

turn someone or something **back†** to cause someone or something to stop and go back; to cause someone or something to retreat. ☐ *The border guards turned us back because we had no passports.* ☐ *They turned back the bus because the bridge was down.*

turn someone or something **in† (to** someone or something**)** to submit or refer someone or something to someone or a group, especially in some official capacity. ☐ *The good citizen turned his neighbor in for watering his lawn during the wrong hours.* ☐ *I turned in the report to the treasurer.*

turn someone or something **inside out** to evert someone or something; to pull the inside of someone or something out to become the outside. (With people, this refers to mutilation.) ☐ *I felt like the explosion was going to turn me inside out.* ☐ *Ken turned his pockets inside out.*

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turn someone or something **into** someone or something to change someone or something into someone or something else. ☐ *The magician tried to turn Ginny into a robin.* ☐ *She turned the parrot into a dove.*

turn someone or something **over†** to rotate someone or something so that the side that was on the bottom is now on the top. ☐ *The nurses turned the patient over so they could give her some medicine.* ☐ *They turned over the unconscious patient.*

turn someone or something **over† to** someone or something to release or assign someone or something to someone or something; to transfer or deliver someone or something to someone or something. ☐ *The deputy turned the bank robber over to the sheriff.* ☐ *I turned over the money I found to the police.*

turn someone or something **to** something to aim someone or something to face something. ☐ *The nurse turned the old man to the sun so he could get warm.* ☐ *Ken turned the plant to the light.*

turn someone or something **toward** someone or something to turn someone or something to face someone or something. ☐ *The nurse turned the old man toward his daughter, who had come to visit him.* ☐ *Ken turned the microphone toward the speaker.*

turn someone or something **up† 1.** *Lit.* to increase the volume of a device emitting the sound of someone or something. ☐ *I can't hear the lecturer. Turn her up.* ☐ *Turn up the radio, please.* **2.** *Fig.* to discover or locate someone or something. ☐ *See if you can turn up any evidence for his presence on the night of January 16.* ☐ *Have you been able to turn up a date for Friday night?*

turn someone or something **upside down 1.** *Lit.* to invert someone or something. ☐ *The wrestler turned his opponent upside down and dropped him on his head.* ☐ *I turned the bottle upside down, trying to get the last drop out.* **2.** *Fig.* to upset someone or something; to thoroughly confuse someone or something. ☐ *The whole business turned me upside down. It'll take days to recover.*

turn someone **out† 1.** *Lit.* to send someone out of somewhere. ☐ *I didn't pay my rent, so the manager turned me out.* ☐ *I'm glad it's not winter. I'd hate to turn out someone in the snow.* **2.** *Fig.* to train or produce someone with certain skills or talents. ☐ *The state law school turns lawyers out by the dozen.* ☐ *A committee accused the state university of turning out too many veterinarians.*

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turn someone's **head** *Fig.* [for flattery or success] to distract someone; to cause someone not to be sensible. ☐ *Don't let our praise turn your head. You're not perfect!* ☐ *Her successes had turned her head. She was now quite arrogant.*

turn someone's **stomach** *Fig.* to upset one's stomach. ☐ *The violent movie turned my stomach.* ☐ *The rich, creamy food turned John's stomach.*

turn someone's **water off†** *Sl.* to deflate someone; to silence someone. ☐ *He said you were stupid, huh? Well, I guess that turns your water off!* ☐ *That really turned off her water.*

turn something **around** and **turn** something **about** to reverse the direction of something; to cause something to face the opposite direction. ☐ *Turn the car around and head it in the other direction.* ☐ *If you turn the chair around, we can see one another while we talk.*

turn something **aside†** to evade something. ☐ *Ann turned the awkward questions aside.* ☐ *She turned aside the questions she didn't want to answer.*

turn something **down† 1.** to bend or fold something down. ☐ *He turned his coat collar down when he got inside the house.* ☐ *Timmy had turned down his cuffs and caught one of them in his bicycle chain.* **2.** to decrease the volume of something. ☐ *Please turn the radio down.* ☐ *Can't you turn down that stereo?* **3.** to reject something; to deny someone's request. ☐ *The board turned our request down.* ☐ *She had turned down John's offer of help, too.*

turn something **off†** to switch something off so that it stops running or operating. ☐ *Please turn the light off.* ☐ *Turn off the lights as you leave.*

turn something **on†** to switch on something to make it run. ☐ *I turned the microwave oven on and cooked dinner.* ☐ *I turned on the lights when the sun went down.*

turn something **out† 1.** to manufacture or produce something in numbers. ☐ *The factory turns too few cars out.* ☐ *The factory turns out about seventy-five cars a day.* **2.** to turn off a light. ☐ *Please turn the hall light out.* ☐ *Turn out the light.*

turn something **over† in** one's **mind** *Fig.* to think about something. ☐ *I have to turn your suggestion over in my mind a bit before I decide what to do.* ☐ *After Alice had turned the matter over in her mind, she gave us her verdict.* ☐ *Please take some time to turn over this matter in your mind.*

turn something **to good account** to use something in such a way that it is to one's advantage; to make good use of a situation, experience, etc. ☐ *Pam turned her illness to good account and did a lot of reading.* ☐ *Many people turn their retirement time to good account and take up interesting hobbies.*

turn something **to** one's **advantage** to make an advantage for oneself out of something (which might otherwise be a disadvantage). ☐ *Sally found a way to turn the problem to her advantage.* ☐ *The ice cream store manager was able to turn the hot weather to her advantage.*

turn something **under (**something**)** to fold something underneath something. ☐ *Please turn the frayed edge of the sheet under so that it does not show.* ☐ *Please turn the edge under.*

turn something **up† 1.** to bend or fold something up. (See also **turn up**.) ☐ *Please turn your cuffs up. They are getting muddy.* ☐ *He turned up his coat collar to keep the rain off his neck.* **2.** to turn playing cards face up. ☐ *Please turn all the cards up.* ☐ *Sally turned up the cards one at a time.*

turn something **upside down** *Fig.* to throw things all about in a thorough search for someone or something. ☐ *We turned this place upside down, looking for the lost ring.* ☐ *Please don't turn everything upside down, looking for your book.*

turn tail (and run) *Fig.* to flee; to run away in fright. ☐ *I couldn't just turn tail and run, but I wasn't going to fight that monster, either.* ☐ *Sometimes turning tail is the only sensible thing to do.*

turn the clock back and **turn back the clock 1.** *Lit.* to set a clock to an earlier time. ☐ *I have to turn the clocks back each fall.* ☐ *Please turn back the clock.* **2.** *Fig.* to try to return to the past. ☐ *You are not facing up to the future. You are trying to turn the clock back to a time when you were more comfortable.* ☐ *Let us turn back the clock and pretend we are living at the turn of the century—the time that our story takes place.*

turn the corner *Fig.* to pass a critical point in a process. ☐ *The patient turned the corner last night. She should begin to show improvement now.* ☐ *The project has turned the corner. The rest should be easy.*

turn the heat up† (on someone) *Fig.* to use force to persuade someone to do something; to increase the pressure on someone to do something. ☐ *Management is turning the heat up to increase production.* ☐ *The teacher really turned up the heat on the students by saying that everyone would be punished if the real culprit was not found.*

turn the other cheek *Fig.* to ignore abuse or an insult. ☐ *When Bob got mad at Mary and yelled at her, she just turned the other cheek.* ☐ *Usually I turn the other cheek when someone is rude to me.*

turn the other way *Fig.* to look away and ignore someone or something. ☐ *When I tried to talk to her, she turned the other way and made it clear that she was angry.*

turn the tables (on someone) *Fig.* to cause a reversal in someone's plans; to make one's plans turn back on one. ☐ *I went to Jane's house to help get ready for a surprise party for Bob. It turned out that the surprise party was for me! Jane really turned the tables on me!* ☐ *Turning the tables like that requires a lot of planning and a lot of secrecy.*

turn the tide *Fig.* to cause a reversal in the direction of events; to cause a reversal in public opinion. ☐ *It looked as if the team were going to lose, but near the end of the game, our star player turned the tide.* ☐ *At first, people were opposed to our plan. After a lot of discussion, we were able to turn the tide.*

turn three hundred and sixty degrees Go to do a three-sixty.

turn thumbs down (on someone or something) *Fig.* to reject someone or something; to grow to reject someone or something. ☐ *The boss turned thumbs down on Tom. They would have to find someone else.* ☐ *The minute I saw it, I turned thumbs down.*

turn thumbs up (on someone or something) *Fig.* to accept someone or something; to approve someone or something. ☐ *The board of directors turned thumbs up on my proposal and voted to fund the project.* ☐ *The committee turned thumbs up on Carl as the new manager.* ☐ *When the boss turned thumbs up, I knew everything was okay.*

turn to *Fig.* to begin to get busy. ☐ *Come on, you guys! Turn to! Let's get to work.* ☐ *If you people will turn to, we can finish this work in no time at all.*

turn to someone or something (for something) to seek or expect something from someone or something. ☐ *I turned to Sally for advice.* ☐ *I turn to my dictionary for help two or three times a day.*

turn turtle *Fig.* to turn upside down. (See also turn belly up.) ☐ *The sailboat turned turtle, but the sailors only got wet.* ☐ *The car ran off the road and turned turtle in the ditch.*

turn up 1. [for part of something] to point upward. ☐ *The ends of the elf's funny little shoes turned up.* **2.** *Fig.* to happen. ☐ *Something always turns up to prevent their meeting.* ☐ *I am sorry I was late. Something turned up at the last minute.* **3.** *Fig.* to appear; to arrive and attend. ☐ *We'll send out invitations and see who turns up.* ☐ *Guess who turned up at my door last night?*

turn up one's toes *Sl.* to die. ☐ *When I turn up my toes, I want a big funeral with lots of flowers.* ☐ *Our cat turned up his toes during the night. He was nearly ten years old.*

turn up (somewhere) *Fig.* [for someone or something] to appear in a place. ☐ *Her name is always turning up in the gossip columns.* ☐ *He turned up an hour late.*

turn up† the heat (on someone or something) *Fig.* to put pressure on someone or something; apply additional pressure to someone or something. ☐ *The FBI turned the heat up on the gang.* ☐ *The police turned up the heat on the people who park illegally every day.*

turn (up)on someone or something to attack or oppose someone or something, especially the person or group in charge. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *I never thought that my own dog would turn on me!* ☐ *The treasurer turned on the entire board of directors.*

Turnabout is fair play. *Prov.* It is fair for one to suffer whatever one has caused others to suffer. ☐ *So, you don't like being made fun of! Well, turnabout is fair play.*

turned off uninterested. ☐ *I'm sort of turned off to stuff like that these days. Part of getting older, I guess.* ☐ *I can't pay attention if I'm turned off, now can I?*

***a turning point** *Fig.* a time when things may change; a point at which a change of course is possible or desirable. (Originally nautical. Fig. on the image of a ship approaching a point where a change of course has been planned. (*Typically: **be at ~; come to ~; reach ~**.) ☐ *Things are at to a turning point. Bob can no longer afford the payments on his car.* ☐ *I think we have come to a turning point and there ought to be some improvement henceforth.*

tussle with someone or something 1. to struggle or battle with someone or something. ☐ *Tim tussled with Roger for a while, and then they made peace.* ☐ *I tussled with the trunk, trying to get it into the attic.* **2.** *Fig.* to argue or contend with someone, a group, or something. (Fig. on ①.) ☐ *I tussled with my conscience all night.* ☐ *We tussled with the committee and won our point.*

tweak something off (of) someone or something and **tweak something off†** to flick something off someone or something; to remove something from someone or something by pinching. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Sarah tweaked a little beetle off of Fred.* ☐ *Sarah tweaked off a little bug.*

twelve good men and true *Fig.* a jury composed of trustworthy men. ☐ *He was convicted by a jury of twelve good men and true. Not a wino in the lot.*

twiddle one's thumbs *Fig.* to pass the time by twirling one's thumbs. ☐ *What am I supposed to do while waiting for you? Sit here and twiddle my thumbs?* ☐ *Don't sit around twiddling your thumbs. Get busy!*

twiddle with something to play with something; to play with something, using one's fingers; to fiddle with something. ☐ *I asked Jason to stop twiddling with the pencils.* ☐ *Someone is twiddling with the stereo controls.*

twilight years *Fig.* the last years before death. ☐ *In his twilight years, he became more mellow and stopped yelling at people.*

twine around something to weave or coil around something. ☐ *The snake twined around the branch.* ☐ *As the vine grew, it twined around the lamppost.*

twinkle with something [for someone's eyes] to sparkle because of something. ☐ *Her eyes twinkled with laughter.* ☐ *Tom's eyes twinkled with recognition when he saw Gwen again.*

twist around to turn around part way at the waist, without moving one's feet or legs. ☐ *Nancy twisted around to get a better look at who was sitting behind her.* ☐ *I had to twist around to see who was there.*

a **twist of fate** and a **turn of fate** *Fig.* a fateful event; an unanticipated change in a sequence of events. ☐ *A strange turn of fate brought Fred and his ex-wife together at a New Year's Eve party in Queens.*

twist (slowly) in the wind *Fig.* to suffer the agony of some humiliation or punishment. (Alludes to an execution by hanging.) ☐ *I'll see you twist in the wind for trying to frustrate this investigation.* ☐ *The prosecutor was determined that Richard would twist slowly in the wind for the crime.*

twist someone **around** one's **little finger** and **wind** someone **around** one's **little finger** *Fig.* to manipulate and control someone. ☐ *Bob really fell for Jane. She can twist him around her little finger.* ☐ *Billy's mother has wound him around her little finger. He's very dependent on her.*

twist someone's **arm** *Fig.* to pressure someone. (Fig. on the image of hurting someone until they agree to cooperate.) ☐ *I had to twist her arm a little, but she agreed.* ☐ *Do I have to twist your arm, or will you cooperate?*

twist someone's **words (around)** to restate someone's words inaccurately; to misrepresent what someone has said. ☐ *Stop twisting my words around! Listen to what I am telling you!* ☐ *You are twisting my words again. That is not what I said!*

twist something **around** someone or something to wrap something around someone or something. ☐ *Max twisted the wire around Lefty, and totally immobilized him.* ☐ *I twisted the rope around the post and tied a knot.*

twist something **into** something to change or distort something into something else, as if by twisting. ☐ *Kelly twisted the balloons into the shape of a dog.* ☐ *Ann twisted the silver wires into an earring.*

twist something **off (of)** something and **twist** something **off**† to take something off something by twisting. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Fran twisted the top off of the bottle of mineral water and poured it.* ☐ *She twisted off the top.*

twist something **out of** something to remove something from something by twisting. ☐ *Flo twisted the cork out of the bottle and smelled the wine.* ☐ *Roger twisted the bulb out of its socket and replaced it with a good one.*

twist up 1. to move upward in a twisting path. ☐ *The smoke twisted up into the sky.* ☐ *As the car twisted up the narrow path, we got a good view of the valley.* **2.** to become twisted. ☐ *The rope twisted up and had to be unwound.*

two bricks shy of a load Go to a few cards shy of a full deck.

Two can play (at) this game (as well as one). *Fig.* Both competitors—not just one—can compete in this manner or with this strategy. (See also a game that two can play.) ☐ *You are not the only one who knows how to cheat and lie. Two can play this game.*

Two heads are better than one. *Prov.* Two people working together have a better chance of solving a problem than one person working alone. ☐ *Come over here and help me balance my checkbook. Two heads are better than one.* ☐ *Jane: Can you figure out what this insurance document means? Alan: Why ask me? I don't know anything about insurance. Jane: Neither do I, but two heads are better than one.*

Two is company, (but) three's a crowd. and **Two's company(, three's a crowd).** *Prov.* A way of asking a third person to leave because you want to be alone with someone. (Often implies that you want to be alone with the person because you are romantically interested in him or her.) ☐ *When Lucy followed Mark and Nora into the drawing room, Nora turned to her and said, "Two's company, but three's a crowd."* ☐ *Bill: Can I go to lunch with you and Tom? Jane: Two's company, three's a crowd, Bill.*

two jumps ahead of someone *Fig.* a good way ahead of someone. ☐ *Her market research kept her two jumps ahead of her competitors.* ☐ *I was just starting to think of vacation plans, not realizing that my wife was two jumps ahead of me. She had already made hotel reservations.*

two of a kind *Fig.* people or things of the same type or that are similar in character, attitude, etc. ☐ *Jack and Tom are two of a kind. They're both ambitious.* ☐ *The companies are two of a kind. They both pay their employees badly.*

two shakes of a lamb's tail *Fig.* quickly; rapidly. ☐ *I'll be there in two shakes of a lamb's tail.* ☐ *In two shakes of a lamb's tail, the entire pile of bricks had collapsed.*

two sheets to the wind Go to three sheets in the wind.

***two strikes against** one **1.** two strikes on a baseball batter, three being the number that will put the batter "out." (Such a player is in a vulnerable position. *Typically: **get ~; have ~**.) ☐ *Sammy has two strikes against him and might just strike out.* **2.** *Fig.* a critical number of things against one; a position wherein success is unlikely or where the success of the next move is crucial. (Fig. on ①. *Typically: **get ~; have ~**.) ☐ *Poor Bob had two strikes against him when he tried to explain where he was last night.* ☐ *I can't win. I've got two strikes against me before I start.*

two (w)hoops and a holler *Rur.* a short distance. ☐ *Lexington? That's just two whoops and a holler from here.* ☐ *We're just two hoops and a holler from the downtown.*

Two wrongs do not make a right. *Prov.* Someone else may do something bad and not be punished, but that does

not mean you are allowed to do bad things. ☐ *Jill: I'd really like to humiliate Fred, after he made fun of me in front of everyone at lunch. Jane: Now, now, Jill. Two wrongs don't make a right.*

a **two-edged sword** and a **double-edged sword** *Fig.* something that offers both a good and bad consequence. ☐ *The ability to get your insurance to pay for it is a double-edged sword. They may raise your rates.* ☐ *Her authority in the company is a two-edged sword. She makes more enemies than allies.*

two-fisted *Fig.* [of a male] aggressive and feisty. ☐ *Perry is a real, two-fisted cowboy, always ready for a fight or a drunken brawl.*

a **two-time loser** a confirmed loser. ☐ *Poor Richard is a two-time loser.* ☐ *Martin is a two-time loser, or at least he looks like one.*

two-time someone *Sl.* to cheat on or betray one's spouse or lover by dating or seeing someone else. ☐ *When Mrs. Franklin learned that Mr. Franklin was two-timing her, she left him.* ☐ *Ann told Bob that if he ever two-timed her, she would cause him a lot of trouble.*

a **two-way street** a reciprocal situation. ☐ *This is a two-way street, you know. You will have to help me someday in return.* ☐ *Friendship is a two-way street.*

type over something to type one letter over another. ☐ *Just type over the* o *with an* e. *No one will notice.*

type something **into** something and **type** something **in**† to insert information into a form or a place on a form by typing or keying it. ☐ *Please type your name and address into this box.* ☐ *Please type in your name.*

type something **out**† to make some information presentable by typing or keying it. ☐ *Please type this out before you submit it to the board for approval.* ☐ *Can you type out this report before quitting time?*

type something **up**† to type a handwritten document; to type a document, perhaps using a computer. ☐ *I will give this to you as soon as I type it up.* ☐ *Please type up this document.*

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***ugly as a toad** [of a living creature] very ugly. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Maria may be a beautiful woman, but when she was a child she was as ugly as a toad.* ☐ *The shopkeeper was ugly as a toad, but he was kind and generous, and everyone loved him.*

***ugly as sin** *Cliché* extremely ugly. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *Why would anyone want to buy that dress? It's as ugly as sin!* ☐ *Harold is ugly as sin, but his personality is very charming.*

unaccustomed to someone or something not used to someone or something. ☐ *The poor family was unaccustomed to going to fancy restaurants.* ☐ *Bill was unaccustomed to mailing his own letters.*

unbosom oneself **to** someone *Fig.* to reveal one's inner thoughts and secrets to someone. ☐ *He unbosomed himself to his best friend.* ☐ *Todd unbosomed himself to almost everyone he met.*

unburden oneself **to** someone *Fig.* to tell someone about one's trouble or anxiety. ☐ *I didn't mean to unburden myself to you. I'm just so upset.* ☐ *She unburdened herself to her mother.*

under a cloud (of suspicion) *Fig.* suspected of something. ☐ *Someone stole some money at work, and now everyone is under a cloud of suspicion.* ☐ *Even the manager is under a cloud.*

under a deadline Go to under pressure.

***under a spell** *Fig.* enchanted; under the control of magic. (*Typically: **be ~; have** someone **~; put** someone **~**.) ☐ *Her soft voice and faint perfume put Buxton under a spell. Then enchantment was broken when he found his wallet missing.*

***under arrest** arrested and in the custody of the police in preparation for the filing of a charge. (*Typically: **be ~; put** someone **~**.) ☐ *Stop where you are! You are under arrest!* ☐ *Am I under arrest, officer? What did I do?*

under certain **circumstances** and **under** certain **conditions** *Fig.* depending on or influenced by something; because of something. ☐ *Under certain conditions, you can see across the lake to the other side.* ☐ *Under certain circumstances, what you propose to do is all right.*

under certain **conditions** Go to previous.

***under (close) scrutiny** *Fig.* being watched or examined closely. (*Typically: **be ~; have** someone or something **~; keep** someone or something **~**.) ☐ *The suspect was kept under scrutiny throughout the investigation.*

under construction *Fig.* being built or repaired. ☐ *We cannot travel on this road because it's under construction.* ☐ *Our new home has been under construction all summer. We hope to move in next month.*

***under control** *Fig.* manageable; restrained and controlled; not out of control. (*Typically: **be ~; bring** someone or something **~; get** someone or something **~; have** someone or something **~; keep** someone or something **~**.) ☐ *We finally got things under control and functioning smoothly.* ☐ *The doctor felt she had the disease under control and that I would get well soon.*

***under fire** *Fig.* during an attack; being attacked. (*Typically: **be ~; resign ~; think ~**.) ☐ *There was a scandal in city hall, and the mayor was forced to resign under fire.* ☐ *John is a good lawyer because he can think under fire.*

under no circumstances and **not under any circumstances** *Fig.* absolutely never. ☐ *Andy: Under no circumstances will I ever go back there again! Rachel: Why? What happened?* ☐ *Sue: Can I talk you into serving as a referee again? Mary: Heavens, no! Not under any circumstances!*

under normal circumstances *Fig.* normally; usually; typically. ☐ *"We'd be able to keep the dog at home under normal circumstances," said Mary to the vet.* ☐ *"Under normal circumstances you'd be able to return to work in a week," explained the doctor.*

under oath *Fig.* bound by an oath; having taken an oath. ☐ *You must tell the truth because you are under oath.* ☐ *I was placed under oath before I could testify in the trial.*

***under** one's **belt 1.** *Fig.* eaten or drunk and in one's stomach. (Fig. on the image of swallowed food ending up under one's belt. *Typically: **get** something **~; have** something **~**.) ☐ *I need to have something filling under my belt. I've had it with just soup.* ☐ *I want to get a nice juicy steak under my belt.* **2.** *Fig.* achieved; counted or scored. (Fig. on ①. *Typically: **have** something **~**.) ☐ *Minnie has over four hundred wins under his belt.* ☐ *This fighter pilot has over 20 kills under his belt.* **3.** *Fig.* learned; mastered. (Fig. on ①. *Typically: **get** something**~**.) ☐ *Finally, she got good painting techniques under her belt.* ☐ *When I get the right procedures under my belt, I will be more efficient.*

***under** one's **breath** *Fig.* [spoken] so softly that almost no one can hear it. (*Typically: **curse ~; curse** someone or something **~; mutter ~; mutter** something **~; say** something **~**.) ☐ *John was muttering something under his breath, and I don't think it was very pleasant.* ☐ *I'm glad he said it under his breath. If he had said it out loud, it would have caused an argument.*

under one's **own steam** *Fig.* by one's own power or effort. ☐ *I missed my ride to class, so I had to get there under my own steam.* ☐ *John will need some help with this project. He can't do it under his own steam.*

***under pressure 1.** and ***under a deadline; *under the gun (about** something**)** *Fig.* facing or enduring something such as pressure or a deadline. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I have to get back to work. I am under a deadline.* ☐ *I am under a lot of pressure lately.* ☐ *The management is under the gun for the mistakes made last year.* **2.** [of a gas or liquid] being forced, squeezed, or compressed. (*Typically: **be ~; deliver** something **~; put**

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something ~.) ☐ *The gas in the pipes leading to the oven are under pressure.*

under someone's **care** Go to **in the care of** someone.

***under** someone's **thumb** *Fig.* under someone's control and management. (*Typically: **get** someone **~; have** someone **~; hold** someone **~; keep** someone **~**.) ☐ *You can't keep your kids under your thumb all their lives.* ☐ *I don't want to have these people under my thumb. I'm not the manager type.*

***under** someone's **wing(s)** *Fig.* receiving someone's care and nurturing. (*Typically: **get** someone **~; have** someone **~; take** someone **~**.) ☐ *John wasn't doing well in geometry until the teacher took him under her wing.* ☐ *I had a number of the new workers under my wing for a few weeks.*

under the aegis of someone and **under the auspices of** someone *Fig.* under the sponsorship or protection of someone or some group; under the control or monitoring of someone or some group. ☐ *The entire project fell under the aegis of Thomas.* ☐ *The entire program is under the auspices of Acme-Global Paper Co., Inc.*

under the auspices of someone Go to previous.

under the circumstances *Fig.* in a particular situation; because of the circumstances. ☐ *I'm sorry to hear that you're ill. Under the circumstances, you may take the day off.* ☐ *We won't expect you to come to work for a few days, under the circumstances.*

under the counter *Fig.* [bought or sold] in secret or illegally. (Compare this to **over the counter**.) ☐ *The drugstore owner was arrested for selling liquor under the counter.* ☐ *The clerk sold dirty books under the counter.*

under the gun (about something**)** Go to **under pressure**.

under the influence (of alcohol) *Euph.* drunk; nearly drunk; affected by alcohol. ☐ *She behaves quite rudely when under the influence of alcohol.* ☐ *Ed was stopped by a police officer for driving while under the influence.*

under the sun *Fig.* anywhere on earth at all. ☐ *This is the largest cattle ranch under the sun.* ☐ *Isn't there anyone under the sun who can help me with this problem?*

under the table 1. *Sl.* intoxicated. ☐ *Jed was under the table by midnight.* ☐ *By 3:00 in the morning, everyone was under the table.* **2.** *Fig.* secret; clandestine. (This is hyphenated before a nominal.) ☐ *It was strictly an under-the-table deal.* ☐ *The mayor made a few bucks under the table, too.*

under the weather 1. ill. ☐ *I feel sort of under the weather today.* ☐ *Whatever I ate for lunch is making me feel a bit under the weather.* **2.** intoxicated. ☐ *Daddy's had a few beers and is under the weather again.* ☐ *Wally's just a tad under the weather.*

under the wire *Fig.* just barely in time or on time. ☐ *I turned in my report just under the wire.* ☐ *Bill was the last person to get in the door. He got in under the wire.*

***under way** *Fig.* moving; running; started. (*Typically: **be ~; get** something **~; have** something **~**.) ☐ *The time has come to get this game under way.* ☐ *Now that the president has the meeting under way, I can relax.*

***under wraps** *Fig.* concealed; suppressed. (*Typically: **be ~; have ~; hold ~; keep ~**.) ☐ *We kept the candidate's conviction under wraps until after the election.* ☐ *The plan we had under wraps had to be scrapped anyway.*

undertake to do something to try to do something; to take the responsibility of doing something. ☐ *The carpenter undertook to repair the door frame.* ☐ *I will undertake to fix it.*

Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown. *Prov.* A person who has a lot of power and prestige also has a lot of responsibilities, and therefore worries more than other people. (From Shakespeare's play, *Henry IV, Part II.*) ☐ *Susan began to have trouble sleeping shortly after she was promoted to head of her department. "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown," her friends teased.*

The **unexpected always happens.** *Prov.* The things you do not foresee will happen to you; when you plan, you cannot think of everything that might happen. ☐ *It took us an hour to drive to the restaurant, and when we got there, it was closed. I would never have expected a restaurant to be closed on a Friday night, but the unexpected always happens. Especially to me.*

unfamiliar territory an area of knowledge unknown to the speaker. ☐ *We are in unfamiliar territory and I don't know the answer.* ☐ *Astronomy is unfamiliar territory for me, and I cannot answer any questions about the stars.*

unfold into something **1.** [for something folded up] to unfold into something. ☐ *The greeting card unfolded into a little paper house.* ☐ *It unfolded into a cute scene.* **2.** *Fig.* [for a story] to develop into something interesting. (Fig. on ①.) ☐ *The story unfolded into a real mystery.* ☐ *The tale unfolded into a farce.*

unfold something **into** something to spread something out into something. ☐ *The child unfolded the page into a model village.* ☐ *I unfolded the brochure into a large colorful sheet of advertising.*

unify someone or something **into** something to combine people or things into a united whole. ☐ *The mayor unified his party into a powerful force.* ☐ *I unified the committee into a strong body.*

Union is strength. *Prov.* If people join together, they are more powerful than if they work by themselves. ☐ *The students decided to join together in order to present their grievances to the faculty, since union is strength.* ☐ *We cannot allow our opponents to divide us. Union is strength.*

unite against someone or something to join against someone or something. ☐ *We will unite against the opposing forces.* ☐ *We must unite against the incumbent legislators.*

unite for something to join together for some purpose. ☐ *All the forces united for the attack.* ☐ *We will unite for a great party.*

unite in something to come together in something. ☐ *Let us unite in our efforts.* ☐ *We will unite in song.*

unite someone **against** someone or something to cause people to join together against someone or something. ☐ *The mayor united his staff against the federal investigators.* ☐ *Ted united us against John.* ☐ *They united themselves against the enemy.*

unite someone **in** something to join two or more people in something, usually marriage. ☐ *The preacher united the couple in matrimony.* ☐ *A judge united them in marriage.*

unite someone or something **into** something to form something by merging people together; to form something by merging things together. ☐ *Let us unite the party into a powerful political force.* ☐ *We will unite ourselves into a powerful force.*

unite someone or something **(together†)** to join people or groups of people together. ☐ *They united all the workers together for the strike.* ☐ *The event united together the people who cared about the quality of life.*

unite someone or something **with** someone or something to join people or things, in any combination. ☐ *We united Tom with his brother Arnold during the evening.* ☐ *We united our committee with the president in an effort to expand our influence.*

unite with someone to join with someone; to go or come together with someone. ☐ *I was pleased to unite with my family for the holidays.* ☐ *The brothers united with their sister after many years of separation.*

United we stand, divided we fall. *Prov.* People who join together as a group are much harder to defeat than they would be separately. ☐ *The tenants of this building must band together if we are to make the landlord agree to our demands. United we stand, divided we fall!* ☐ *We had better all agree on what we are going to say to the boss before we go in there and say it. United we stand, divided we fall.*

*an **unknown quantity** *Fig.* a person or thing about which no one is certain. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *John is an unknown quantity. We don't know how he's going to act.* ☐ *The new clerk is an unknown quantity. Things may not turn out all right.*

unleash someone or something **against** someone or something to turn someone or something loose against someone or something. ☐ *The army unleashed a horrible attack against the enemy.* ☐ *Max unleashed his bullies against the helpless merchants.*

unleash someone or something **(up)on** someone or something to turn someone or something loose on someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *The air force unleashed a bombing attack upon the enemy.* ☐ *The mob chief unleashed his tough guys on Lefty.*

unload someone or something **on(to)** someone to get rid of a burdensome person or thing on someone else. ☐ *I unloaded my obnoxious little cousin onto his aunt.* ☐ *I didn't mean to unload my problems onto you.*

unload something **from** something to take things off of something; to remove the burden from something. ☐ *Please unload the groceries from the car.* ☐ *I unloaded the groceries from the bags.*

unsung hero *Fig.* a hero who has gotten no praise or recognition. ☐ *The time has come to recognize all the unsung heroes of the battle for low-cost housing.*

until all hours *Fig.* until very late. ☐ *Mary is out until all hours, night after night.* ☐ *If I'm up until all hours two nights in a row, I'm just exhausted.*

until all hours (of the day and night) Go to all hours (of the day and night).

until hell freezes over Go to when hell freezes over.

(un)til the cows come home *Rur.* until the last; until very late. (Referring to the end of the day, when the cows come home to be fed and milked.) ☐ *We were having so much fun that we decided to stay at the party until the cows came home.* ☐ *Where've you been? Who said you could stay out till the cows come home?*

Until we meet again. Go to Good-bye for now.

***up a blind alley** *Fig.* at a dead end; on a route that leads nowhere. (*Typically: **be ~; go ~**.) ☐ *I have been trying to find out something about my ancestors, but I'm up a blind alley. I can't find anything.* ☐ *The police are up a blind alley in their investigation of the crime.*

up a creek Go to up the creek (without a paddle).

***up a storm** *Fig.* [doing or making] a great amount with fury or intensity. (*Typically: **cook ~; gab ~; sing ~; kick ~; talk ~**.) ☐ *Whenever we get together, we always talk up a storm.* ☐ *Everyone was gabbing up a storm and didn't hear the chairman come in.*

up a tree 1. confused; without an answer to a problem; in difficulty. ☐ *This whole business has me up a tree.* ☐ *I'm up a tree, and I need some help.* **2.** intoxicated. ☐ *Only two glasses of booze and he was up a tree for sure.* ☐ *My buddy here is up a tree and needs a place to crash for the night.*

***up against** someone or something in opposition to someone or something, as in a contest. (*Typically: **be ~; come ~; go ~; run ~; team ~**.) ☐ *Let's team up against Paul and Tony in the footrace.* ☐ *We came up against a very strong team.*

***up against** something **1.** *Fig.* resting firmly against something. (*Typically: **be ~; place** something **~**.) ☐ *The car is up against the back of the garage! Back out a little!* **2.** *Fig.* in conflict with something; facing something as a barrier. (Fig. on ①. *Typically: **be ~; go ~**.) ☐ *I am up against some serious problems.*

***up against the wall** *Fig.* in serious difficulties. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; push** someone **~**.) ☐ *Let's face it, we're up against the wall this time.* ☐ *It's when you're up against the wall that your true character shows.*

***(up and) about** and ***up and around** out of bed and moving about. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I'm up and about, but I'm not really well yet.* ☐ *The flu put Alice into bed for three days, but she was up and around on the fourth.*

up and at 'em *Fig.* up and taking action. ☐ *Dad woke me at seven, saying, "Up and at 'em!"* ☐ *It's six-thirty. Time for us to be up and at 'em.*

up and away *Fig.* [of a bird or an airplane] up into the air and into flight. ☐ *After a few seconds of speeding down the runway, our flight to Tucson was up and away.* ☐ *Just before the cat pounced on the sparrows, they were up and away and the cat was left with empty paws and jaws.*

up and did something *Rur.* did something suddenly. ☐ *That summer, she up and died.* ☐ *He had lived here for twenty years, and then one day, he up and left for good.*

up and running *Fig.* [of a machine] functioning. ☐ *As soon as we can get the tractor up and running, we will plant the corn crop.*

***up before** someone *Fig.* standing in front of someone to receive something. (Especially in front of a judge. *Typically: **be ~; come ~; stand ~**.) ☐ *Have you been up before me before?* ☐ *I have never been up before any judge.*

***up for auction** *Fig.* to be sold at an auction. (*Typically: **be ~; come ~; go ~; put** something **~**.) ☐ *The old farm where I lived as a child is up for auction.*

up for grabs 1. *Fig.* available for anyone; not yet claimed. ☐ *The election is up for grabs. Everything is still very chancy.* ☐ *I don't know who will get the promotion. It's up for grabs.* **2.** *Fig.* in total chaos. ☐ *This is a madhouse. The whole place is up for grabs.* ☐ *When the market crashed, the whole office was up for grabs.*

***up for reelection** *Fig.* to be running for reelection to an office or position. (*Typically: **be ~; come ~**.) ☐ *The governor is up for reelection in the fall.* ☐ *Lily is up for reelection this fall.*

***up for sale** *Fig.* available for purchase. (*Typically: **be ~; come ~; put** something **~**.) ☐ *When this lot comes up for sale, let me know.* ☐ *Is this property up for sale?*

***up for** something **1.** *Fig.* [of someone] mentally ready for something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; get** oneself **~**.) ☐ *The team is up for the game tonight.* ☐ *We are all up for the contest.* **2.** *Sl.* agreeable to something. (*Typically: **be ~**.) ☐ *I'm up for a pizza. Anybody want to chip in?* ☐ *Who's up for a swim?*

up front 1. in the forefront; under fire (at the front). ☐ *You guys who are up front are gonna get the most fire.* ☐ *You two go up front and see if you can help.* **2.** *Fig.* at the beginning; in advance. ☐ *She wanted $200 up front.* ☐ *The more you pay up front, the less you'll have to finance.* **3.** *Fig.* open; honest; forthcoming. ☐ *She is a very up front gal—trust her.* ☐ *I wish the salesman had been more up front about it.*

***up in arms 1.** *Fig.* in armed rebellion. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *The entire population is up in arms.* ☐ *They are up in arms, ready to fight.* **2.** *Fig.* very angry. (Fig. on ①, but without weapons. *Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Wally was up in arms about the bill for the broken window.* ☐ *I am really up in arms about what happened.*

up in the air (about someone or something**)** *Fig.* undecided about someone or something; uncertain about someone or something. ☐ *I don't know what Sally plans to do. Things were sort of up in the air the last time we talked.* ☐ *Let's leave this question up in the air until next week.*

up in years and **advanced in years; along in years; on in years** *Fig.* old; elderly. ☐ *My uncle is up in years and can't hear too well.* ☐ *Many people lose their hearing somewhat when they are along in years.*

up North to or at the northern part of the country or the world. ☐ *I don't like living up North. I want to move down South where it's warm.* ☐ *When you say "up North," do you mean where the polar bears live or just in the northern states?*

up on someone or something *Fig.* knowledgeable about someone or something. ☐ *Ask Tom about the author of this book. He's up on stuff like that.*

up one side and down the other *Rur.* thoroughly. ☐ *She scolded him up one side and down the other.* ☐ *They shopped the whole downtown up one side and down the other.*

up stakes to prepare for leaving and then leave. (*Up* has the force of a verb here. The phrase suggests pulling up tent stakes in preparation for departure.) ☐ *They just upped stakes and left without saying good-bye.* ☐ *It's that time of the year when I feel like upping stakes and moving to the country.*

up the ante and **raise the ante 1.** *Fig.* to raise the opening stakes in a betting game. ☐ *Pete upped the ante on that the poker game to $100 per hand.* ☐ *Don't up the ante any more. You're betting far too much money already.* **2.** *Fig.* to increase a price. (Fig. on ②.) ☐ *Sensing how keen the people looking at the house were, Jerry upped the ante another $5,000.* ☐ *"Don't try to up the ante on us," said the man, "We know what the asking price is."*

up the creek (without a paddle) and **up a creek; up shit creek** *Inf. Fig.* in an awkward position with no easy way out. ☐ *I'm sort of up the creek and don't know what to do.* ☐ *You are up a creek! You got yourself into it, so get yourself out.*

up the pole *Fig.* intoxicated. ☐ *You sound a little up the pole. Why don't you call back when you're sober?* ☐ *She's up the pole and shouldn't drive.*

up the river *Sl.* in prison. (Underworld.) ☐ *Gary was up the river for a couple of years, but that doesn't make him an outcast, does it?* ☐ *The judge who sent him up the river was indicted for accepting bribery. If Gary had only known sooner!*

up the wall *Fig.* in a very bad situation; very upset or anxious. ☐ *He's really up the wall about Mary's illness.* ☐ *We were all up the wall until the matter was resolved.*

up to doing something [feeling] able to do something. ☐ *Do you feel up to going back to work today?* ☐ *She just isn't up to staying up so late.*

***up to here (with** something**)** having had as much as one can bear. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I'm up to here with your excuses!* ☐ *We are all up to here with this mystery.*

up to no good *Fig.* doing something bad. ☐ *I could tell from the look on Tom's face that he was up to no good.* ☐ *There are three boys in the front yard. I don't know what they are doing, but I think they are up to no good.*

up to one's **ears (in** something**)** Go to **up to** one's **neck (in** something**)**.

up to one's **eyeballs (in** something**)** Go to **up to** one's **neck (in** something**)**.

***up to** one's **knees** *Fig.* deep in something, such as paperwork or water. (The idea is that it is hard to move or make progress. *Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *We're up to our knees with orders and getting more all the time.* ☐ *The orders are up to our knees.*

***up to** one's **neck (in** something**)** and ***up to** one's **ears (in** something**); *up to** one's **eyeballs (in** something**)** having a lot of something; *Fig.* very much involved in something; immersed in something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I can't come to the meeting. I'm up to my neck in these reports.* ☐ *Mary is up to her ears in her work.* ☐ *I am up to my eyeballs in things to do! I can't do any more!*

up to par *Fig.* as good as the standard or average; up to standard. ☐ *I'm just not feeling up to par today. I must be coming down with something.* ☐ *The manager said that the report was not up to par and gave it back to Mary to do over again.*

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up to snuff and **up to scratch** *Fig.* as good as is required; meeting the minimum requirements. ☐ *Sorry, Tom. Your performance isn't up to snuff. You'll have to improve or find another job.* ☐ *My paper wasn't up to scratch, so I got an F.*

***up to** someone or something *Fig.* decided by someone. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~; leave** something **~**.) ☐ *If it were up to me, I would say yes.* ☐ *It is up to the decision of the judges!*

up to something **1.** *Fig.* [of someone] plotting something. ☐ *I think they are up to something.* ☐ *I am sure that Lily and Max are up to something evil.* **2.** *Fig.* [of someone] well enough or rested enough to do something. ☐ *I'm not quite up to the party.* ☐ *Are you up to a game of volleyball?* **3.** to be as good as something; to be good enough for something. ☐ *This work's not up to the standard of the class.* ☐ *Your last essay was not up to your best.*

***up to speed 1.** *Fig.* moving, operating, or funtioning a normal or desired rate. (*Typically: **be ~; bring** something **~; get ~; get** something **~**.) ☐ *Terri did everything she could to bring her workers up to speed, but couldn't.* ☐ *Can we get this production line up to speed?* **2.** and ***up to speed on** someone or something *Fig.* fully apprised about someone or something; up-to-date on the state of someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; bring** someone **~; get ~; get** someone **~**.) ☐ *Please bring me up to speed on this matter.* ☐ *I'll feel better about it when I get up to speed on what's going on.*

***up to the minute** *Fig.* current. (*Typically: **be ~; bring** something **~**.) ☐ *This report is up to the minute and fresh from the wire services.*

***up with** someone *Fig.* even with someone; caught up with someone. (*Typically: **be ~; catch ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I'm up with the best of them.* ☐ *Are you up with your colleagues on this one?*

up-and-coming *Fig.* enterprising and alert. ☐ *Jane is a hard worker—really up-and-coming.* ☐ *Bob is also an up-and-coming youngster who is going to become well known.*

upbraid someone **for** something to scold someone for doing something. ☐ *The judge upbraided David severely for his crime.* ☐ *Walter upbraided his son for denting the car.*

update someone **about** someone or something and **update** someone **on** someone or something to tell someone the latest news about someone or something. ☐ *Please update me about the current situation in France.* ☐ *Please update me about Tony.*

upgrade someone or something **to** something to raise someone or something to a higher grade or rank. ☐ *Please upgrade me to first class.* ☐ *They upgraded the terrorist alert status to red.*

upgrade to something to move up to a higher grade or rank. ☐ *I would like to upgrade to a first-class seat.* ☐ *Please upgrade me to a better room.*

an **uphill battle** and an **uphill struggle** *Fig.* a hard struggle. ☐ *Convincing the senator to see our point of view was an uphill battle, but we finally succeeded.*

upon impact *Fig.* at the place or time of an impact. ☐ *The car crumpled upon impact with the brick wall.* ☐ *The man who fell from the top of the building died on impact.*

***(up)on** someone *Fig.* to be someone's obligation or responsibility. (*Typically: **be ~; lie ~**.) ☐ *The obligation is upon you to settle this.* ☐ *The major part of the responsibility is on you.*

upper crust *Fig.* the higher levels of society; the upper class. (From the top, as opposed to the bottom, crust of a pie.) ☐ *Jane speaks like that because she pretends to be from the upper crust, but her father was a miner.* ☐ *James is from the upper crust, but he is penniless.*

*the **upper hand (on** someone**)** *Fig.* a position superior to someone; the advantage of someone. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *John is always trying to get the upper hand on someone.* ☐ *He never ends up having the upper hand, though.*

upper story Go to **top story**.

uproot someone **from** some place *Fig.* to cause someone to move from a well-established home or setting. ☐ *You should not uproot people from the land in which they were born.* ☐ *I just couldn't uproot myself from my home.*

uproot something **from** some place to take up a plant or tree, roots and all. ☐ *Wally uprooted the bush from the backyard and replanted it on the other side of the house.* ☐ *Who uprooted a rosebush from my garden?*

upset someone's **plans** *Fig.* to ruin someone's plans. ☐ *I hope it doesn't upset your plans if I'm late for the meeting.* ☐ *No, it won't upset my plans at all.*

upset the apple cart *Fig.* to mess up or ruin something. ☐ *Tom really upset the apple cart by telling Mary the truth about Jane.* ☐ *I always knew he'd tell secrets and upset the apple cart.*

the **upshot of** something *Fig.* the result or outcome of something. ☐ *The upshot of my criticism was a change in policy.* ☐ *The upshot of the argument was an agreement to hire a new secretary.*

***upside-down** *Fig.* in a financial state such that one owes more money on a car, truck, house, etc., than its resale value. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *When I tried to trade in the car, I found that I was upside-down and couldn't close the deal without more money.* ☐ *I took a loan period that was too long and was upside-down in two years.*

***up-to-date** modern or contemporary. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *Is the room up-to-date, or is it standard?* ☐ *Your knowledge is not really up-to-date on this matter.*

up-to-date modern; up to the current standards of fashion; having the most current information. ☐ *I'd like to see a more up-to-date report on Mr. Smith.* ☐ *This is not an up-to-date record of the construction project.*

up-to-the-minute the very latest or most recent. ☐ *I want to hear some up-to-the-minute news on the hostage situation.* ☐ *I just got an up-to-the-minute report on Tom's health.*

urban legend *Fig.* a myth or piece of folklore that is totally false. ☐ *That story about the rats in the sewer being as big as dogs is an urban legend. It's just not so.*

urge someone **along** to encourage someone to continue or go faster. ☐ *We urged them along with much encouragement.* ☐ *They won't do well, but we urged them along anyway.*

urge someone **forward** to encourage someone to move forward. ☐ *The generals urged the troops forward.* ☐ *Sally urged Timmy forward into the classroom.*

U

urge someone **to** do something to try to get someone to do something. ☐ *I urge you to give skiing a try.* ☐ *Ken urged Lily to finish her dinner.*

urge something **(up)on** someone to try to get someone to take something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Arnold urged the new policy on the employees.* ☐ *He urged restraint upon them.*

use a firm hand Go to a firm hand.

use every trick in the book *Fig.* to use every method possible. ☐ *I used every trick in the book, but I still couldn't manage to get a ticket to the game Saturday.* ☐ *Bob tried to use every trick in the book, but he still failed.*

use foul language *Euph.* to swear. ☐ *There's no need to use foul language.* ☐ *When she gets angry, she tends to use foul language.*

use one's **head** and **use** one's **noggin; use** one's **noodle** *Fig.* to use one's own intelligence. (The words *noggin* and *noodle* are slang terms for "head.") ☐ *You can do better in math if you'll just use your head.* ☐ *Jane uses her noggin and gets things done correctly and on time.* ☐ *Yes, she sure knows how to use her noodle.*

use one's **noggin** Go to previous.

use one's **noodle** Go to use one's head.

use some elbow grease *Fig.* use some effort, as in scrubbing something. (As if lubricating one's elbow would make one more efficient. Note the variations in the examples.) ☐ *Come on, Bill. You can do it. Just use some elbow grease.* ☐ *I tried elbow grease, but it doesn't help get the job done.*

use some shut-eye Go to some shut-eye.

use someone or something **as an excuse** to blame someone or something (for a failure). (See also use someone or something as something.) ☐ *John used his old car as an excuse for not going to the meeting.* ☐ *My husband was sick in bed, and I used him as an excuse.*

use someone or something **as** something to make someone or something function as something. (See also use someone or something as an excuse.) ☐ *You have used me as your tool!* ☐ *I don't like your using my car as your private taxi.*

use someone or something **for** something to make use of someone or something for a specific purpose. ☐ *Would you please use Don for your errands?* ☐ *You can use my car for the trip.*

use someone **up** *Fig.* to use all the effort or talent a person has. ☐ *His career simply used him up.* ☐ *I used myself up. I'm done. I can't function anymore.*

use something **before** something **1.** to consume or use something before using something else. ☐ *Use this jar before that one. This one is older.* ☐ *I used the old one before the one you just bought.* **2.** to consume or use something before a specified date. ☐ *I will use this bottle of catsup before May.* ☐ *You should use this one before the date stamped on the bottom.*

use something **by** something to consume or complete the use of something by a specified time. ☐ *Please use this jar of mayonnaise by the last day of the month.* ☐ *Use this one by next week.*

use something **over (again)** to reuse something. ☐ *Do I have to use this stuff over again?* ☐ *Yes. Please use it over.*

use something **up**† to consume or use all of something. ☐ *Use the flour up. I have more in the cupboard.* ☐ *Use up every bit of it. Go ahead.*

use something **with** something to use something in a particular manner. ☐ *Use this tool with a lot of skill and caution.* ☐ *Use this one with great care.*

use strong language *Euph.* to swear, threaten, or use abusive language. ☐ *I wish you wouldn't use strong language in front of the children.* ☐ *If you feel that you have to use strong language with the manager, perhaps you had better let me do the talking.*

use the bathroom and **use the toilet** *Euph.* to urinate or defecate. ☐ *May I be excused to use the bathroom?* ☐ *I have to use the toilet.*

use the race card Go to the race card.

use the toilet Go to use the bathroom.

use your head for more than a hatrack and **use your head for more than something to keep your ears apart** *Rur.* to think. ☐ *How are we going to solve this problem? Come on, use your head for more than a hatrack.* ☐ *Instead of whining about it, why don't you use your head for more than something to keep your ears apart?*

use your head for more than something to keep your ears apart Go to previous.

used to do something to have done something [customarily] in the past. ☐ *We used to go swimming in the lake before it became polluted.* ☐ *I used to eat nuts, but then I became allergic to them.*

***used to** someone or something *Fig.* accustomed to someone or something; familiar and comfortable with someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~; get ~**.) ☐ *I am used to eating better food than this.* ☐ *I am used to the doctor I have and I don't want to change.*

user friendly *Fig.* easy to use. (Hyphenated before nominals.) ☐ *The set-up instructions for the printer were very user friendly.* ☐ *I have a user-friendly computer that listens to my voice and does what I tell it.*

usher someone or something **into** some place and **usher** someone or something **in**† to escort or lead a person, a group, or something into a place. ☐ *The guard ushered the group into the palace.* ☐ *They ushered in the visitors.*

usher someone or something **out of** some place and **usher** someone or something **out**† to escort or lead someone or a group out of a place. ☐ *We ushered them from the room.* ☐ *The woman ushered out the guest.*

usher someone **to** something to escort or lead someone to something, such as a seat, the door, etc. ☐ *The well-dressed gentleman ushered the bride to the altar.* ☐ *Her father ushered her to the altar.*

utilize someone or something **for** something to use someone or something for something or for some purpose. ☐ *Is there any way you can utilize Peter for the project?* ☐ *Can you utilize this contraption for anything?*

Vv

vaccinate someone or an animal **against** something to inoculate or immunize someone or an animal against some disease. □ *They had to vaccinate us against yellow fever.* □ *The vet vaccinated the horse against everything that threatened it.*

vaccinate someone or an animal **with** something to inoculate or immunize someone or an animal with some substance. □ *This time the doctor vaccinated Tom with killed virus.* □ *The vet vaccinated the cat with something that would prevent rabies.*

vacillate between someone **and** someone else or something **and** something else to waver between a choice of people or a choice of things. □ *He kept vacillating between Fred and Alice.* □ *Wayne vacillated between chocolate and vanilla.*

vacuum something **out**† to clean an enclosed area out with a vacuum cleaner. □ *Please vacuum this car out now!* □ *Can you vacuum out the car?*

vacuum something **up**† **(from** something**)** to clean something up from something with a vacuum cleaner. □ *Fred vacuumed the dirt up from the carpet.* □ *He vacuumed up the birdseed from the kitchen floor.*

vain as a peacock Go to proud as a peacock.

value someone or something **above** someone or something to hold someone or something to be more important than someone or something. □ *I value her above all things.* □ *He values his car above his family!*

value someone or something **as** something to hold someone or something in esteem as something; to find someone or something to be as good as something. □ *I value you as a close friend.* □ *I value this watch as a keepsake.*

value someone or something **for** something to hold someone or something in esteem for a particular quality. □ *I value him for his skill in negotiation.* □ *I value this car for its speed and dependability.*

value something **at** something to consider something to be worth a certain amount. □ *The museum curator valued the vase at one million dollars.* □ *I value this vase at one million dollars.*

vanish away to disappear. (The *away* is considered redundant.) □ *The pizza vanished away in no time at all.* □ *The city lights vanished away as dawn broke.*

vanish from something to disappear from something or some place. □ *The money vanished from the desk drawer.* □ *My glasses have vanished from sight again.*

vanish into something to disappear by going into something. □ *All the deer vanished into the forest.* □ *Money seems to vanish into a black hole.*

vanish into thin air *Cliché* to disappear without leaving a trace. □ *My money gets spent so fast. It seems to vanish into thin air.* □ *When I came back, my car was gone. I had locked it, and it couldn't have vanished into thin air!*

Variety is the spice of life. *Prov. Cliché* You should try many different kinds of experiences, because trying different things keeps life interesting. □ *I know we usually spend our summer vacation camping out, but I think we should try something different this year. Variety is the spice of life.*

vary between someone **and** someone else and **vary between** something **and** something else to fluctuate in choosing between people or things. □ *In choosing a bridge partner, Sam varied between Tom and Wally.* □ *I varied between chocolate and vanilla cake for dessert.*

vary between something **and** something else to fluctuate between one thing and another. □ *The daytime temperatures vary between 80 and 90 degrees.* □ *She varies between angry and happy.*

vary (from something**) (in** something**)** to differ from something. □ *This one varies from that one in many ways.* □ *It varies from the other one a little.*

vary from something **to** something to fluctuate over the range from something to something. □ *The colors vary from red to orange.* □ *It varies from warm to very hot during the summer.*

vary with something **1.** to be at variance with someone's figures or a sum or estimate. □ *My figures vary with yours considerably.* □ *Her estimate varies with yours by a few dollars.* **2.** to change according to something. □ *The rainfall in New York State varies with the season.* □ *His mood varies with the stock market average.*

vault into something to jump or dive into something. □ *The diver vaulted into the pool.* □ *He vaulted into bed and pulled up the covers.*

vault over someone or something to jump or leap over someone or something. □ *Molly vaulted over Ted and kept on running.* □ *She vaulted over the trunk.*

veer (away) (from someone or something**)** to swerve away from someone or something; to turn aside to avoid someone or something. □ *The plane veered away from the mountain.* □ *The car veered from the children who were in its path.*

veer off (from someone or something**)** to turn or steer sharply away from someone or something. □ *The bird veered off from the cluster of trees.* □ *The bird veered off and missed hitting the post.*

veer toward someone or something to turn sharply or swerve toward someone or something. □ *The car suddenly veered toward me.* □ *The horse veered toward the side of the bridle path.*

veg out to cease working and take it easy; to vegetate. ☐ *Someday, I just want to veg out and enjoy life.* ☐ *I think I'll just veg this weekend.*

vegged out debilitated by drugs or alcohol. ☐ *Ernie is vegged out and has quit his job and everything.* ☐ *Won't be long till Larry is vegged out altogether.*

vent one's **spleen** *Fig.* to get rid of one's feelings of anger caused by someone or something by attacking someone or something else. ☐ *Jack vented his spleen at his wife whenever things went badly at work.* ☐ *Peter vented his spleen on his car by kicking it when it broke down.*

vent something **(up)on** someone or something to release one's emotional tension on someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Henry vented his anger on Carl.* ☐ *It's no use to vent your hatred on a door. Kicking it won't help.*

venture forth 1. *Fig.* to set out; to go forward; to go out cautiously. ☐ *George ventured forth into the night.* ☐ *I think I will venture forth. It looks safe.* **2.** *Fig.* to go forth bravely. ☐ *Let us venture forth and conquer the enemy.* ☐ *We will arm ourselves and venture forth against our foe.*

venture out ((of) something**)** to go out of something cautiously. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Peter ventured out of his house for only a minute into the cold.* ☐ *He ventured out the door for only a moment.*

venture (up)on someone or something to come upon someone or something by chance. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*. The entire expression is formal or stilted.) ☐ *David ventured upon Fred, who was out looking for mushrooms.* ☐ *I ventured on a little shop on Maple Street that deals in old model trains.*

verge into something to change gradually into something. ☐ *The reds verged into a violet color that seemed to glow.* ☐ *The cool morning verged imperceptibly into a steamy midday.*

verge (up)on something to be almost identical to something; to be similar to or almost the same as something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Your actions verge upon mutiny.* ☐ *What you said verges on an insult.*

verify something **with** someone to check with someone to make sure that something is the truth. ☐ *I will have to verify your story with the storekeeper.* ☐ *I verified your story with the other witness.*

Very good. 1. It is good. ☐ *John: How do you like your lobster? Alice: Mmm. Very good.* ☐ *Jane: What did you think of the movie? Fred: Very good. Jane: Is that all? Fred: Yeah.* **2.** Thank you for your instructions. (Typically said by someone in a serving role, such as a clerk, waiter, waitress, butler, maid, etc.) ☐ *Waiter: What are you drinking, madam? Sue: It's just soda. No more, thanks. Waiter: Very good.* ☐ *Mary: Would you charge this to my account? Clerk: Very good.*

the **very last** *Fig.* the end; an absolute end of something. ☐ *At the very last of the movie, the hero gets killed.* ☐ *Bill stayed at the party until the very last.*

the **(very) picture of** something *Fig.* the perfect example of something; an exact image of something. ☐ *The young newlyweds were the picture of happiness.* ☐ *My doctor told me that I was the very picture of good health.*

the **very thing** *Fig.* the exact thing that is required. ☐ *The vacuum cleaner is the very thing for cleaning the stairs.* ☐ *I have the very thing to remove that stain.*

vest someone **with** something to grant power, rights, or ownership to someone. ☐ *Who vested you with the power to order me around?* ☐ *The dictator vested himself with the power to imprison almost anyone.*

vest something **in** someone or something to grant sole power or control over something to someone or some group. ☐ *The king vested all the military power in his own hands.* ☐ *The constitution vests the power to tax in the legislature.*

*a **vested interest in** something *Fig.* a personal or biased interest, often financial, in something. (*Typically: **have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Margaret has a vested interest in wanting her father to sell the family firm. She has shares in it and would make a large profit.* ☐ *Bob has a vested interest in keeping the village traffic-free. He has a summer home there.*

vie (with someone**) (for** someone or something**)** and **vie (with** someone**) (over** someone or something**)** to compete or contend with someone for someone or something. ☐ *They vied with each other for Mary's favor.* ☐ *I really don't want to have to vie with Randy for recognition.*

the **villain of the piece** *Fig.* someone or something that is responsible for something bad or wrong. (Fig. on the villainous role in a drama.) ☐ *I wonder who told the newspapers about the local scandal. I discovered that Jane was the villain of the piece.* ☐ *We couldn't think who had stolen the meat. The dog next door turned out to be the villain of the piece.*

vim and vigor *Cliché* energy; enthusiasm. ☐ *Show more vim and vigor! Let us know you're alive.* ☐ *She's sure got a lot of vim and vigor.*

vindicate someone **of** something to clear or acquit someone of something. ☐ *The police sought to vindicate Donald of the charges.* ☐ *They vindicated themselves of the charges with a clear alibi.*

virtual reality *Fig.* computer imaging that attempts to mimic real scenes or places. ☐ *The movie had so much virtual reality that the regular photographic scenes began to look funny.*

Virtue is its own reward. *Prov.* You should not be virtuous in hopes of getting a reward, but because it makes you feel good to be virtuous. ☐ *Bill: If I help you, will you pay me? Fred: Virtue is its own reward.*

visible to the naked eye Go to the naked eye.

a **visit from the stork** *Fig.* a birth. (According to legend, babies are brought to their parents by a stork.) ☐ *I hear that Maria is expecting a visit from the stork.* ☐ *The young couple had a visit from the stork.*

visit something **(up)on** someone *Fig.* to inflict something upon someone. (Stilted. *Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *The FBI visited a plague of investigations on the mayor's staff.* ☐ *The storm visited disaster on the little village.*

visit the plumbing *Euph.* to go to the bathroom. ☐ *I think I'd better visit the plumbing before we go.* ☐ *I want you kids to visit the plumbing before we get in the car.*

V

visit with someone to pay a social call on someone. ☐ *I would like to come by and visit with you for a while.* ☐ *I will enjoy visiting with you.*

visualize someone or something **as** someone or something to imagine or envision someone as someone or something or something as something. ☐ *I can almost visualize you as the president.* ☐ *I visualize this room as a meeting place for everyone.*

visually impaired *Euph.* blind or partly blind. ☐ *I am visually impaired, but I like TV just as much as the next person.* ☐ *The disease left him visually impaired.*

***a voice (in** something**)** and ***a say (in** something**)** *Fig.* a part in making a decision. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I'd like to have a voice in choosing the carpet.* ☐ *John wanted to have a say in the issue also.* ☐ *He says he seldom gets a say.*

volunteer as something to submit oneself as a person ready or willing to do something. ☐ *Would you be willing to volunteer as a marcher?* ☐ *I will volunteer as a helper in the hospital.*

volunteer for something **1.** to submit oneself for some task without being asked. ☐ *I volunteered for the job.* ☐ *I didn't volunteer for this.* **2.** to work as an unpaid volunteer for a charity, etc. ☐ *On Sundays she volunteers as a receptionist at the hospital.*

vomit something **out**† *Fig.* [for something] to spill forth a great deal of something. ☐ *The volcano vomited the lava out for days.* ☐ *It vomited out hot lava for months.*

vomit something **up**† to bring up something from the stomach by vomiting. ☐ *The dog vomited the chocolate cake up.* ☐ *Fido vomited up the rabbit.*

vote a split ticket *Fig.* to cast a ballot on which one's votes are divided between two or more parties. ☐ *I always vote a split ticket since I detest both parties.* ☐ *Mary voted a split ticket for the first time in her life.*

vote a straight ticket *Fig.* to cast a ballot on which all one's votes are for members of the same political party. ☐ *I'm not a member of any political party, so I never vote a straight ticket.* ☐ *I usually vote a straight ticket because I believe in the principles of one party and not in the other's.*

vote against someone or something to cast a ballot against someone or something. ☐ *Are you going to vote against the provision?* ☐ *I plan to vote against David.*

vote for someone or something to cast a ballot in favor of someone or something. ☐ *Did you vote for Alice?* ☐ *I plan to vote for the tax freeze.* ☐ *Of course, I voted for myself! Wouldn't you?*

a **vote of confidence** *Fig.* a poll taken to discover whether or not a person, party, etc., still has the majority's support. ☐ *The government easily won the vote of confidence called for by the opposition.* ☐ *The president of the club resigned when one of the members called for a vote of confidence in his leadership.*

a **vote of thanks** *Fig.* a speech expressing appreciation and thanks to a speaker, lecturer, organizer, etc., and inviting the audience to applaud. ☐ *John gave a vote of thanks to Professor Jones for his talk.* ☐ *Mary was given a vote of thanks for organizing the dance.*

vote someone **into** something and **vote** someone **in**† to elect someone to office or to membership in a group. ☐ *The other party finally voted a candidate into office.* ☐ *The people voted in the new officers.*

vote someone **on(to** something**)** to elect someone to something, such as a board. ☐ *Let's vote Christine onto the board.* ☐ *We voted Dave on last term.*

vote someone or something **down**† to defeat someone or something in an election. ☐ *The community voted the proposal down.* ☐ *They voted down the proposal.*

vote someone **out of** something and **vote** someone **out**† to remove one from office by defeating one in an election. ☐ *They voted her out of office.* ☐ *The electorate voted out a number of incumbents.*

vote something **into law** and **vote** something **in**† to take a vote on a proposal and make it a law. ☐ *They voted the proposal into law.* ☐ *If we vote in this proposal, will that solve everything?*

vote something **through**† to get something through a set of procedures by voting in favor of it. ☐ *They were not able to vote the bill through.* ☐ *They voted through the bill.*

vote (up)on someone or something to make a decision about someone or something by ballot. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *The committee decided to vote on it.* ☐ *Are we going to vote on this?*

vote with one's **feet** *Fig.* to express one's dissatisfaction with something by leaving, especially by walking away. ☐ *I think that the play is a total flop. Most of the audience voted with its feet during the second act.* ☐ *I am prepared to vote with my feet if the meeting appears to be a waste of time.*

vouch for someone or something to support or back someone or something; to endorse someone or something. ☐ *I can vouch for Tom.* ☐ *Irene will vouch for my honesty.*

Ww

wade across something to walk across something covered by water. ☐ *Let's wade across the stream at this point.* ☐ *If I wade across it, I will get wet.*

wade in(to something**) 1.** to walk into an area covered by water. ☐ *The horse waded right into the stream.* ☐ *It waded right in.* **2.** *Fig.* to get quickly and directly involved in something. (Fig. on ①.) ☐ *Don't just wade into things. Stop and think about what you are doing.* ☐ *Just wade in and get started.*

wade through something **1.** to walk with effort through a substance, such as water, mud, garbage, etc. ☐ *The soldiers waded through the mud on the way to battle.* ☐ *They waded through the mess to get to where they were going.* **2.** *Fig.* to struggle through something with difficulty. (Fig. on ①.) ☐ *You mean I have to wade through all these applications?* ☐ *I have to wade through forty term papers in the next two days.*

waffle around and **waffle about** to be indecisive; to be wishy-washy about making a decision. ☐ *Make up your mind. Stop waffling around.* ☐ *Now, don't waffle about. Make up your mind.*

wag one's **chin** *Rur.* to talk. ☐ *She loves to visit. She'll wag her chin for hours.* ☐ *He was on the phone, wagging his chin to his buddy.*

wage something **against** someone or something to carry on something against someone or a group. ☐ *They waged war against the aggressors.* ☐ *Are you still waging your battle against your father?*

wager on someone or something to bet on someone or something. ☐ *I wouldn't want to wager on the outcome.* ☐ *I'll wager on Bill, the fastest runner in town.*

wager something **on** someone or something to bet a certain amount of money on someone or something. ☐ *I'll wager twenty bucks on you.* ☐ *I would never wager anything on that horse!*

wait (around) (for someone or something**)** to stay somewhere until something happens or someone or something arrives. ☐ *I'll wait around for you for an hour or so.* ☐ *I don't want to wait around.*

wait at something **(for** someone or something**)** to stay at something or some place until something happens or someone or something arrives. ☐ *Wait at the door for me.* ☐ *I waited at the office for your call.*

wait for the next wave Go to **catch the next wave.**

wait for the other shoe to drop *Fig.* to wait for the inevitable next step or the final conclusion. ☐ *He just opened his mail and moaned. Now, I'm waiting for the other shoe to drop when he finds the subpoena.*

wait on someone **hand and foot** *Fig.* to serve someone very well, attending to all personal needs. ☐ *I don't mind bringing you your coffee, but I don't intend to wait on you hand and foot.* ☐ *I don't want anyone to wait on me hand and foot. I can take care of myself.*

wait (on) tables *Fig.* to serve food and tend diners, as at a restaurant. ☐ *I waited on tables for years to pay my college tuition.*

wait one's **turn** *Fig.* to keep from doing something until everyone ahead of you has done it. ☐ *You can't cross the intersection yet. You must wait your turn.* ☐ *I can't wait my turn. I'm in a tremendous hurry.*

wait something **out†** to wait until something ends. ☐ *I will wait the summer out, and if nothing happens, I'll write again.* ☐ *I can wait out the storm inside.*

Wait up (a minute)! Wait for me while I catch up with you! ☐ *Tom, who was following Mary down the street, said, "Wait up a minute! I need to talk to you."* ☐ *John: Hey, Sally! Wait up! Sally: What's happening?*

wait up (for someone or something**) 1.** *Fig.* to stay up late waiting for someone to arrive or something to happen. ☐ *I'll be home late. Don't wait up for me.* ☐ *We waited up for the coming of the new year, and then we went to bed.* **2.** and **hold up (for** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to wait for someone or something to catch up. ☐ *Hey! Don't go so fast. Wait up for me.* ☐ *Hold up! You're going too fast.*

wait up (until something**)** to delay going to bed until a certain time or until something happens or someone arrives. ☐ *Are you going to wait up until midnight?* ☐ *We waited up until we heard him come in the back door.*

wait (up)on someone *Fig.* to pay homage to someone. (Stilted.) ☐ *Do you expect me to wait upon you like a member of some medieval court?* ☐ *She waited on her grown children as if they were gods and goddesses.*

wait-and-see attitude *Fig.* a skeptical attitude; an uncertain attitude in which someone will just wait to see what happens before reacting. ☐ *John thought that Mary couldn't do it, but he took a wait-and-see attitude.* ☐ *His wait-and-see attitude seemed to indicate that he didn't really care what happened.*

waiting in the wings *Fig.* ready or prepared to do something, especially to take over someone else's job or position. ☐ *Mr. Smith retires as manager next year, and Mr. Jones is just waiting in the wings.* ☐ *Jane was waiting in the wings, hoping that a member of the hockey team would drop out and she would get a place on the team.*

wake someone or an animal **up†** to cause someone or an animal to awaken. ☐ *Please don't wake me up until noon.* ☐ *Wake up your brother at noon.*

wake someone **(up†) from** something to awaken someone from something, such as a sound sleep, a nap, dreams, etc. ☐ *Henry woke Fred up from his dreams.* ☐ *He woke up Fred from a deep sleep.*

wake someone **up† (to** something**)** to cause someone to become alert and pay attention. (Does not refer to some-

one actually asleep.) ☐ *We tried to wake them up to the dangers.* ☐ *Try to wake up the students to their responsibilities.*

wake the dead *Fig.* to be so loud as to wake those who are "sleeping" the most soundly: the dead. ☐ *You are making enough noise to wake the dead.* ☐ *Stop hollering! You'll wake the dead!*

wake up to awaken; to become alert. ☐ *Wake up! We have to get on the road.* ☐ *It's time to wake up!*

Wake up and smell the coffee. *Prov.* Try to pay attention to what's going on. ☐ *Things have changed around here, Wallace J. Hodder! Wake up and smell the coffee!*

wake (up) from something to awaken from something, such as a sound sleep, sleep, dreams, etc. ☐ *She woke up from a deep sleep.* ☐ *Elaine woke from her dreams with a start.*

wake (up) to something and **waken to** something to awaken and face something, such as a problem, sunlight, music, noise, etc. ☐ *I love to wake up to soft music.* ☐ *We woke to the smell of freshly brewed coffee.*

walk a tightrope *Fig.* to be in a situation where one must be very cautious. ☐ *I've been walking a tightrope all day. I need to relax.* ☐ *Our business is about to fail. We've been walking a tightrope for three months.*

walk across something to move across something on foot. ☐ *We walked across the bridge carefully.* ☐ *Jerry walked across the field and examined the fence on the other side.*

walk ahead of someone or something to move on ahead of someone or something on foot. ☐ *Please walk ahead of me where I can see you.* ☐ *The road was so bad, I had to walk ahead of the car and look for potholes.*

walk all over someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to tread on someone or something. ☐ *Who walked all over the posters I had spread out on the floor?* ☐ *The rioters walked all over a child who had fallen in the confusion.* **2.** *Fig.* to treat someone or something very badly; to beat someone or something soundly in a competition. ☐ *The prosecution walked all over the witness.* ☐ *The attorney walked all over my case.*

walk along to move along on foot. ☐ *I was just walking along when my heel broke off.* ☐ *I'm in no hurry. I'll just walk along at my own speed.*

walk along something to move beside something on foot. ☐ *Let's not walk along the road. It's too dangerous.* ☐ *Walk along the wall where it's safer.*

walk arm in arm Go to arm in arm.

walk around to move around walking; to pace around. ☐ *I need to walk around and get some fresh air.* ☐ *Why don't we walk around for a while before we go in?*

walk around something **1.** to avoid something by passing around it. ☐ *Let's walk around this muddy place in the path.* **2.** to tour something or some place on foot. ☐ *I will walk around the park while I am waiting for you.* ☐ *Let me walk around the grounds and see what potential they offer.*

walk away from someone or something **1.** to depart from someone or something on foot. ☐ *Don't walk away from me while I am talking to you.* ☐ *I walked away from the concert by myself.* **2.** to abandon someone or something; to go away and leave someone or something. ☐ *Todd walked away from the problem.* ☐ *I walked away from him and never saw him again.*

walk away with someone or an animal to lead, take, accompany, or carry someone or an animal away. ☐ *I walked away with my brother.* ☐ *The young man walked away with the heifer.*

walk away with something and **walk off with** something **1.** *Fig.* to win something easily. (With little more effort than is required to carry off the winning trophy.) ☐ *John won the tennis match with no difficulty. He walked away with it.* ☐ *Our team walked away with first place.* **2.** *Fig.* to take or steal something. ☐ *I think somebody just walked off with my purse!* ☐ *Somebody walked off with my daughter's bicycle.*

walk back ((to) something**)** to return to something or some place on foot. ☐ *I walked back to my office alone.* ☐ *She walked back home.* ☐ *Thanks for the offer of a ride. I'll walk back.*

walk down something to go down something on foot. ☐ *She walked down the path and turned to the right.* ☐ *Todd was walking down the road when they caught up with him.*

walk hand in hand Go to hand in hand.

walk in (a) single file Go to in (a) single file.

walk in on someone or something to interrupt someone or something by entering a place. ☐ *I didn't mean to walk in on you. I didn't know anyone was in here.* ☐ *Alice walked in on the meeting by accident.*

walk in(to something**)** to enter something on foot. ☐ *We walked into the parking garage and tried to find our car.* ☐ *He walked in and sat down.*

walk off to walk away; to leave on foot abruptly. ☐ *She didn't even say good-bye. She just walked off.* ☐ *He walked off and never looked back.*

walk off the job 1. *Fig.* to abandon a job abruptly. ☐ *I was so mad I almost walked off the job.* ☐ *Fred almost walked off the job when he saw how bad things were.* **2.** *Fig.* to go on strike at a workplace. ☐ *The workers walked off the job and refused to negotiate.* ☐ *They walked off the job and called a strike.*

walk off with something Go to walk away with something.

walk on to continue walking. ☐ *Walk on. Go all the way to the end.* ☐ *I knew I wasn't there yet, so I just walked on.*

walk on air *Fig.* to be very happy; to be euphoric. ☐ *Ann was walking on air when she got the job.* ☐ *On the last day of school, all the children are walking on air.*

walk on eggs and **walk on thin ice** *Fig.* to proceed very cautiously; to be in a very precarious position. (Fig. on the image of someone walking on something that offers little support and may collapse at any moment.) ☐ *I have to remember that I'm walking on eggs when I give this speech.* ☐ *Careful with radical ideas like that. You're walking on thin ice.*

walk on eggshells 1. *Fig.* to walk very carefully; to take steps gingerly. ☐ *Since he stumbled and fell against the china cabinet, Bill has been walking on eggshells.* **2.** *Fig.* to be very diplomatic and inoffensive. ☐ *I was walking on eggshells trying to explain the remark to her without offending her further.*

walk on stage and off again *Fig.* to play a very small role where one goes on stage and quickly leaves again. ☐ *It was a very small part. I walked on stage and right off again.*

walk on thin ice Go to walk on eggs.

walk out (of something**)** to exit something or some place. ☐ *We walked out of the shop when we had made our purchases.* ☐ *She went to the door and walked out.*

walk out (on someone**)** *Fig.* to abandon someone; to leave one's spouse. ☐ *Mr. Franklin walked out on Mrs. Franklin last week.* ☐ *Bob walked out on Jane without saying goodbye.*

walk out (on something**)** *Fig.* to leave a performance (of something by someone). ☐ *We didn't like the play at all, so we walked out.* ☐ *John was giving a very dull speech, and a few people even walked out on him.*

walk out with someone to exit something or some place with someone on foot. ☐ *After the play, Jane and I walked out together and had a nice talk.* ☐ *We walked out with Mr. Wilson, who had sat next to us during the show.*

walk over (to someone or something**)** to move to someone or something on foot. ☐ *I walked over to her and asked her what she thought.* ☐ *I just walked over.*

walk right in to enter on foot without hesitation. ☐ *He went up to the door, opened it, and walked right in.* ☐ *Please just walk right in!*

walk (right) into a trap to fall right into a trap or deception. ☐ *You walked right into my trap. Now I have you right where I want you.* ☐ *The unsuspecting agent walked into the FBI setup.*

walk (right) into someone or something to bump into someone or something. ☐ *Fred walked right into the edge of the door and broke his nose.* ☐ *Sam walked into Liz and frightened her.*

walk right up (to someone or something**)** to move up close to someone or something, on foot; not to hesitate to approach someone or something. ☐ *Walk right up to him and ask him what you want to know.* ☐ *Just walk right up.*

walk soft to be unobtrusive; to be gentle and humble. ☐ *I try to walk soft and not rock the boat.* ☐ *The guy's a tyrant. He walks soft just to mislead people.*

walk someone **out** to accompany someone out, walking. ☐ *I'll walk you out. The exit is hard to find.* ☐ *Please let me walk you out so you don't get lost.*

walk someone **over to** someone or something to accompany someone a short distance on foot to someone or something. ☐ *I'll walk her over to the personnel department and show her what to do.* ☐ *I will walk her over to Richard. I think he's in his office.* ☐ *She walked herself over to the window and looked out.*

walk someone's **feet off** *Fig.* to walk too much and tire out someone's feet, including one's own. ☐ *I've gone all over town today. I walked my feet off, looking for just the right present for Jill.* ☐ *I need to know where I am going before I leave so I won't walk my feet off.*

walk someone **through** something **1.** to lead or accompany someone through an opening, arch, doorway, etc. ☐ *Mike walked Mary through the arch into a lovely garden.* ☐ *Todd walked Rita through the doorway, into the ballroom.* **2.** *Fig.* to lead someone through a complex problem or thought process. ☐ *Mary walked Jane through the complex solution to the calculus problem.* ☐ *Do I have to walk you through this solution?*

walk tall *Fig.* to be brave and self-assured. ☐ *I know I can walk tall because I'm innocent.* ☐ *You go out on that stage and walk tall. There is no reason to be afraid.*

walk the floor *Fig.* to pace nervously while waiting. ☐ *While Bill waited for news of the operation, he walked the floor for hours on end.* ☐ *Walking the floor won't help. You might as well sit down and relax.*

walk the plank *Fig.* to suffer punishment at the hand of someone. (Fig. on the image of pirates making their blindfolded captives die by walking off the end of a plank jutting out over the open sea.) ☐ *Fred may think he can make the members of my department walk the plank, but we will fight back.* ☐ *Tom thought he could make John walk the plank, but John fought back.*

walk through something *Fig.* to rehearse something in a casual way; to go through a play or other performed piece, showing where each person is to be located during each speech or musical number. ☐ *Let's walk through this scene one more time.*

walk together [for two or more people] to walk as a group. ☐ *Let's all walk together so we can talk to one another.* ☐ *We walked together for a while.*

walk up something **1.** to move up an incline or stairs on foot. ☐ *Sally will have to walk up the stairs by herself.* **2.** to walk the length of something. ☐ *I walked slowly up the hall.*

walk up to someone or something to approach someone or something on foot. ☐ *I walked up to the manager and told him my problem.* ☐ *Eric walked up to the door and rang the bell.*

walk with someone to walk in the company of someone. ☐ *Why don't you walk with me for a while?* ☐ *Can I walk with you?*

walk with something **1.** to walk with the aid of something, such as a cane, crutches, etc. ☐ *You can recognize her easily. She walks with a cane.* ☐ *Dan walks with the help of a crutch.* **2.** to walk in a characteristic manner, such as with a limp, halting gait, a sprightly step, etc. ☐ *Martha's uncle walks with a limp.* ☐ *I have always walked with a halting gait.*

wall someone or something **in**† to contain someone or something behind or within a wall. (Implies a constriction of space, but not necessarily an inescapable area. See wall something up.) ☐ *The count walled his prisoner in permanently.* ☐ *Jane decided to wall in the little garden at the side of the house.* ☐ *She walled the garden in.*

wall someone or something **off**† to separate or segregate someone or something by building a wall. ☐ *She sat right across from me at her desk, listening to every phone call I made. Finally, the manager walled her off so we now can carry on our business in privacy.* ☐ *They walled off the south door to the building.*

wall something **off**† **(from** someone or something**)** to deny access to an area by building a wall as a barrier. ☐ *The manager was told to wall the incinerator area off from the machinery area.* ☐ *Please wall off the incinerator area.*

W

wall something **up**† **1.** to seal something up behind a wall. ☐ *We simply walled the old furnace up. It was cheaper than removing it.* ☐ *They walled up the old furnace.* **2.** to fill up an opening, such as a window or door, by building a wall. ☐ *We will have to hire someone to wall the doorway up.* ☐ *They walled up the doorway.*

wallow (around) in something to roll around in something. ☐ *Pigs enjoy wallowing around in mud.* ☐ *They wallow in mud to keep cool.*

wallow in something *Fig.* to experience an abundance of something. (Fig. on **wallow (around) in something**.) ☐ *Roger and Wilma are just wallowing in money.* ☐ *Claire spent the entire day wallowing in self-pity.* ☐ *The villagers are all wallowing in superstition.*

Walls have ears. *Prov.* Someone may be listening. (A warning that you think your conversation is being overheard.) ☐ *Jill: Did I tell you what I found out about Fred? He— Jane: Shhh! Walls have ears.* ☐ *Don't say anything about our business dealings in here. Walls have ears.*

wall-to-wall (with) something *Fig.* covered with something in all places. (From *wall-to-wall carpeting.*) ☐ *The hallway is wall-to-wall with Jimmy's toys.* ☐ *The beach was wall-to-wall tourists.*

waltz around something *Fig.* to move around or through a place happily or proudly. ☐ *She waltzed around the room, very pleased with herself.* ☐ *Who is that person waltzing around, trying to look important?*

waltz in(to some place**)** *Fig.* to step or walk into a place briskly and easily. ☐ *She waltzed into the room and showed off her ring.* ☐ *Eric waltzed in and said hello.*

waltz off *Fig.* to depart briskly and easily. ☐ *They said good-bye and waltzed off.*

waltz off (with something**)** *Fig.* to take something away easily. ☐ *The thieves waltzed off with a giant screen television in broad daylight.* ☐ *They just picked the thing up and waltzed off. Nobody asked them any questions.*

waltz through something *Fig.* to get through something easily. ☐ *I waltzed through my comps and started on my research in my second year of grad school.* ☐ *I tried to waltz through my assignment, but it was too hard.*

waltz up (to someone**)** *Fig.* to approach someone boldly. ☐ *He just waltzed up to her and introduced himself.* ☐ *He waltzed up and said hello.*

wander about and **wander around** to stroll or amble around without any purpose evident; to roam around. ☐ *We just wandered about downtown all morning, looking at the shop windows.* ☐ *It's fun to wander around in a strange town.*

wander away (from someone or something**)** and **wander off (from** someone or something**)** to roam away from someone or something. ☐ *The little boy wandered away from his mother.* ☐ *He wandered off from his sister.* ☐ *The dog wandered off.*

wander from something to stray from something, such as a path, a set of rules, etc. ☐ *Please do not wander from the path I have set for you.* ☐ *If you wander from our guidelines, your finished product may not be acceptable.*

wander in(to something**)** to stray or roam into something or some place. ☐ *A deer wandered into the parking lot and frightened some of the shoppers.* ☐ *Someone wandered in and sat down.*

wander off (from someone or something**)** Go to **wander away (from** someone or something**)**.

wangle out of something *Fig.* to get out of having to do something; to argue or deceive one's way out of a responsibility. ☐ *Don't try to wangle out of this mess. You must stay and fix the problems you made.* ☐ *Mary managed to wangle out of staying late again.*

wangle something **from** someone and **wangle** something **out of** someone *Fig.* to obtain, through argument or deception, something from someone. ☐ *Are you trying to wangle money from me?* ☐ *You can't wangle any money out of me.*

Wanna make sumpin' of it? Go to **Want to make something of it?**

want a knuckle sandwich Go to a **knuckle sandwich.**

want a pick-me-up Go to a **pick-me-up.**

Want a piece of me? Go to **(You) want a piece of me?**

want first crack at something Go to **first crack at** something.

want for nothing *Fig.* not to lack anything; to have everything one needs or desires. ☐ *The Smiths don't have much money, but their children seem to want for nothing.* ☐ *Lisa's husband spoils her. She wants for nothing.*

want for something *Fig.* to lack something; to need something. ☐ *I certainly don't want for advice. In fact, I have had too much.* ☐ *We don't want for helpers around here.*

want in((to) something**)** to want to come into something or some place. ☐ *It's cold out here! I want into the house.* ☐ *The dog wants in.*

want off ((of) something**)** to desire to be off or get off something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *I want off of this bus this very minute!* ☐ *Stop this train! I want off!*

want out (of something**)** **1.** to desire to get out of something or some place. ☐ *I want out of this stuffy room.* ☐ *Where's the door? I want out.* **2.** *Fig.* to desire to be relieved of a responsibility. ☐ *I want out of this responsibility. I don't have the time to do it right.* ☐ *This job is no good for me. I want out.* **3.** *Fig.* to want to remove oneself from some association or relationship. ☐ *I want out. This relationship is stifling me.*

want so bad one **can taste it** Go to **so bad** one **can taste it.**

want someone **for** something **1.** to desire someone for some job or purpose. ☐ *I want Fred for my team.* ☐ *We all want you for a candidate.* **2.** to hunt or seek someone as a criminal suspect. ☐ *The police want Max for questioning.* ☐ *They want him for a number of crimes.*

want someone or something **back** to desire the return of someone or something. ☐ *Timmy wanted his mother back very badly.* ☐ *I want my money back!*

want someone or something **in** something to desire that someone or something be in something or some place. ☐ *I want you in my office immediately.* ☐ *I want some coffee in this room now!*

want someone or something **out of** something to desire that someone or something leave or be removed from something or some place. □ *I want you out of here immediately.* □ *I want this box out of here now!*

want something **for** someone or something to desire to have something for someone or something. □ *I want a gift for my wife. What would you suggest?* □ *I want a button for my shirt.*

want something **on a silver platter** Go to on a silver platter.

Want to make something of it? and **Wanna make sumpin' of it?** *Inf.* Do you want to fight about it? (See also (Do you) want to make something of it?) □ *So, I'm a little ugly. Wanna make sumpin' of it?* □ *I'm sitting in your usual chair, you say? Want to make something of it?*

war against someone or something to fight against someone or something; to oppose someone or something. □ *That country is always warring against its neighbors.* □ *Why do you want to war against the city council?*

war over someone or something to fight about who is to get someone or something. □ *Stop warring over Tom. He refuses to play on either team.* □ *There is no point in warring over the contract.*

war with someone to fight or dispute with someone. □ *Ruth is always warring with someone, usually about something trivial.* □ *Please don't war with me!*

ward someone or something **off†** to hold someone or something off; to fight someone or something **off.** □ *The army was able to ward the attackers off repeatedly.* □ *We couldn't ward off the attackers any longer.*

***warm as toast** very warm and cozy. (*Also: **as ~**.) □ *The baby will be warm as toast in that blanket.* □ *We were as warm as toast by the side of the fire.*

warm body a person; just any person (who can be counted on to be present). □ *See if you can get a couple of warm bodies to stand at the door and hand out programs.* □ *You mean among all these warm bodies nobody knows calculus?*

warm someone or something **up†** to make someone or something warmer; to take the chill off someone or something. □ *I put him by the fire to warm him up a little.* □ *We warmed up our feet before the fire.* □ *Could you warm up my coffee, please?*

warm someone **up† 1.** to make someone warmer. □ *Stand by the fire and warm yourself up.* □ *Warm up the kids and then give them some cookies.* **2.** *Fig.* to help someone get physically prepared to perform in an athletic event. (As if exercising or loosening up someone's muscles.) □ *The referee told the coach to warm his team up so the game could begin.* □ *You have to warm up the team before a game.* □ *Be sure to warm yourself up before playing.* **3.** *Fig.* to prepare an audience for another—more famous—performer. (Fig. on ②.) □ *A singer came out to warm us up for the main attraction.* □ *This comedian is a superb choice to warm up the audience.*

warm something **over† 1.** to reheat food to serve it as leftovers. □ *I'll just warm the rest over for lunch tomorrow.* □ *Jane warmed over yesterday's turkey.* **2.** *Fig.* to bring up a matter that was thought to have been settled. (Fig. on ①.) □ *Please don't warm that business over again. It is settled and should remain that way.* □ *Don't warm over that matter. We have discussed it enough.*

warm the bench *Fig.* [for a player] to remain out of play during a game—seated on a bench. □ *John spent the whole game warming the bench.* □ *Mary never warms the bench. She plays from the beginning to the end.*

warm the cockles of someone's **heart** *Fig.* to make someone feel warm and happy. □ *It warms the cockles of my heart to hear you say that.* □ *Hearing that old song again warmed the cockles of her heart.*

warm up 1. [for the weather or a person] to become warmer or hotter. □ *I think it is going to warm up next week.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to become more friendly. (A warm person is a friendly person.) □ *Todd began to warm up halfway through the conference.* □ *After he had worked there for a while, he began to warm up.* **3.** and **warm up for** something *Fig.* to prepare for some kind of performance or competition. □ *The team had to warm up before the game.* □ *They have to warm up.*

warm up to someone or something *Fig.* to become more fervent and earnest toward someone, something, or a group; to become more responsive and receptive to someone, a group, or something. □ *After we talked, he began to warm up to us a little.* □ *I warmed up to the committee as the interview went on.*

warmed over not very original; rehashed. □ *I am not interested in reading warmed over news on a computer screen.* □ *The lecture sounded sort of warmed over, but it wasn't too dull.*

warn someone **about** someone or something to advise someone about the dangers associated with someone or something. □ *Didn't I warn you about the dangers of going there?* □ *I warned you about Alice.*

warn someone **against** someone or something to advise someone against someone, something, or doing something. □ *We warned them all against going to the region at this time.* □ *I warned her against Gerald.*

warn someone **away from** someone or something to advise someone to avoid someone or something. □ *We warned her away from the danger, but she did not heed our warning.* □ *Why didn't you warn me away from Roger?*

warn someone **of** something to advise someone that something bad is likely to happen. □ *I wish you had warned us of what was going to happen.* □ *Please warn John of the heavy traffic he may run into.*

warn someone **off†** to advise a person to stay away. □ *We placed a guard outside the door to warn people off until the gas leak could be fixed.* □ *The guards warned off everyone in the vicinity.*

warts and all *Cliché* even with the flaws. □ *It's a great performance—warts and all.* □ *Yes, we admire each other very much, warts and all.*

was had Go to been had.

wash away to be carried away by water or some other liquid. □ *The bridge washed away in the flood.* □ *All the soil washed away and left the rocks exposed.*

wash off ((of) someone or something**)** to be carried off of or away from someone or something by the action of water or another liquid. (*Of* is usually retained before pro-

nouns.) ☐ *The dirt washed off of the floor easily.* ☐ *The label washed off this can, and now I don't know what's in it.*

wash one's **dirty linen in public** Go to **air** one's **dirty linen in public.**

wash one's **hands of** someone or something *Fig.* to end one's association with someone or something. (Fig. on the notion of getting rid of a problem by removing it as if it were dirt on the hands.) ☐ *I washed my hands of Tom. I wanted no more to do with him.* ☐ *That car was a real headache. I washed my hands of it long ago.*

wash out 1. *Inf.* to fail and be removed from something, such as school. ☐ *I studied all I could, but I still washed out.* ☐ *I don't want to wash out. It's my whole future.* **2.** *Inf.* to have a serious wreck; to **wipe out.** ☐ *The little car washed out on the curve.* ☐ *The vehicles have a tendency to wash out when cornering.* **3.** *Inf.* to lose a large amount of money. ☐ *Fred washed out on that stock deal.* ☐ *Lefty and Willie washed out at the racetrack.* **4.** *Inf.* to break down or collapse from exhaustion. ☐ *The whole play began to wash out during the second act. It was a lost cause by the third.* ☐ *Finally, after a long day, I just washed out. They had to call the paramedics.*

wash over someone *Fig.* [for a powerful feeling] to flood over a person. ☐ *A feeling of nausea washed over me.* ☐ *A strong feeling of satisfaction washed over me.*

wash overboard [for someone or something] to be carried overboard (off the deck of a ship) by water. ☐ *Our chairs washed overboard in the storm.* ☐ *I was afraid that the dog would wash overboard, so I took her below.*

wash someone or something **away**† [for a flood of water] to carry someone or something away. ☐ *The flood washed the boats away.* ☐ *The high water washed away much of the sand along the shoreline.*

wash someone or something **off**† to clean someone or something by washing. ☐ *She washed the muddy children off with a hose and put their clothes right into the washing machine.* ☐ *Jane washed off the children.*

wash someone or something **overboard** [for water] to flood up and carry someone or something off the deck of a ship into the sea. ☐ *The high seas washed two of the sailors overboard.* ☐ *The storm washed our chairs overboard.*

wash someone or something **up**† **1.** to clean up someone or something by washing. ☐ *Please wash the baby up as long as you are changing the diaper.* ☐ *I'll wash up the baby.* ☐ *Sam will wash himself up before dinner.* **2.** [for water or the waves] to bring someone or something up onto the shore or beach. ☐ *Look what the waves washed up! A bottle with a note in it!* ☐ *The waves washed a bottle up.*

wash someone **out**† *Fig.* to deplete the strength or vitality of someone. ☐ *The flu really washed me out.* ☐ *The disease washed out the whole class.*

W

wash someone **out of** something and **wash** someone **out**† to make it necessary for a person to leave a place or program; to wash someone up. (See also **wash** someone **out.**) ☐ *That professor just loves to wash students out of the course.* ☐ *The professor washed out over half the class.*

wash someone **up**† to terminate someone in something. ☐ *This error is going to wash you up as an account executive.* ☐ *That washed me up.* ☐ *Problems like this have washed up quite a few careers.*

wash something **away**† to clean something by scrubbing and flushing away the dirt. ☐ *Fresh water will wash the seawater away.* ☐ *Let's wash away these muddy footprints.*

wash something **down** something to get rid of something by flooding it down the sewer, drain, sink, etc. ☐ *Wash all the soap suds down the drain and clean the sink, please.* ☐ *Please wash all that stuff down the drain.*

wash something **down**† **(with** something**) 1.** to clean something by flooding with water, alcohol, etc. ☐ *The doctor washed the area down and began to stitch up the wound.* ☐ *She washed down the wound with alcohol to clean it thoroughly.* ☐ *Todd washed the driveway down with water.* **2.** *Fig.* to use fluid to aid the swallowing of food or medicine. ☐ *Molly washed the pills down with a gulp of coffee.* ☐ *She washed down the pills with a glass of water.*

wash something **of** something to get something cleaned of something by washing. ☐ *I washed my hair of the smell of cigarette smoke I was saturated with in the meeting.* ☐ *I have to get home and wash my trousers of this stain.*

wash something **off (of)** someone or something and **wash** something **off**† to clean something off someone or something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *I have to wash this tomato sauce off my jacket before it stains it.* ☐ *I will wash off the tomato stains.*

wash something **out**† **1.** to wash out the inside of something; to wash something made of fabric. ☐ *I have to wash my socks out tonight.* ☐ *Wash the pitcher out before you put it away.* ☐ *I will wash out my socks tomorrow.* **2.** *Fig.* to rain on or flood an event so that it must be canceled. (Fig. on ①.) ☐ *Rain washed the game out.* ☐ *The storm washed out the picnic.* **3.** to wash or erode something out or away. ☐ *The flood washed the new bushes out.* ☐ *The rains washed out the paving stones.*

wash something **out of** something and **wash** something **out**† to clean some kind of dirt from something. ☐ *You had better wash all the stains out of the clothing before you put it in the dryer.* ☐ *You will want to wash out the dirt.*

wash up (for something**)** to clean [oneself] up for something, such as a meal. ☐ *Please wash up for dinner.* ☐ *Go and wash up!*

washed out *Inf.* exhausted; tired. ☐ *I feel too washed out to go to work today.* ☐ *Poor Ted really looks washed out.*

washed up *Fig.* finished. ☐ *"You're through, Tom," said the manager, "Fired—washed up!"* ☐ *Wilbur is washed up as a bank teller.*

waste away to wither or dwindle away. ☐ *Our money just seemed to waste away.* ☐ *As she grew older, she just sort of wasted away.*

Waste not, want not. *Prov. Cliché* If you do not waste anything, you will always have enough. ☐ *Always save the fabric scraps left over from your sewing projects; you can use them to make something else. Waste not, want not.* ☐ *Sam never let his leftovers spoil in the refrigerator but made sure to eat them. "Waste not, want not," he said.*

a **waste of space** something that is completely without value. ☐ *The wrecked furniture in here is just a waste of space.* ☐ *This broken-down car is a waste of space!*

waste one's **breath** *Fig.* to waste one's time talking; to talk in vain. ☐ *Don't waste your breath talking to her. She won't listen.* ☐ *You can't persuade me. You're just wasting your breath.*

waste someone *Sl.* to kill someone. ☐ *The thief tried to waste the bank guard after the bank robbery.* ☐ *The crook said, "Try that again, and I'll waste you!"*

waste something **away**† to use something up wastefully; to dissipate something. ☐ *He wasted all his money away and had to live in poverty.* ☐ *They wasted away everything and regretted it later.*

waste something **on** someone or something to throw something away on someone or something. ☐ *Please don't waste any sweet potatoes on me. I don't like them.* ☐ *I can't waste any more money on this car.*

watch for someone or something to keep looking for someone or something to appear. ☐ *Watch for me. I'll be wearing a red carnation in my hair.* ☐ *I will watch for the bus.*

Watch it! 1. *Inf.* Be careful. ☐ *Rachel: Watch it! There's a broken stair there. Jane: Gee, thanks.* ☐ *Mary: Watch it! There's a pothole in the street. Bob: Thanks.* **2.** *Inf.* Do not act or talk that way. ☐ *Sally: I really hate John! Sue: Watch it! He's my brother!* ☐ *Bill: You girls always seem to take so long to do a simple thing like getting dressed. Mary: Watch it!*

Watch my lips! and **Read my lips!** *Inf.* I am going to say something rude to you that I will not say out loud! ☐ *You jerk! Watch my lips!* ☐ *Hey, chum! Read my lips!*

watch one's **step 1.** be careful of one's walking or stepping. ☐ *It's slippery here. Watch your step.* **2.** *Fig.* to act with care and caution so as not to make a mistake or offend someone. ☐ *John had better watch his step with the new boss. He won't put up with his lateness.* ☐ *Mary was told by the teacher to watch her step and stop missing classes.*

watch out for someone and **look out for** someone *Fig.* to watch over and care for someone. ☐ *When I was a kid, my older brother always watched out for me.* ☐ *I really needed someone to look out for me then.*

watch out for someone or something and **look out for** someone or something **1.** to be on guard for someone or something; to be on watch for the arrival or approach of someone or something. ☐ *Watch out for someone wearing a white carnation.* ☐ *Look out for John and his friends. They'll be coming this way very soon.* **2.** and **look out; watch out** *Fig.* to try to avoid a confrontation with someone or something. ☐ *Watch out! That car nearly hit you!* ☐ *Look out for John. He's looking for you, and he's really mad.* ☐ *Thanks. I'd better look out.*

watch over someone or something to keep guard over someone or something; to care for someone or something. ☐ *Could you please watch over my little girl while I go to the store?* ☐ *I will watch over your house while you are away.*

watch someone or something **like a hawk** *Fig.* to watch someone or something very carefully. ☐ *The teacher watched the pupils like a hawk to make sure they did not cheat on the exam.* ☐ *We had to watch our dog like a hawk in case he ran away.*

watch the store Go to mind the store.

Watch your mouth! and **Watch your tongue! Watch your language!** *Inf.* Pay attention to what you are saying!; Do not say anything rude! ☐ *Hey, don't talk that way! Watch your mouth!* ☐ *Watch your tongue, garbage mouth!*

A **watched pot never boils.** *Prov.* Something you are waiting for will not happen while you are concentrating on it. ☐ *Don't just sit there staring at the phone while you wait for Lucy to call. A watched pot never boils.* ☐ *I'd better do something besides look out the window waiting for Emily to drive up. A watched pot never boils.*

water over the dam and **water under the bridge** *Fig.* past and unchangeable events. ☐ *Your quarrel with Lena is water over the dam; now you ought to concentrate on getting along with her.* ☐ *George and I were friends once, but that's all water under the bridge now.*

water something **down**† **1.** to dilute something. ☐ *Who watered the orange juice down?* ☐ *Jim watered down the orange juice.* **2.** to water something thoroughly. ☐ *Will you water the lawn down tonight?* ☐ *Water down the lawn this evening so it will grow tomorrow.* **3.** *Fig.* to reduce the effectiveness or force of something. (Fig. on ①.) ☐ *Please don't water my declaration down.* ☐ *The new laws watered down the power of the president.*

water under the bridge Go to water over the dam.

watering hole 1. *Lit.* a place where there is water for animals (and people) to drink. ☐ *The elephants came down to the watering hole and chased away the lions so they could drink in peace.* **2.** *Fig.* a bar or tavern. ☐ *Fred is down at the local watering hole boozing it up.*

wave at someone and **wave to** someone to move an upraised hand in such a way as to signal recognition to someone. ☐ *The people in the boat waved at us.* ☐ *They waved to us after we waved at them.*

wave back (at someone**)** to return someone's hand signal of greeting. ☐ *I waved back at her, but she didn't see me.* ☐ *She didn't wave back.*

wave someone **back (from** something**)** to motion someone to move back from something. ☐ *The police officer waved the curious onlookers back from the scene of the crime.* ☐ *The students started to go onstage, but the teacher waved them back.*

wave someone or something **aside**† to make a signal with the hand for someone or something to move aside. ☐ *The police officer waved us aside and would not let us turn into our street.* ☐ *The officer waved aside the spectators.* ☐ *She waved all the traffic aside.*

wave someone or something **away**† **(from** someone or something**)** to make a signal with the hand for someone or something to move away from someone or something. ☐ *The officer waved us away from the intersection where we were about to turn left.* ☐ *The guard waved away the traffic from the intersection.*

wave someone or something **off**† to make a signal with the hand for someone or something to remain at a distance. ☐ *There was someone standing in front of the bridge, waving everyone off. The bridge must have collapsed.* ☐ *He waved off all the traffic.*

wave someone or something **on**† to make a signal with the hand for someone or something to move on or keep moving. ☐ *The traffic cop waved us on.* ☐ *The cop waved on the hordes of pedestrians.*

W

wave something **around**† to raise something up and move it around so that everyone can see it. ☐ *When Ruth found the money, she waved it around so everyone could see it.* ☐ *She kept waving around the dollar she found in the street.*

wave to someone Go to wave at someone.

waver between someone **and** someone else to vacillate between choosing one person or another. ☐ *I had to appoint the new manager, and I was wavering between Jane and Janet.* ☐ *We wavered between Bill and Bob for the position.*

waver between something **and** something else to vacillate between choosing one thing and another; to linger indecisively between doing one thing or another. ☐ *The captain was wavering between St. Thomas and St. Croix.* ☐ *We wavered between chocolate and vanilla.*

wax and wane *Fig.* to increase and then decrease, as the phases of the moon. ☐ *As the moon waxes and wanes, so does the height of the tide change.* ☐ *Voter sentiment about the tax proposal waxes and wanes with each passing day.*

wax angry and **wax wroth** *Fig.* to speak in anger and with indignity. ☐ *Seeing the damage done by the careless children caused the preacher to wax wroth at their parents.*

wax eloquent *Fig.* to speak with eloquence. ☐ *Perry never passed up a chance to wax eloquent at a banquet.*

wax poetic *Fig.* to speak poetically. ☐ *I hope you will pardon me if I wax poetic for a moment when I say that your lovely hands drift across the piano keys like swans on a lake.*

wax wroth Go to wax angry.

the **way it plays** *Sl.* the way it is; the way things are. ☐ *The world is a rough place, and that's the way it plays.* ☐ *It's tough, but it's the way it plays.*

way off (base) *Inf. Fig.* on the wrong track; completely wrong. ☐ *I think you're way off base. Try again.* ☐ *Sorry. You are way off. You should just give up.*

way out 1. extreme; arcane. ☐ *Some of your ideas are really way out.* ☐ *What a way-out hairdo.* **2.** heavily intoxicated. ☐ *That guy is way out—can't even walk.* ☐ *She was so way-out, she was almost unconscious.*

(way) over there in a place some distance away. ☐ *I see a house way over there in the field.* ☐ *My hat is over there on the table.*

The **way to a man's heart is through his stomach.** *Prov.* If you want a man to love you, you should feed him good food. ☐ *Sue: I want Keith to notice me, but he doesn't even know I'm alive. Mother: Invite him over and cook him a good meal. The way to a man's heart is through his stomach.*

We aim to please. *Fig.* We try hard to please you. (Usually a commercial slogan, but can be said in jest by one person, often in response to Thank you.) ☐ *Mary: This meal is absolutely delicious! Waiter: We aim to please.* ☐ *Tom: Well, Sue, here's the laundry detergent you wanted from the store. Sue: Oh, thanks loads. You saved me a trip. Tom: We aim to please.*

[we are] See the entries beginning with *we're.*

(We) don't see you much around here anymore. and **(We) don't see you around here much anymore.** *Fig.* We haven't seen you for a long time. (The *we* can be replaced with *I.*) ☐ *Bill: Hello, Tom. Long time no see. Tom: Yes, Bill. We don't see you much around here anymore.* ☐ *"We don't see you around here much anymore," said the old pharmacist to John, who had just come home from college.*

We had a lovely time. Go to I had a lovely time.

We must do this again (sometime). Go to Let's do this again (sometime).

We must learn to walk before we can run. *Prov.* You must master a basic skill before you are able to learn more complex things. ☐ *Maria wanted to make a tailored jacket as her first sewing project, but her mother convinced her that she should make something much simpler; she would have to learn to walk before she could run.*

We need to talk about something. an expression urging or ordering someone to discuss something. ☐ *Bill: Can I come over tonight? We need to talk about something. Mary: I guess so.* ☐ *"Mr. Franklin," said Bill's boss sort of sternly, "I want to see you in my office for a minute. We need to talk about something."*

We were just talking about you. a phrase said when a person being discussed appears on the scene. (Compare this with Speak of the devil.) ☐ *Tom: Speak of the devil, here comes Bill. Mary: We were just talking about you, Bill.* ☐ *Sally (approaching Tom and Bill): Hi, Tom. Hi, Bill. What's new? Bill: Oh, Sally! We were just talking about you.*

[we will] See the entries beginning with *we'll.*

***weak as a baby** and ***weak as a kitten** *Cliché* [of someone] physically very weak. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *Six weeks of illness left the athlete as weak as a baby.* ☐ *John is as weak as a kitten because he doesn't eat well.*

weak as a kitten Go to previous.

the **weak link (in the chain)** *Fig.* the weak point or person in a system or organization. ☐ *Joan's hasty generalizations about the economy were definitely the weak link in her argument.*

weak sister a timid person, usually a male. ☐ *It looks like Dave is the weak sister on the team.* ☐ *We've got to pull together and stop playing like a bunch of weak sisters.*

a **wealth of** something *Fig.* a large amount of something. ☐ *There's a wealth of information on parrots at the library.* ☐ *The junkyard had a wealth of used car parts.*

wean someone **(away†) from** something to force someone or an animal to break a habit. (Fig. on the notion of ending the dependence of a young creature on milk alone.) ☐ *It was almost impossible to wean her from her high spending habits.* ☐ *We couldn't wean away the dog from its mother.*

wear and tear (on something**)** *Fig.* the process of wearing down or breaking down something by regular use. ☐ *Driving in freezing weather means lots of wear and tear on your car.* ☐ *I drive carefully and have my car serviced regularly to avoid wear and tear.*

wear away at someone or something to annoy or diminish someone or something. ☐ *Facing the same problems year after year was wearing away at the president of the company.* ☐ *The rain wore away at the stone through time.*

wear down *Fig.* to break down with wear; to erode. ☐ *The steps had worn down so much that each one was curved and slanted dangerously.*

W

wear more than one hat and **wear two hats** *Fig.* to have more than one set of responsibilities; to hold more than one office. □ *The mayor is also the police chief. She wears more than one hat.* □ *I have too much to do to wear more than one hat.* □ *He wears two hats; he's both CEO and chairman of the board.*

wear off [for the effects of something] to become less; to stop gradually. □ *The effects of the painkiller wore off and my tooth began to hurt.* □ *I was annoyed at first, but my anger wore off.*

wear off ((of) something**)** [for something] to be ground or rubbed away. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) □ *The paint has worn off the porch steps.* □ *The finish is wearing off.*

wear on (for a period of time**)** *Fig.* [for an event] to continue for a long period of time. □ *The lecture seemed to wear on for hours.* □ *It wore on until I went to sleep.*

wear on someone *Fig.* to bother or annoy someone. □ *We stayed with them only a short time because my children seemed to wear on them.* □ *Always being short of money wears on a person after a while.*

wear one's **heart on** one's **sleeve** and **have** one's **heart on** one's **sleeve** *Fig.* to display one's feelings openly and habitually, rather than keep them private. □ *John always has his heart on his sleeve so that everyone knows how he feels.* □ *Because she wears her heart on her sleeve, it's easy to hurt her feelings.*

wear out to become worn from use; to become diminished or useless from use. □ *My car engine is about to wear out.* □ *It takes a lot of driving to wear out an engine.*

wear out one's **welcome** *Fig.* to stay too long (at an event to which one has been invited); to visit somewhere too often. □ *Tom visited the Smiths so often that he wore out his welcome.* □ *At about midnight, I decided that I had worn out my welcome, so I went home.*

wear someone **down**† **1.** *Fig.* to exhaust someone. □ *This hot weather wears me down.* □ *The steamy weather wore down the tourists and made them stay in their hotels.* **2.** *Fig.* to reduce someone to submission or agreement by constant badgering. □ *Finally they wore me down and I told them what they wanted to know.* □ *The interrogation wore down the suspect.*

wear someone **out**† *Fig.* to exhaust someone; to make someone tired. □ *The coach made the team practice until he wore them out.* □ *If he wears out everybody on the team, nobody will be left to play in the game.*

wear someone **to a frazzle** *Fig.* to exhaust someone. □ *Her work wears her to a frazzle.* □ *Taking care of all those kids must wear you to a frazzle.*

wear something **away**† to erode something. □ *The constant rains wore the side of the cathedral away.* □ *The flooding wore away the topsoil.*

wear something **down**† to grind something away; to erode something. □ *The constant rubbing of the door wore the carpet down.* □ *The rubbing of the door wore down the carpet.*

wear something **off (of)** something and **wear** something **off**† to grind or rub something off something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) □ *The grinding of the bottom of the boat on the sandbanks wore the barnacles off the hull.* □ *The sand wore off the barnacles.*

wear something **out**† to make something worthless or nonfunctional from use. □ *I wore my shoes out in no time at all.* □ *I wore out my shoes in less than a month.*

wear something **(up)on** something to have something on something as clothing or adornment. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) □ *I wore a lovely diamond pin upon my blouse.* □ *I wore the flower on my lapel.*

wear the britches (in the family) and **wear the pants (in the family)** *Rur.* to be in charge in the family. □ *Jane bosses her husband around something scandalous. It's clear that she wears the britches in the family.* □ *I don't intend to let my wife wear the pants in the family.* □ *Mary's a strong-minded woman, but her husband still wears the britches.*

wear the pants (in the family) Go to previous.

wear through something to grind or rub through something. □ *My heel finally wore through the carpeting beneath the accelerator of my car.* □ *The constant rubbing of hands wore through the paint on the railing.*

wear two hats Go to wear more than one hat.

wear (up)on someone to diminish someone's energy and resistance; to bore or annoy someone. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) □ *You could see that the lecture was beginning to wear upon the audience.* □ *This kind of thing really wears on me.*

wear (up)on something to grind or rub at something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) □ *The bottom of the door is wearing upon the carpet and leaving marks.* □ *It is wearing on the carpet.*

weary of someone or something to become tired of or bored with someone or something. □ *I am beginning to weary of you. Isn't it time you were going?* □ *We soon wearied of chicken twice a week.*

weary someone **with** something to tire or bore someone with something. □ *He wearied her with his constant requests.* □ *Please don't weary me with your complaints.*

weasel out (of something**)** **1.** *Fig.* to squeeze one's way out of something. □ *Somehow, the child managed to weasel out of the hole she was stuck in.* □ *The mouse tried to weasel out.* **2.** *Fig.* to evade or avoid a job or responsibility. (Fig. on ①.) □ *Don't try to weasel out of your responsibility!* □ *You can't weasel out! You have to do it.*

weather permitting *Fig.* if the weather allows it. □ *Weather permitting, we will be there on time.* □ *The plane lands at midnight, weather permitting.*

weather the storm **1.** *Fig.* to experience and survive a storm. □ *We decided to stay in the building and weather the storm there with the other visitors.* **2.** *Fig.* to experience something and survive it. (Fig. on ①.) □ *The manager went on another shouting rampage and frightened his assistants. The rest of us stayed in our offices to weather the storm.*

weave around to move about, changing directions at random. □ *The drunken driver wove around all over the road.* □ *He was weaving around everywhere.*

weave in and out (of something**)** *Fig.* to move, drive, or walk in and out of something, such as traffic, a line, etc.

W

☐ *The car was weaving in and out of traffic dangerously.* ☐ *The deer ran rapidly through the forest, weaving in and out of the trees.*

weave something **from** something **1.** to make a fabric from some type of fiber. ☐ *They weave this cloth from a fine plant fiber.* ☐ *This cloth is woven from silk threads.* **2.** *Fig.* to make a story or explanation out of a small amount of information. (Fig. on ①.) ☐ *You have woven the entire tale from something you heard me say to Ruth.* ☐ *Your explanation has been woven from supposition.*

weave something **into** something **1.** to form fibers into a fabric. ☐ *They could weave the threads into simple cloth with a primitive loom.* ☐ *We will weave this wool into a rug.* **2.** *Fig.* to turn separate episodes into a story. (Fig. on ①.) ☐ *Skillfully, the writer wove the elements into a clever story.* ☐ *Memories from her childhood were woven into a series of short stories.*

weave through something to move through something by turning and dodging. ☐ *The car wove through traffic, almost hitting a number of other cars.* ☐ *We wove through the jungle vines, trying to avoid touching the poisonous ones.*

wed someone **to** someone to marry someone to someone else. ☐ *Her parents wedded her to a young prince when she was only twelve.* ☐ *They cannot wed her to anyone if she has already married someone of her own choosing.*

wed someone **to** something *Fig.* to join someone firmly to a concept. (Fig. on wed someone to someone.) ☐ *Don't try to wed me to your way of doing things. I have my own way.* ☐ *Don't wed yourself to that idea.*

wed(ded) to someone married to someone. ☐ *The couple will have been wed to each other for fifty years next June.* ☐ *Anne is wed to one of my cousins.*

wedded to something *Fig.* mentally attached to something; firmly committed to something. (Fig. on wed(ded) to someone.) ☐ *The manager was wedded to the idea of getting new computers.* ☐ *The mayor was wedded to the new budget plan.*

wedge someone or something **(in†) between** people or things to work someone or something into a tiny space between people or things. ☐ *The usher wedged us in between two enormously fat people, and we were all very uncomfortable.* ☐ *They wedged in the package between Jane and the wall.* ☐ *We had to wedge Timmy between Jed and the side of the car.*

the **wee hours (of the night)** Go to the small hours (of the night).

weed someone or something **out†** *Fig.* to remove someone or something unwanted or undesirable from a group or collection. (Fig. on removing weeds from the soil.) ☐ *We had to weed the less productive workers out one by one.* ☐ *The auditions were held to weed out the actors with the least ability.* ☐ *I'm going through my books to weed out those that I don't need anymore.*

W

week in, week out *Fig.* every week, week after week. ☐ *We have the same old food, week in, week out.* ☐ *I'm tired of this job. I've done the same thing—week in, week out—for three years.*

weeks running Go to days running.

weep about someone or something to cry about someone or something; to mourn someone or something. ☐ *She was weeping about her grandfather, who had passed away in the night.* ☐ *There is no use weeping about spilled milk.*

weep for joy *Fig.* to cry out of happiness. ☐ *She was so happy, she wept for joy.* ☐ *We all wept for joy at the safe return of the child.*

weep for someone or an animal to cry out of sorrow for someone or an animal. ☐ *She wept for her puppy when it was terribly sick.* ☐ *Please don't weep for me after I'm gone.*

weep over someone or something to cry about someone or something. ☐ *No need to weep over me. I'll do all right.* ☐ *There is no point in weeping over something you can't do anything about.*

weigh against someone or something *Fig.* to count against someone or something; [for some fact] to work against someone or something. ☐ *I hope my many absences do not weigh against me on the final grade.* ☐ *This will weigh against you.*

weigh in (at something**)** *Fig.* to present oneself at a certain weight. (Usually said of boxers.) ☐ *The fighter weighed in at over two hundred pounds.* ☐ *The contenders weighed in yesterday.*

weigh on someone's **mind** *Fig.* [for something] to be in a person's thoughts; [for something] to be bothering someone's thinking. ☐ *This problem has been weighing on my mind for many days now.* ☐ *I hate to have things weighing on my mind. I can't sleep when I'm worried.*

weigh someone **down†** *Fig.* [for a thought] to worry or depress someone. ☐ *All these problems really weigh me down.* ☐ *Financial problems have been weighing down our entire family.*

weigh someone or something **down†** to burden someone or something. ☐ *The heavy burden weighed the poor donkey down.* ☐ *The load of bricks weighed down the truck.*

weigh someone's **words 1.** *Fig.* to consider carefully what someone says. ☐ *I listened to what he said, and I weighed his words very carefully.* ☐ *Everyone was weighing his words. None of us knew exactly what he meant.* **2.** *Fig.* to consider one's own words carefully when speaking. ☐ *I always weigh my words when I speak in public.* ☐ *John was weighing his words carefully because he didn't want to be misunderstood.*

weigh something **against** something to ponder something by balancing it against something. ☐ *I weighed going to town against staying here and sleeping and I decided to stay here.* ☐ *When I weigh your suggestion against my own ideas, I realize that I must follow my own conscience.*

weigh something **out†** to weigh something as it is distributed. ☐ *The merchant weighed the cuts of meat out for each of the waiting women.* ☐ *They weighed out the grain carefully.*

weigh something **up†** to find out the weight of something. ☐ *I can't tell you how much this will cost until I weigh it up.* ☐ *Liz weighed up the meat and jotted down the price.*

weigh (up)on someone *Fig.* to burden or worry someone. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *The problems at the office were beginning to weigh upon Mr. Franklin.* ☐ *My problems began to weigh on me.*

a **weight off** one's **mind** Go to a load off one's mind.

weight someone or something **down† (with** something**)** to place a heavy weight in or on someone or something; to press down or hold down someone or something with a heavy weight. ☐ *The inquisitors weighted the accused down with stones, but he still refused to say what they wanted.* ☐ *Karen weighted down the papers with an ornamental paperweight.*

weight something **against** someone or something to bias something against someone or something. ☐ *The prosecutor tried to weight the evidence against the defendant.* ☐ *The police weighted the case against the accused company.*

weird out *Sl.* to become emotionally disturbed or unnerved; to flip out. ☐ *The day was just gross. I thought I would weird out at noon.* ☐ *I weirded out at the news of Frankie's death.*

weirded out *Sl.* disturbed or unnerved by drugs or events. ☐ *I was totally weirded out and couldn't control myself.* ☐ *After the blowup, Fred was really weirded out.*

Welcome aboard. *Fig.* Welcome to employment at our company. (See also on board. Invariably said in greeting to a new employee.) ☐ *Glad to meet you. Welcome aboard.*

welcome someone **into** something and **welcome** someone **in†** to greet one as one is ushered into something or some place. ☐ *The Franklins welcomed us into their home.* ☐ *Please welcome in our new members.*

welcome someone or something **back†** to greet the return of someone or something. ☐ *We are delighted to welcome you back to our house.* ☐ *The students welcomed back the teacher who had been ill.*

welcome someone **to** something to greet someone who has come into something or some place. ☐ *I am very pleased to welcome you to Adamsville!* ☐ *They welcomed us to the party and showed us where to put our coats and hats.*

welcome someone **with open arms** Go to receive someone with open arms.

welcome someone **with** something to present something to someone as a sign of greeting. (See also receive someone with open arms.) ☐ *The natives welcomed us with garlands of flowers.* ☐ *I welcomed the visitors with gifts and good wishes.*

welcome to do something free to do something; allowed to do something. ☐ *The audience is welcome to ask questions at the end of the speech.* ☐ *You are welcome to help yourself to anything in the kitchen.*

Welcome to our house. an expression said by a host or hostess when greeting guests and bringing them into the house. ☐ *Andy: Hello, Sally. Welcome to our house. Come on in. Sally: Thanks. It's good to be here.* ☐ *Tom: Welcome to our house. Make yourself at home. Henry: Thanks, I'm really tired.*

weld someone **and** someone else **together** *Fig.* to bind people together. (Fig. on weld something and something else together.) ☐ *Their experiences in the war welded Tom and Sam together for life.* ☐ *They were welded together by their common goals.*

weld something **and** something else **together** to attach things to one another by welding. ☐ *The worker welded the ends of the rods together.* ☐ *See if you can weld these plates together.*

Well begun is half done. *Prov.* Beginning a project well makes it easier to do the rest.; Once you have begun a project well, you do not need to put in much more effort to finish it. ☐ *Jill: I'm afraid I'll never be able to finish writing this report. Jane: You've already written a good introduction. Well begun is half done.*

Well, bust my buttons! *Rur.* What a surprise! ☐ *Well, bust my buttons! It's good to see you!* ☐ *Well, bust my buttons! You did all the dishes!*

***well disposed to(ward)** someone or something *Fig.* friendly with someone or something; having a positive or favorable attitude toward someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; become ~**.) ☐ *I am not well disposed toward Walter.* ☐ *We are quite well disposed to all of them.*

Well done! *Fig.* You did that nicely! ☐ *Sally: Well done, Tom. Excellent speech. Tom: Thanks.* ☐ *In the lobby after the play, Tom was met with a chorus of well-wishers saying, "Well done, Tom!"*

We('ll) have to do lunch sometime. and **Let's do lunch (sometime).** We must have lunch together sometime. (A vague statement that may lead to lunch plans.) ☐ *Rachel: Nice to talk to you, Tom. We have to do lunch sometime. Tom: Yes, good to see you. I'll give you a ring.* ☐ *Tom: Can't talk to you now. Catch you later. Mary: We'll have to do lunch sometime.* ☐ *John: Good to see you, Tom. Tom: Right. Let's do lunch sometime. John: Good idea. I'll call you.* ☐ *Mary: Catch you later. Sue: Sure. Let's do lunch. Mary: Okay. Call me. Bye.*

(Well,) I never! 1. *Inf.* I have never been so humiliated! ☐ *Bill: Just pack up your things and get out! Jane: Well, I never!* ☐ *Tom: Look, your manners with the customers are atrocious! Jane: Well, I never!* **2.** *Inf.* I never heard of such a thing. ☐ *Tom: Now they have machines that will do all those things at the press of a button. Sally: Well, I never! I had no idea!* ☐ *John: Would you believe I have a whole computer in this pocket? Alice: I never!*

(Well,) I'll be! *Rur.* I am very surprised! ☐ *Charlie: Joe and Sally got married last weekend. Jane: Well, I'll be!* ☐ *I'll be! Bill got the top score on the test!*

well in hand *Fig.* under control. ☐ *Is that matter well in hand?* ☐ *We have everything well in hand. Don't worry.*

***well into** something *Fig.* far into something or far along in something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *It was well into the morning before she awoke.* ☐ *The car was well into the tunnel when it broke down.*

well out (of something**)** to gush out of something. ☐ *I opened the door and the water welled out.*

well out(side) of something far outside something. ☐ *We were well out of the city when the air-raid sirens went off.*

well over [for a liquid] to fill up and spill over. ☐ *The laundry tub finally welled over as it became too full.* ☐ *The milk glass began to well over, and Timmy began to cry.*

Well said. *Fig.* You said that very well, and I agree. ☐ *As Sally sat down, Mary complimented her, "Well said, Sally. You made your point very well."* ☐ *John: And I for one will never stand for this kind of encroachment on my rights again! Mary: Well said! Bob: Well said, John! Fred: Yes, well said.*

Well, shut my mouth! *Rur.* I am very surprised! ☐ *Well, shut my mouth! I didn't know you were in town!* ☐ *Tom:*

The governor's on the phone and wants to talk to you. Jane: Well, shut my mouth!

We'll try again some other time. Go to Maybe some other time.

well up (from something**)** and **well up (out of** something**)** [for a liquid] to gush or pour up and away from something. ☐ *The blood welled up from the wound.* ☐ *Clear water welled up out of the rocks.* ☐ *A gusher of muddy water welled up.* ☐ *Tears welled up out of the baby's eyes.*

well up in years *Euph.* aged; old. ☐ *Jane's husband is well up in years. He is nearly seventy-five.* ☐ *Joan's well up in years but healthy.*

well up (inside someone**)** *Fig.* [for a feeling] to seem to swell and move inside one's body. ☐ *A feeling of revulsion began to well up inside Fred.* ☐ *Burning resentment welled up, and George knew he was going to lose his temper.*

well up (out of something**)** Go to well up (from something).

well up with something to fill up or gush with something, such as water. ☐ *Her eyes welled up with tears.* ☐ *The basement drain welled up with the floodwaters.*

(Well,) what do you know! *Inf.* a way of expressing surprise at finding something that is unexpected; an expression of mild surprise at something someone has said. (No answer is expected or desired.) ☐ *Andy: Well, what do you know! Here's a brand new shirt in this old trunk. Bob: I wonder how it got there.* ☐ *Tom: These two things fit together like this. John: Well, what do you know!*

well-heeled and **well-fixed; well-off** *Fig.* wealthy; with sufficient money. ☐ *My uncle can afford a new car. He's well-heeled.* ☐ *Everyone in his family is well-off.*

well-to-do *Fig.* wealthy and of good social position. (Often with *quite,* as in the examples.) ☐ *The Jones family is quite well-to-do.* ☐ *There is a gentleman waiting for you at the door. He appears quite well-to-do.*

welsh on someone to renege on a bet or an agreement made with someone. (Also spelled *welch.*) ☐ *You had better not welsh on me if you know what is good for you.* ☐ *Max welshed on the mob boss and made a lot of trouble for himself.*

welsh on something **(with** someone**)** to renege on a bet or agreement made with someone. (Also spelled *welch.*) ☐ *Max welshed on his bet with Lefty. That was not a wise thing to do.* ☐ *It is not wise to welsh on a bet.*

welter in something **1.** to roll about or wallow in something; to be immersed in or surrounded by something. ☐ *Most breeds of pigs will welter happily in mud.* ☐ *I hate having to welter in the heat.* **2.** [for someone or something] to drip or run with liquid, such as blood, sweat, water, etc. ☐ *Three minutes into the jungle, we were weltering in our own sweat.* ☐ *The wounded man weltered in his blood.* **3.** *Fig.* to be immersed in something such as activity, work, demands, etc. (Fig. on ①.) ☐ *Toward the peak of the season, we welter in orders for our goods.* ☐ *She was weltering in work, eager to take a break.*

(We're) delighted to have you (here). Go to (I'm) delighted to have you (here).

(We're) glad you could come. Go to (I'm) glad you could come.

Were you born in a barn? *Rur.* an expression chiding someone who has left a door open or who is ill-mannered or messy. ☐ *Andy: Close the door! Were you born in a barn? Bob: Sorry.* ☐ *Fred: Can't you clean this place up a little? Were you born in a barn? Bob: I call it the messy look.*

wet behind the ears and **not dry behind the ears; hardly dry behind the ears** *Fig.* young and inexperienced. ☐ *John's too young to take on a job like this! He's still wet behind the ears!* ☐ *He may be wet behind the ears, but he's well-trained and totally competent.* ☐ *Tom is going into business by himself? Why, he's hardly dry behind the ears.*

a **wet blanket** *Fig.* a dull or depressing person who spoils other people's enjoyment. ☐ *Jack's fun at parties, but his brother's a wet blanket.* ☐ *I was with Anne and she was being a real wet blanket.*

wet one's **whistle** *Rur.* to take a drink. ☐ *He stopped at the bar to wet his whistle.* ☐ *I don't need a big glass of water. Just enough to wet my whistle.*

wet someone or something **down†** to put water onto someone or something. ☐ *Mother wet the children down with a hose while she was washing the car.* ☐ *Karen wet down the children with the hose.* ☐ *We wet the new concrete down to help it cure in all the heat.*

We've had a lovely time. Go to I've had a lovely time.

a **whack at** something Go to a try at something.

whack someone or something **up†** *Sl.* to damage someone or something. ☐ *Bob got mad at Greg and whacked him up.* ☐ *Clara whacked up her car yesterday.*

whack something **off† 1.** *Sl.* to complete something easily or quickly. ☐ *If you want a pair of these, I can whack them off for you in a few minutes.* ☐ *The artisan whacked off a set of the earrings in a few minutes.* **2.** *Sl.* to cut or chop something off. ☐ *A tree branch is rubbing against the house. I guess I'll go out and whack that branch off.* ☐ *Whack off that other branch while you are at it.*

whack something **up†** *Sl.* to chop something up. ☐ *In about an hour, he had whacked the tree up into small logs.* ☐ *Have you whacked up the chicken for frying yet?*

whacked (out) *Sl.* intoxicated. ☐ *Gee, is he ever whacked!* ☐ *Dave was so whacked out he couldn't stand up.*

whale into someone or an animal *Fig.* to attack or punish someone or an animal ☐ *Jimmy's dad really whaled into him.* ☐ *The sailor whaled into the dog.*

whale the tar out of someone *Inf.* to spank or beat someone. (See also beat the living daylights out of someone.) ☐ *My father threatened to whale the tar out of me.* ☐ *I'll whale the tar out of you when we get home if you don't settle down.*

wham bam thank you ma'am *Rur.* a bump in the road. ☐ *We hit a wham bam thank you ma'am and lost one of our hubcaps.* ☐ *Watch out for the wham bam thank you ma'am at the corner of Third Street.*

What (a) nerve! and **Of all the nerve!** *Inf.* How rude! ☐ *Bob: Lady, get the devil out of my way! Mary: What a nerve!* ☐ *Jane: You can't have that one! I saw it first! Sue: Of all the nerve! I can too have it!*

What a pity! and **What a shame!** *Fig.* an expression of consolation meaning That's too bad. (Can also be used sarcastically.) ☐ *Bill: I'm sorry to tell you that the cat died*

today. Mary: What a pity! ☐ *Mary: The cake is ruined! Sally: What a shame!*

What a shame! Go to previous.

What about (doing) something? Would you like to do something? ☐ *What about going on a picnic?* ☐ *What about a picnic?*

What about (having) something? *Inf.* Would you like to have something? ☐ *What about having another drink?* ☐ *What about another drink?*

What about it? *Inf.* So what?; Do you want to argue about it? (Contentious.) ☐ *Bill: I heard you were the one accused of breaking the window. Tom: Yeah? So, what about it?* ☐ *Mary: Your piece of cake is bigger than mine. Sue: What about it?*

What about you? 1. *Fig.* What is your choice? (Compare this with How about you?) ☐ *Tom: I'm having the pot roast and a cup of coffee. What about you? Mary: I want something fattening and unhealthy.* ☐ *Sally: I prefer green and purple for this room. What about you? Mary: Well, purple's okay, but green is not right for this room.* **2.** What will happen to you? ☐ *Mary: My parents are taking my brothers to the circus. Sue: What about you? Mary: I have a piano lesson.* ☐ *Mary: All my friends have been accepted to colleges. Sue: What about you? Mary: Oh, I'm accepted too.*

What are you drinking? 1. *Fig.* a phrase inquiring what someone is already drinking so that the person who asks the question can offer another drink of the same thing. ☐ *Bill: Hi, Tom. Nice to see you. Can I get you something to drink? Tom: Sure. What are you drinking? Bill: Scotch and water.* ☐ *Waiter: What are you drinking, madam? Sue: It's just soda. No more, thanks. Waiter: Very good.* **2.** *Fig.* a phrase inquiring what is being drunk at a particular gathering so that the person asking can request the same drink. (A way of finding out what drinks are available.) ☐ *Mary: Do you want a drink? Sue: Yes, thanks. Say, that looks good. What are you drinking? Mary: It's just ginger ale.* ☐ *Bill: Can I get you something to drink? Jane: What are you drinking? Bill: I'm having gin and tonic. Jane: I'll have that too, thanks.*

What are you driving at? *Fig.* What are you implying?; What do you mean? ☐ *What are you driving at? What are you trying to say?* ☐ *Why are you asking me all these questions? What are you driving at?*

What are you having? *Fig.* What food or drink are you planning to order? (Either part of a conversation or a request from food service personnel. In a restaurant, sometimes the host or hostess will signal to a guest to order first by saying this. Sometimes a guest will ask this of a host or hostess to determine the price range that is appropriate.) ☐ *Waiter: Would you care to order now? Tom: What are you having? Mary: You order. I haven't made up my mind.* ☐ *Waiter: May I help you? Tom: What are you having, Pop? Father: I'll have the roast chicken, I think, with fries. Tom: I'll have the same.*

What brings you here? *Fig.* What is your reason for being here? (A polite request for this information. More polite than "Why are you here?") ☐ *Tom: Hello, Mary. What brings you here? Mary: I was invited, just like you.* ☐ *Doctor: Well, John, what brings you here? John: I've had this cough for nearly a month, and I think it needs looking into.*

What can I do for you? Go to How may I help you?

What can I say? *Inf.* I have no explanation or excuse. What do you expect me to say? (See also What do you want me to say?) ☐ *Bill: Why on earth did you lose that big order? Sally: What can I say? I'm sorry!* ☐ *Bob: You're going to have to act more aggressive if you want to make sales. You're just too timid. Tom: What can I say? I am what I am.*

What can I tell you? 1. *Lit.* What kind of information do you want? ☐ *Bill: I have a question. Bob: What can I tell you? Bill: When do we arrive at Chicago?* ☐ *Mary: I would like to ask a question about the quiz tomorrow. Bill: What can I tell you? Mary: The answers, if you know them.* **2.** *Inf.* I haven't any idea of what to say. (Compare this with What can I say?) ☐ *John: Why on earth did you do a dumb thing like that? Bill: What can I tell you? I just did it, that's all.* ☐ *Mary: I'm so disappointed with you, Fred. Fred: What can I tell you? I am, too.*

What can't be cured must be endured. *Prov.* If you cannot do anything about a problem, you will have to live with it. ☐ *Alan: No matter what I do, I can't make the dog stop barking in the middle of the night. Jane: What can't be cured must be endured, then, I guess.*

What difference does it make? Does it really matter?; Does it cause any trouble? ☐ *What if I choose to leave home? What difference does it make?* ☐ *So Jane dropped out of the club. What difference does it make?*

What do you know? *Inf.* a typical inquiry on greeting someone. (A specific answer is not expected. Often pronounced "Wha-da-ya know?") ☐ *Bob: Hey, Tom! What do you know? Tom: Look who's here! Hi, Bob!* ☐ *John: What do you know? Mary: Nothing. How are you? John: Okay.*

What do you know (about that)? *Inf.* That is very interesting. ☐ *Tom: I heard that Jim and Mary are getting married. Jane: Well! What do you know about that?* ☐ *What do you know? Bill finally sold his house!*

What do you know for sure? *Inf.* How are you?; What do you know? (Familiar. An elaboration of What do you know? Does not require a direct answer.) ☐ *Tom: Hey, man! What do you know for sure? Bill: Howdy, Tom. What's new?* ☐ *John: How are you doing, old buddy? Bill: Great, John! John: What do you know for sure? Bill: Nothing much.*

What do you say? 1. *Inf.* Hello, how are you? ☐ *Bob: What do you say, Tom? Tom: Hey, man. How are you doing?* ☐ *Bill: What do you say, man? Fred: What's the good word, you old so-and-so?* **2.** *Lit.* What is your answer or decision? ☐ *Bill: I need an answer from you now. What do you say? Bob: Don't rush me!* ☐ *Sue: I can offer you seven hundred dollars for your old car. What do you say? Bob: I'll take it!* **3.** *Lit.* an expression urging a child to say Thank you or please. ☐ *When Aunt Sally gave Billy some candy, his mother said to Billy, "What do you say?" "Thank you," said Billy.* ☐ *Mother: Here's a nice glass of milk. Child: Good. Mother: What do you say? Child: Very good. Mother: No. What do you say? Child: Thank you.*

What do you think? What is your opinion? ☐ *Mary: This is our new company stationery. What do you think? Bill: Stunning. Simply stunning.* ☐ *Mary: We're considering moving out into the country. What do you think? Sue: Sounds good to me.*

What do you think of that? and **What do you think about that?** Isn't that remarkable?; What is your opinion of that? ☐ *Bob: I'm leaving tomorrow and taking all these books with me. What do you think of that? Mary: Not much.* ☐ *Sue: I'm going to start taking cooking lessons. What do you think about that? Bill: I'm overjoyed! John: Thank heavens! Mary: Fortune has smiled on us, indeed!*

What do you think of this weather? a phrase used to open a conversation with someone, often someone one has just met. ☐ *Sue: Glad to meet you, Mary. Mary: What do you think about this weather? Sue: I've seen better.* ☐ *Bill: What do you think about this weather? Jane: Lovely weather for ducks.*

What do you think you are doing here? Why are you in this place? (Stern and threatening.) ☐ *John: Mary! Mary: John! John: What do you think you're doing here?* ☐ *"What do you think you're doing here?" said Fred to a frightened rabbit trapped in the garage.*

What do you want me to say? *Inf.* You caught me and I'm sorry, and I don't know what more to say. ☐ *What do you want me to say? I apologized. There is nothing more I can do.* ☐ *Okay, so I'm wrong. What do you want me to say?*

What does that prove? *Fig.* So what?; that does not mean anything. (A defensive expression. The heaviest stress is on *that*. Often with *so*, as in the examples.) ☐ *Tom: It seems that you were in the apartment the same night that it was robbed. Bob: So, what does that prove? Tom: Nothing, really. It's just something we need to keep in mind.* ☐ *Rachel: You're late again on your car payment. Jane: What does that prove? Rachel: Simply that you can't afford the car and we are going to repossess it.*

What else can I do? Go to What more can I do?

What else can I do for you? In what other way can I serve you? (Said by shopkeepers, clerks, and service personnel.) ☐ *Bill: What else can I do for you? Bob: Please check the oil.* ☐ *"Here's your prescription. What else can I do for you?" said the pharmacist.*

***what for 1.** *Fig.* a scolding; a stern lecture. (*Typically: **get ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Billy's mother gave him what for because he didn't get home on time.* ☐ *I will really give you what for if you don't straighten up.* **2.** Why?; For what reason? ☐ *Father: "I want you to clean your room." Child: "What for? It's clean enough."* ☐ *What did you do that for?*

What gives? *Inf.* What happened?; What went wrong?; What's the problem? ☐ *Bill: Hi, you guys. What gives? Bob: Nothing, just a little misunderstanding. Tom's a little angry.* ☐ *Bob: Where's my wallet? What gives? Tom: I think one of those roughnecks who just walked by us has borrowed it for a little while.*

What goes up must come down. *Prov.* Anything that has risen or been raised up must eventually fall down. ☐ *When it came time to move out of our second-floor apartment, we looked at our large, heavy sofa with dismay, not sure how we would get it down the stairs. "What goes up must come down," my husband said, "Somehow."*

What happened? What went wrong here? ☐ *Bob (approaching a crowd): What happened? Tom (with Bob): What's wrong? Bystander: Just a little mix-up. A car wanted to drive on the sidewalk, that's all.* ☐ *There was a terrible noise, an explosion that shook the house. Bob looked at Jane and said, "What happened?"*

What have you been up to? *Inf.* I haven't seen you for a long time, so tell me what you have been doing? ☐ *Hi, Tom. Where have you been? What have you been up to?* ☐ *What have you been up to? Busy, I am sure.*

What if...? What would be the result if something were true? ☐ *What if you had all the money you want?* ☐ *What if everyone thought you were great?*

What if I do? Does it matter to you if I do it?; What difference does it make if I do it? ☐ *Tom: Are you really going to sell your leather coat? Bob: What if I do?* ☐ *Jane: You're not going to go out dressed like that, are you? Sue: So what if I do?*

What if I don't? Does it matter to you if I do not do it?; What difference does it make if I do not do it? ☐ *Bob: You're certainly going to tidy up a bit before going out, aren't you? Tom: What if I don't?* ☐ *Father: You are going to get in by midnight tonight or you're grounded. Fred: So what if I don't? Father: That's enough! You're grounded as of this minute!*

What (in) the devil? and **What (in) the dickens?** *Inf.* What has happened?; What? (Often with the force of an exclamation.) ☐ *What in the devil? Who put sugar in the salt shaker?* ☐ *What the dickens? Who are you? What are you doing in my room?*

What (in) the dickens? Go to previous.

What (in) the hell? 1. *Inf.* What has happened?; What? ☐ *What in the hell? Who did this?* ☐ *What the hell happened here?* **2.** *Inf.* What does it matter? Why not? (Usually with the force of an exclamation.) ☐ *Give her a new one. What the hell!* ☐ *Don't be such a cheapskate. Get the nice one. What the hell!*

What in (the) Sam Hill? *Inf.* What has happened?; What? (An elaboration of *what*. *Sam Hill* is a euphemism for hell. Often with the force of an exclamation. See examples for variations.) ☐ *What in Sam Hill is going on around here?* ☐ *What in the Sam Hill do you think you are doing?*

[what is] See also the entries beginning with *what's*.

What is it? What do you want from me?; Why do you want to get my attention? ☐ *Tom: John, can I talk to you for a minute? John: What is it?* ☐ *Sue: Jane? Jane: What is it? Sue: Close the door, please.*

what makes someone **tick** *Fig.* something that motivates someone; something that makes someone behave in a certain way. (Fig. on what makes something tick.) ☐ *William is sort of strange. I don't know what makes him tick.* ☐ *When you get to know people, you find out what makes them tick.*

what makes something **tick** *Fig.* the sense or mechanism that makes something run or function. (With reference to the ticking of a clock representing the functioning of the clock.) ☐ *I don't know what makes it tick.* ☐ *I took apart the radio to find out what made it tick.*

What makes you think so? 1. *Lit.* Why do you think that?; What is your evidence for that conclusion? ☐ *Tom: This bread may be a little old. Alice: What makes you think so? Tom: The green spots on the edges.* ☐ *Bob: Congress is in session again. Tom: What makes you think so? Bob: My wallet's empty.* **2.** *Inf.* Is that not totally obvious? (Sarcas-

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tic.) ☐ *John: I think I'm putting on a little weight. Mary: Oh, yeah? What makes you think so?* ☐ *Mary (shivering): Gee, I think it's going to be winter soon. Sally (also shivering): Yeah? What makes you think so?*

What more can I do? and **What else can I do?** I am at a loss to know what else to do. Is there anything else I can do? (An expression of desperation, not an inquiry.) ☐ *Bob: Did you hear about the death in the Wilson family. Bill: Yes, I feel so helpless. I sent flowers. What more can I do?* ☐ *Bill: Is your child still sick? Mary: Yes. I'm giving her the right medicine. What more can I do?*

What must be, must be. and **What(ever) will be, will be.** *Prov.* If something is fated to happen, you cannot stop it from happening.; You cannot foretell the future. ☐ *Harry hoped for many months that he would regain the use of his legs after the accident, but it soon became apparent that he would not. "What must be, must be," he thought resignedly.* ☐ *I'd like to win the contest, but I can't be sure that I will. What will be, will be.* ☐ *The doctors have done all they can. Whatever will be, will be.*

What now? Go to Now what?

What number are you calling? an expression used when one suspects that a telephone caller may have gotten the wrong number. ☐ *Bob (on the telephone): Hello? Mary: Hello, is Sally there? Bob: Uh, what number are you calling? Mary: I guess I have the wrong number. Sorry. Bob: No problem. Good-bye.* ☐ *When the receptionist asked, "What number are you calling?" I realized I had made a mistake.*

What of it? *Inf.* What does it matter?; Why treat it as if it were important?; Why do you think that this is any of your business? (A bit contentious.) ☐ *John: I hear you've been having a little trouble at the office. Bob: What of it?* ☐ *Sue: You missed a spot shaving. Fred: What of it?*

What one **doesn't know won't hurt** one. *Cliché* Unknown facts cannot worry or upset a person. ☐ *Don't tell me that I have made a mistake. What I don't know won't hurt me.* ☐ *Don't tell him the truth about his missing dog. What he doesn't know won't hurt him.*

What price something**?** What is the value of something?; What good is something? (Said when the value of the thing referred to is being diminished or ignored.) ☐ *Jane's best friend told us all about Jane's personal problems. What price friendship?* ☐ *Jack simply declared himself president of the political society. What price democracy?*

What's buzzin' (cousin)? *Sl.* What's happening? ☐ *Hey, chum! What's buzzin' cousin?* ☐ *What's buzzin' around here?*

What's coming off? and **What's going down?** *Sl.* What is happening here?; What is going to happen? (Also a greeting inquiry.) ☐ *Bill: Hey, man! What's coming off? Tom: Oh, nothing, just takin' it easy.* ☐ *Bob: Hey, we just got here! What's going down? Bill: What does it look like? This is a party, dude!*

***what's coming to** one what one deserves. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** one **~**.) ☐ *If you cheat, you'll get in trouble. You'll get what's coming to you.* ☐ *They gave Billy what was coming to him.*

What's cooking? *Inf.* What is happening?; How are you? ☐ *Bob: Hi, Fred! What's cooking? Fred: How are you doing, Bob?* ☐ *Bob: Hi, Fred! What's cooking? Bill: Nothing. Anything happening with you?*

What's done cannot be undone. *Prov.* You cannot change what has already happened. ☐ *Jill: I wish I hadn't insulted Maria. Jane: What's done cannot be undone.* ☐ *Jill soon regretted telling Mike that she loved him, but she knew that what's done cannot be undone.*

What's done is done. *Prov.* It is final and in the past. ☐ *It's too late to change it now. What's done is done.* ☐ *What's done is done. The past cannot be altered.*

What's eating someone**?** *Inf. Fig.* What is bothering someone? ☐ *Tom: Go away! Bob: Gee, Tom, what's eating you?* ☐ *Bill: Tom's so grouchy lately. What's eating him? Bob: Beats me!*

What's going down? Go to What's coming off?

What's going on (around here)? What is happening in this place?; What is the explanation for the strange things that are happening here? ☐ *Bill: There was an accident in the factory this morning. Bob: That's the second one this week. What's going on around here?* ☐ *Mary: What's all the noise? What's going on? Sue: We're just having a little party.*

What's got(ten) into someone**?** What is bothering someone?; What caused someone to act that way? (Past or perfect only. The *has* is contracted except for emphasis.) ☐ *I just don't know what's gotten into her.* ☐ *I don't know what got into me.*

What's happ(ening)? *Sl.* Hello, what's new? ☐ *Hey, dude! What's happening?* ☐ *What's happ? How's it goin'?*

what's his face and **what's his name** *Sl.* someone whose name has been forgotten; someone whose name is being avoided. ☐ *Was what's his name there? I never can remember his name.* ☐ *I can't remember what's his face's name either.*

what's his name Go to previous.

What's in a name? *Prov.* The name of a thing does not matter as much as the quality of the thing. (From Shakespeare's play, *Romeo and Juliet.*) ☐ *Sue: I want to buy this pair of jeans. Mother: This other pair is much cheaper. Sue: But it doesn't have the designer brand name. Mother: What's in a name?*

What's in it for me? *Inf.* What is the benefit for me in this scheme? ☐ *Bob: Now that plan is just what is needed. Bill: What's in it for me? What do I get out of it?* ☐ *Sue: We signed the Wilson contract yesterday. Mary: That's great! What's in it for me?*

What's it to you? *Inf.* Why does it matter to you?; It's none of your business. (A bit contentious.) ☐ *Tom: Where are you going? Jane: What's it to you?* ☐ *Mary: Bill's pants don't match his shirt. Jane: Does it matter? What's it to you?*

What's keeping someone**?** What is delaying someone? (The *someone* is replaced by a person's name or a pronoun.) ☐ *Bob: Wasn't Mary supposed to be here? Bill: I thought so. Bob: Well, what's keeping her? Bill: How should I know?* ☐ *Bill: I've been waiting here for an hour for Sally. Sue: What's keeping her?*

What's new? *Inf.* What things have happened since we last met? ☐ *Mary: Greetings, Jane. What's new? Jane: Nothing much.* ☐ *Bob: What's new? Tom: Not a whole lot.*

What's new with you? *Inf.* a typical greeting, often a response to What's new? ☐ *Mary: What's new with you? Sally: Oh, nothing. What's new with you? Mary: The same.* ☐ *Fred: Hi, John! How you doing? John: Great! What's new with you?*

What's on tap for today? *Inf.* What is on the schedule for today?; What is going to happen today? (As a beer that is on tap and ready to be served.) ☐ *Tom: Good morning, Fred. Fred: Morning. What's on tap for today? Tom: Trouble in the morning and difficulty in the afternoon. Fred: So nothing's new.* ☐ *Sally: Can we have lunch today? Sue: I'll have to look at my schedule and see what's on tap for today.*

What's poppin'? *Sl.* Hello, what is happening? ☐ *What's poppin'? Anything new?* ☐ *What's poppin', G?*

What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. *Prov.* What is good for one person is good for another.; What is good for the man in a couple is good for the woman. ☐ *Jane: You're overweight; you should get more exercise. Alan: But I don't really have time to exercise. Jane: When I was overweight, you told me to exercise; what's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.*

What's shakin' (bacon)? *Sl.* How are you?; What is new? ☐ *What's shakin' bacon? What's going down?* ☐ *Hi, Jim. What's shakin'?*

What's that? What did you say? ☐ *Tom: We're leaving tomorrow. Jane: What's that?* ☐ *What's that? Did you say "Iowa" or "Idaho"?*

What's the (big) idea? *Inf.* Why did you do that? (Usually said in anger.) ☐ *Please don't do that! What's the idea?* ☐ *Why did you shove me? What's the big idea?*

What's the catch? *Sl.* What is the drawback?; It sounds good, but are there any hidden problems? ☐ *Sounds too good to be true. What's the catch?* ☐ *This looks like a good deal. What's the catch?*

What's the damage? *Sl.* What are the charges?; How much is the bill? ☐ *Bill: That was delicious. Waiter, what's the damage? Waiter: I'll get the check, sir.* ☐ *Waiter: Your check sir. Tom: Thanks. Bill: What's the damage, Tom? Let me pay my share. Tom: Nonsense, I'll get it. Bill: Okay this time, but I owe you one.*

What's the deal? Go to What's the scam?

What's the drill? 1. *Inf.* What is going on here? ☐ *Bill: I just came in. What's the drill? Tom: We have to carry all this stuff out to the truck.* ☐ *"What's the drill?" asked Mary. "Why are all these people sitting around like this?"* **2.** *Inf.* What are the rules and procedures for doing this? ☐ *Bill: I need to apply for new license plates. What's the drill? Is there a lot of paperwork? Clerk: Yes, there is.* ☐ *Bill: I have to get my computer repaired. Who do I talk to? What's the drill? Bob: You have to get a purchase order from Fred.*

What's the good of something**?** What is the point of something?; Why bother with something? ☐ *What's the good of my going at all if I'll be late?* ☐ *There is no need to get there early. What's the good of that?*

What's the (good) word? *Sl.* Hello, how are you? ☐ *Hi, Jim! What's the good word?* ☐ *Haven't seen you in a long time. What's the good word?*

What's the matter (with you)? 1. *Lit.* Is there something wrong with you?; Are you ill? ☐ *Bill: What's the matter with you? Fred: I have this funny feeling in my chest. Bill: Sounds serious.* ☐ *Bob: I have to stay home again today. Bill: What's the matter with you? Have you seen a doctor?* ☐ *Mary: Oh, I'm so miserable! Sue: What's the matter? Mary: I lost my contact lenses and my glasses.* ☐ *John: Ouch! Alice: What's the matter? John: I bit my tongue.* **2.** *Inf.* How very stupid of you! How can you be so stupid? (Usually said in anger.) ☐ *As Fred stumbled over the step and dumped the birthday cake on the floor, Jane screamed, "What's the matter with you? The party is in fifteen minutes and now we have no cake!"* ☐ *Mary: I think I just lost the Wilson account. Sue: What! What's the matter with you? That account pays your salary!*

What's the problem? 1. *Lit.* What problem are you presenting to me? ☐ *Bill (coming in): I need to talk to you about something. Tom: What's the problem, Bill?* ☐ *"What's the problem?" said Mary, peering at her secretary over her glasses.* **2.** *Inf.* a question asking what the problem is and implying that there should not be a problem. ☐ *Child (crying): He hit me! Father: What's the problem? Child: He hit me! Father: Are you hurt? Child: No. Father: Then stop crying.* ☐ *Bob: Hi, Fred. Fred: What's the problem? Bob: There's no problem. Why do you ask? Fred: I've had nothing but problems today.*

What's the scam? and **What's the deal?** *Sl.* What is going on around here? (Often implies that something seems to be wrong.) ☐ *There's a big rumpus down the hall. What's the scam?* ☐ *I gave you a twenty, and you give me five back? What's the deal? Where's my other five?*

What's the scoop? *Inf.* What is the news?; What's new with you? ☐ *Bob: Did you hear about Tom? Mary: No, what's the scoop?* ☐ *"Hi, you guys!" beamed John's little brother. "What's the scoop?"*

What's (there) to know? *Inf.* This doesn't require any special knowledge, so what are you talking about? ☐ *Bill: Do you know how to wind a watch? Bob: Wind a watch? What's there to know?* ☐ *Sue: We must find someone who knows how to repair a broken lawnmower. Tom: What's to know? Just a little tightening here and there. That's all it needs.*

What's up? *Inf.* Hello. What is happening? ☐ *What's up? How're you doing?* ☐ *Hey, Chuck! What's up?*

What's up, doc? *Cliché* What's happening around here?; What are you doing? ☐ *Your bike's spread out all over the garage. What's up, Doc?*

What's with someone or something**?** Why is someone or something in that condition?; What's going on with someone or something? ☐ *Mary: What's with Tom? He looks depressed. Bill: He broke up with Sally.* ☐ *"What's with this stupid coffee maker? It won't get hot!" groused Alice.*

What's wrong? There is something wrong here. What has happened? ☐ *Mary: Oh, good grief! Bill: What's wrong? Mary: I forgot to feed the cat.* ☐ *Sue (crying): Hello, Sally? Sally: Sue, what's wrong? Sally: Oh, nothing. Tom left me.*

What's your age? *Sl.* Hello, how are you? ☐ *Tim: What's your age? Joe: Hey, Tim, what's going on with you?* ☐ *Yo, Sam! What's your age?*

What's yours? Go to What'll it be?

What's yours is mine, and what's mine is mine. *Prov.* A humorous way of saying, "Everything belongs to me."; (A jocular variant of "What's yours is mine, and

what's mine is yours," an expression of generosity.) □ *I know you won't mind lending me your radio. After all, what's yours is mine, and what's mine is mine.* □ *The thief took his confederate's share of the money they had stolen, saying, "What's yours is mine, and what's mine is mine."*

What say? *Inf.* What did you say? (Widely used.) □ *Tom: My coat is there on the chair. Could you hand it to me? Bob: What say? Tom (pointing): Could you hand me my coat?* □ *Sue: Here's your paper. Fred: What say? Sue (louder): Here is your newspaper!*

what someone or something **is cracked up to be** what someone or something is supposed to be. □ *This pizza isn't what it's cracked up to be.* □ *I wanted to find out whether this stuff was what it is cracked up to be.*

What someone **said.** *Sl.* I agree with what someone just said, although I might not have been able to say it as well or so elegantly. □ *What John said. And I agree 100 percent.* □ *What you said. That's my feeling, too.*

What the deuce? *Sl.* What has happened?; What? (*Deuce* is an old word for *devil.*) □ *What the deuce! Who are you?* □ *What the deuce! Who did this?*

What the devil? and **What the fuck?; What the hell?; What the shit?** What has happened?; What? (Often with the force of an exclamation. What the fuck? and What the shit? are taboo.) □ *What the devil? Who put sugar in the salt shaker?* □ *What the fuck? Who are you? What are you doing in my room?* □ *What the shit are you doing here? You're supposed to be at work.*

What the eye doesn't see, the heart doesn't grieve over. *Prov.* You cannot be upset by something you do not know about. □ *When Robbie cracked his mother's favorite vase, he simply turned the cracked side toward the wall. "What the eye doesn't see, the heart doesn't grieve over," he thought.*

What the fuck? Go to What the devil?

What the heck! *Inf.* It doesn't matter! (Often with the force of an exclamation.) □ *Oh, what the heck! Come on in. It doesn't matter.* □ *Oh, what the heck! I'll have another beer. Nobody's counting.*

What the hell? Go to What the devil?

What was the name again? Please tell me your name again. (More typical of a clerk than of someone just introduced.) □ *Clerk: What was the name again? Bill: Bill.* □ *"What was the name again? I didn't write it down," confessed Fred.*

[what will] See also the entries beginning with *what'll.*

What will be, will be. Go to What must be, must be.

what with something because of something. □ *What with the children being at home and my parents coming to stay, I have too much to do.* □ *The Smiths find it difficult to manage financially, what with Mr. Smith losing his job and Mrs. Smith being too ill to work.*

What would you like to drink? an offer to prepare or serve a drink. □ *Bill: Come in and sit down. What would you like to drink? Andy: Nothing, thanks. I just need to relax a moment.* □ *Waiter: What would you like to drink? Alice: Do you have any grape soda? Waiter: I'll bring you some ginger ale, if that's all right. Alice: Well, okay. I guess.*

What would you say if...? an expression introducing a request for an opinion or a judgment. □ *Bill: What would you say if I ate the last piece of cake? Bob: Go ahead. I don't care.* □ *Mary: What would you say if we left a little early? Sally: It's okay with me.*

What you don't know won't hurt you. and **What you don't know can't hurt you.** *Prov.* If you do not know about a problem or a misdeed, you will not be able to make yourself unhappy by worrying about it. (Often used to justify not telling someone about a problem or misdeed.) □ *Ellen: What a beautiful diamond necklace! Thank you! But how on earth did you get the money to pay for it? Fred: What you don't know won't hurt you.*

What you see is what you get. The product you are looking at is exactly what you get if you buy it. □ *It comes just like this. What you see is what you get.* □ *What you see is what you get. The ones in the box are just like this one.*

What(ever) goes around, comes around. *Prov.* The results of things that one has done will someday have an effect on the person who started the events. □ *So he finally gets to see the results of his activities. What goes around, comes around.* □ *Now he is the victim of his own policies. Whatever goes around comes around.*

Whatever turns you on. 1. *Inf.* Whatever pleases or excites you is okay. □ *Mary: Do you mind if I buy some of these flowers? Bill: Whatever turns you on.* □ *Mary: I just love to hear a raucous saxophone play some smooth jazz. Bob: Whatever turns you on, baby.* **2.** *Inf.* a comment implying that it is strange to get so excited about something. (Essentially sarcastic.) □ *Bob: I just go wild whenever I see pink gloves on a woman. I don't understand it. Bill: Whatever turns you on.* □ *Jane: You see, I never told anybody this, but whenever I see snow falling, I just go sort of mushy inside. Sue: Weird, Jane, weird. But, whatever turns you on.*

Whatever will be, will be. Go to What must be, must be.

What'll it be? and **Name your poison.; What'll you have?; What's yours?** *Inf.* What do you want to drink?; What do you want?; How can I serve you? (Typically said by a bartender or bar waiter or waitress.) □ *Tom: What'll it be, friend? Bill: I'll just have a ginger ale, if you don't mind.* □ *Waitress: What'll you have? Bob: Nothing, thanks.*

wheedle someone **into** something to get someone to agree to do something by begging or flattery. □ *She is always trying to wheedle us into coming for a visit.* □ *You can't wheedle me into doing that!*

wheedle something **away from** someone and **wheedle** something **out of** someone to get something away from someone by begging or flattery. □ *The crooks wheedled the old lady's money away from her.* □ *Tim wheedled a few dollars out of his uncle.*

wheel and deal to take part in clever (but sometimes dishonest or immoral) business deals. □ *John loves to wheel and deal in the money markets.* □ *Jack got tired of all the wheeling and dealing of big business and retired to run a pub in the country.*

wheel around to turn around quickly; to change direction quickly. □ *She wheeled around quickly to face him.* □ *Suddenly, Roger wheeled around and started chasing Wally.*

wheel someone or something **around†** to push or steer around someone or something on wheels. ☐ *I had to wheel my great-uncle around all day when we visited the zoo.* ☐ *I wheeled around my uncle so he could enjoy the park.* ☐ *I wheeled the heavy shopping cart around the grocery store.*

wheel someone or something **away†** to push away someone or something on wheels. ☐ *The nurse wheeled the old man away, into the shelter of the porch.* ☐ *She wheeled away the old man.*

wheel someone or something **into** something and **wheel** someone or something **in†** to bring someone or something into something or some place on wheels. ☐ *The orderly wheeled the man into the operating room.* ☐ *The orderly wheeled in the patient.*

wheel someone or something **off†** to push or steer someone or something on wheels some distance away. ☐ *The nurse wheeled the old man off.* ☐ *Karen wheeled off the patient.*

wheel someone or something **out of** something and **wheel** someone or something **out†** to push or steer someone or something out of something on wheels. ☐ *The nurse wheeled the new mother out of the hospital.* ☐ *Liz wheeled out the new mother.*

wheeze something **out†** to say something, while wheezing; to say something, using a wheeze for a voice. (As if one is out of breath.) ☐ *He was out of breath from running and was only able to wheeze a few words out.* ☐ *Liz wheezed out a quick hello.*

when all is said and done *Cliché* when everything is finished and settled; when everything is considered. ☐ *When all is said and done, this isn't such a bad part of the country to live in after all.* ☐ *When all is said and done, I believe I had a very enjoyable time on my vacation.*

When do we eat? What time is the next meal served? (Indicates that the speaker is hungry, but considered impolite.) ☐ *Bill: This is a lovely view, and your apartment is great. When do we eat? Mary: We've already eaten. Weren't you just leaving? Bill: I guess I was.* ☐ *Andy: Wow! Something really smells good! When do we eat? Rachel: Oh, mind your manners.*

When in Rome(, do as the Romans do). *Prov.* Behave however the people around you behave. Adapt yourself to the customs of the places you visit. ☐ *Jill: Everyone in my new office dresses so casually. Should I dress that way, too? Jane: By all means. When in Rome, do as the Romans do.*

when it comes right down to it *Cliché* all things considered; when one really thinks about something. ☐ *When it comes right down to it, I'd like to find a new job.* ☐ *When it comes right down to it, he can't really afford a new car.*

when it comes to something as for something; speaking about something. ☐ *When it comes to fishing, John is an expert.* ☐ *When it comes to trouble, Mary really knows how to cause it.*

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when least expected when one does not expect something. ☐ *An old car is likely to give you trouble when least expected.* ☐ *My pencil usually breaks when least expected.*

When one door shuts, another opens. *Prov.* When you lose one opportunity, you often find a different one. ☐ *Jane: I just found out I'm failing two classes. I'll never get into college with grades like this. Jill: Well, maybe you'll find something better than college. When one door shuts, another opens.*

when one **is good and ready** when one is completely ready. ☐ *I'll be there when I'm good and ready.* ☐ *Ann will finish the job when she's good and ready and not a minute sooner.*

when one's **ship comes in** *Fig.* when one becomes rich and successful. ☐ *When my ship comes in, we'll live in one of these huge mansions on the hill, my lass.* ☐ *When your ship comes in, Otto, I'll probably die of amazement!*

When poverty comes in at the door, love flies out of the window. and **When the wolf comes in at the door, love creeps out of the window.** *Prov.* If a couple gets married because they are in love, but they do not have enough money, they will stop loving each other when the money runs out. ☐ *You young folks may think you can live on love alone, but when poverty comes in at the door, love flies out of the window.* ☐ *After Susan lost her job, she and her unemployed husband had a big argument. When the wolf comes in at the door, love creeps out of the window.*

when push comes to shove and **if push comes to shove** *Fig.* when things get a little pressed; when the situation gets more active or intense. ☐ *When push comes to shove, you know I'll be on your side.* ☐ *If push comes to shove at the meeting, the front office can back you up with some statistics.*

When the cat's away, the mice will play. *Prov.* When no one in authority is present, the subordinates can do as they please. ☐ *When the teacher left for a few minutes, the children nearly wrecked the classroom. When the cat's away, the mice will play.* ☐ *Jill: You shouldn't be reading a novel at your desk. Jane: But the boss isn't here. And when the cat's away, the mice will play.*

when the chips are down *Fig.* at the final, critical moment; when things really get difficult. ☐ *When the chips are down, I know that I can depend on Jean to help out.* ☐ *I knew you would come and help when the chips were down.*

when the dust settles 1. *Lit.* when the dust falls out of the air. ☐ *When the dust settles, we will have to begin sweeping it up.* **2.** *Fig.* when things have calmed down. ☐ *When the dust settles, we can start patching up all the hurt feelings.*

when the fat hit the fire Go to the fat hit the fire.

when the fat lady sings Go to till the fat lady sings.

when the going gets tough and **if the going gets tough; when the going gets rough; if the going gets rough** as things get extremely difficult; when it becomes difficult to proceed. ☐ *When the going gets tough, I will be there to help you.* ☐ *If the going gets tough, just give me a call.*

When the going gets tough, the tough get going. *Prov.* When things are difficult, strong people take action and do not despair. (Can be used to encourage someone to take action.) ☐ *The football team was losing the game, so at halftime the coach reminded them that when the going gets tough, the tough get going.* ☐ *Jill: I don't think I can walk all the way to the top of this hill; it's so steep! Jane:*

Don't give up. When the going gets tough, the tough get going.

when the shit hits the fan *Sl.* when all the expected trouble materializes. ☐ *When the shit hits the fan, you had better be prepared to support those of us who are involved in this mess.*

when the time is ripe *Fig.* at exactly the right time. ☐ *I'll tell her the good news when the time is ripe.* ☐ *When the time is ripe, I'll bring up the subject again.*

When the wolf comes in at the door, love creeps out of the window. Go to When poverty comes in at the door, love flies out of the window.

when you get a chance Go to next.

when you get a minute and **when you get a chance** a phrase introducing a request, especially to talk to someone. ☐ *Bill: Tom? Tom: Yes. Bill: When you get a minute, I'd like to have a word with you.* ☐ *"Please drop over for a chat when you get a chance," said Fred to Bill.*

Where can I wash up? and **Is there some place I can wash up?** *Euph.* a way of asking where the toilet or bathroom is without referring to one's need to use it. (Of course, this is also appropriate to ask where one can wash one's hands.) ☐ *The minute he got to the house, he asked Fred, "Where can I wash up?"* ☐ *Fred: Welcome. Come in. Bill: Oh, is there some place I can wash up?*

Where do (you think) you get off? *Inf.* What do you think you are doing?; Who do you think you are? (A sharp reply to something offensive or impolite.) ☐ *How rude! Where do you think you get off?* ☐ *Where do you get off, talking to me like that?*

Where have you been all my life? *Inf.* an expression of admiration usually said to a lover. ☐ *Mary: I feel very happy when I'm with you. John: Oh, Mary, where have you been all my life?* ☐ *John grasped her hand, stared directly at her left ear, and stuttered, "Where have you been all my life?"*

Where (have) you been hiding (yourself)? Go to next.

Where (have) you been keeping yourself? and **Where (have) you been hiding (yourself)?** *Inf.* I haven't seen you for a long time. Where have you been? ☐ *Bill: Hi, Alice! Where you been keeping yourself? Alice: Oh, I've been around. How are you doing? Bill: Okay.* ☐ *John: What's up? Bill: Hi. man. Where you been keeping yourself? John: Oh, I've been busy.*

Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise. *Prov.* If knowing something makes you unhappy, it would be better not to know it. (Also the cliché: **ignorance is bliss**.) ☐ *Ellen: The doctor didn't tell Dad that Mom probably won't recover from her illness. Do you think we should tell him? Bill: No. It would only make him unhappy and ruin their last months together. Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise.*

Where in the world...? *Inf.* Where? (An intensive form of *where.* See examples for variations.) ☐ *Where in the world have you been?* ☐ *Where in the world did I put my glasses?*

Where is the restroom? the appropriate way of asking for the toilet in a public place. ☐ *Bob: 'Scuse me. Waiter: Yes, sir. Bob: Where is the restroom? Waiter: To your left, sir.* ☐ *Mary: Where is the restroom, please? Clerk: Behind the elevators, ma'am.*

where it's at *Sl.* what one is aiming for; what is needed. (This does not refer to a place.) ☐ *Keep on trying. That's where it's at!* ☐ *Good strong friends. That's where it's at.*

Where on (God's green) earth? *Inf.* (Exactly) where? (An intensive form of *where.* See examples for variations.) ☐ *Where on God's green earth did you get that ridiculous hat?* ☐ *Where on earth is my book?* ☐ *Where on God's green earth were you?*

where one **is coming from** one's point of view. ☐ *I think I know what you mean. I know where you're coming from.* ☐ *Man, you don't know where I'm coming from! You don't understand a single word I say.*

Where's the beef? *Inf.* Where is the substance?; Where is the important content? ☐ *That's really clever and appealing, but where's the beef?* ☐ *Where's the beef? There's no substance in this proposal.*

Where's the fire? *Inf.* Where are you going in such a hurry? (Typically said by a police officer after stopping a speeding driver.) ☐ *Officer: Okay, where's the fire? Mary: Was I going a little fast?* ☐ *"Where's the fire?" Bob called ahead to Sue, who had gotten well ahead of him in her excitement.*

where someone **is at** *Sl.* what mental condition someone is in. ☐ *I know where you're at. I know what you are talking about.* ☐ *You said it! I know just where you're at!*

where someone **lives** *Inf.* at one's core; in one's personal situation. ☐ *That really hits you where you live, doesn't it?* ☐ *Yes, that gets me where I live.*

where someone's **head is at** *Inf.* the state of one's mental well-being. ☐ *As soon as I figure where my head is at, I'll be okay.* ☐ *He doesn't know where his head is at.*

where the action is where important things are happening. ☐ *I want to be where the action is.* ☐ *Right there in city hall. That's where the action is.*

where the rubber meets the road *Fig.* at the point in a process where there are challenges, issues, or problems. ☐ *Now we have spelled out the main area of dissent. This is where the rubber meets the road.*

where the sun don't shine *Sl.* in a dark place, namely the anus. ☐ *I don't care what you do with it. Just put it where the sun don't shine.* ☐ *For all I care you can shove it where the sun don't shine.*

Where there's a will, there's a way. *Prov. Cliché* If you truly want to do something, you will find a way to do it, in spite of obstacles. ☐ *We'll get this piano up the stairs somehow. Where there's a will, there's a way.* ☐ *I have no doubt that Bob will find a publisher for his novel. Where there's a will, there's a way.*

Where there's life there's hope. Go to While there's life there's hope.

Where there's smoke there's fire. Go to (There's) no smoke without fire.

Where will I find you? Please give me directions for finding you. (Said when people are arranging a meeting somewhere.) ☐ *Sue: Where will I find you? Bob: I'll be sitting in the third row somewhere.* ☐ *Tom: We'll get to the farm about noon. Where will we find you? Sally: Probably*

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in the barn. If you can't find me, just go up to the house and make yourself comfortable on the porch.

*the **wherewithal (to** do something**)** the means to do something, especially energy or money. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *He has good ideas, but he doesn't have the wherewithal to carry them out.* ☐ *I could do a lot if only I could get the wherewithal.*

whet someone's **appetite** *Fig.* to cause someone to be interested in something and to be eager to have, know, learn, etc., more about it. ☐ *Seeing that film really whetted my sister's appetite for horror films. She now sees as many as possible.* ☐ *My appetite for theater was whetted when I was very young.*

whether or not either if something is the case or if something is not the case; one way or the other. ☐ *I'll drive to New York tomorrow whether or not it rains.* ☐ *I'm going to the mall whether you come with me or not.*

which brings me to the (main) point a transitional phrase that introduces the main point of a discussion. ☐ *Bill: Keeping safe at times like this is very important—which brings me to the main point. Does your house have an adequate burglar alarm? Sally: I knew you were trying to sell me something! Out!* ☐ *Lecturer: . . . which brings me to the point. John (whispering): Thank heavens! I knew there was a point to all this.*

*a **whiff of** something **1.** *Lit.* the smell or odor of something. (*Typically: **get ~; catch ~; have ~; take ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Did you get a whiff of the turkey roasting? Yummy.* ☐ *I caught a whiff of something rather unpleasant in the attic. I think there is a dead mouse up there.* **2.** *Fig.* a bit of knowledge of something. (*Typically: **get ~; catch ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *The boss got a whiff of the problems in the accounting department.* ☐ *No one will get a whiff of your trouble with the police. I'll see to that.*

while a period of time **away† (**doing something**)** to spend or waste time doing something. ☐ *I whiled an hour away just staring at the sea.* ☐ *Liz whiled away the entire afternoon, snoozing.* ☐ *I just love to while away the hours.*

While there's life there's hope. and **Where there's life there's hope.** *Prov. Cliché* As long as you are alive, you should be hopeful, because it is possible that your situation will improve. ☐ *Nancy: What will we do, now that our house and everything we own has burned up? Bill: While there's life there's hope.* ☐ *Ellen: Ever since my divorce, it seems as if I have nothing to hope for. Jane: I know things seem bleak, but where there's life there's hope.*

whine about someone or something to whimper or complain about someone or something. ☐ *Please don't whine about Sally. She is sorry she couldn't come to your party, but it's not the end of the world.* ☐ *The dog is whining about its hurt paw.*

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whine something **out†** to say something in a whine; to say something, using a whine for a voice. ☐ *She whined her complaint out so everyone could hear it.* ☐ *Jake whined out his usual complaints.*

whip around 1. to reverse suddenly. (As with the tip of a whip.) ☐ *The rope suddenly whipped around and struck me in the face.* ☐ *A branch whipped around and tore my shirt.* **2.** to turn around very quickly and suddenly. ☐ *John whipped around when he heard the noise.* ☐ *Claire whipped around to face her opponent.*

whip back (on someone**)** [for something] to snap back and strike someone. ☐ *The branch whipped back and struck Jill in the leg.* ☐ *It whipped back and slapped my side.*

whip into something *Fig.* to go quickly into something or some place. ☐ *They whipped into the parking space before I could get there.* ☐ *I whipped into the store to pick up a few things.*

whip someone **into** a state *Fig.* to excite, arouse, or foment someone into some state. (Based on **whip** someone **into** doing something.) ☐ *The governor's speech whipped the audience into a frenzy.* ☐ *The angry cries from the audience whipped the speaker into a rage.*

whip someone **into** doing something to beat someone into doing something. ☐ *The cruel captain whipped his men into going on with the journey.* ☐ *You can't whip me into betraying my friends.*

whip someone or something **around†** to cause someone or something to reverse direction quickly. ☐ *The roller coaster whipped around the riders, right and left, until they were almost sick.* ☐ *The sharp turn whipped me around, but I wasn't hurt.*

whip someone or something **into shape** to cause someone or something to be in a better condition. ☐ *The coach was not able to whip the players into shape before the game.* ☐ *I think I can whip this proposal into shape quickly.* ☐ *Hey, Tom, whip yourself into shape. You look a mess.*

whip someone or something **on†** to force someone or something to continue by whipping or beating. ☐ *The rider whipped his horse on, faster and faster.* ☐ *The stage coach driver whipped on the team of horses.*

whip someone **up†** to excite or stir up someone. ☐ *Well, you've certainly whipped them up with that speech.* ☐ *Harry whipped up the crowd with a few good jokes.*

whip something **away† (from** someone**)** to jerk something away from someone suddenly. ☐ *The mugger whipped Sally's purse away from her and ran.* ☐ *The thief whipped away the purse.*

whip something **into shape** Go to **lick** something **into shape**.

whip something **into** something to beat one soft ingredient into another. ☐ *Whip the butter into the egg and make a smooth paste.* ☐ *First, you must whip the egg whites into the cream.*

whip something **off† 1.** *Inf.* to do or create something quickly. ☐ *If you need another receipt, I can whip one off in a jiffy.* ☐ *She whipped off another set of earrings for the tourist.* **2.** *Inf.* to remove something, such as an item of clothing, quickly. ☐ *He whipped the coat off and dived into the water.* ☐ *I whipped off my cap.*

whip something **out† 1.** *Inf.* to complete making or working on something quickly. ☐ *I think I can whip one out for you very quickly.* ☐ *The factory whips out twenty of these every minute.* **2.** *Inf.* to jerk something out [of some place]. ☐ *Liz whipped a pencil out of her pocket.* ☐ *She whipped out a pencil and signed the contract.*

whip something **over (to** someone**)** *Fig.* to send or give something to someone with great speed. ☐ *I will whip this*

letter over to Mr. Franklin right away. ☐ *Sam whipped the package over to Alice immediately.*

whip something **up**† to prepare, create, or put something together. ☐ *I haven't written my report yet, but I'll whip one up before the deadline.* ☐ *I will whip up the most beautiful arrangement you have ever seen.*

whip something written **off**† **to** someone *Inf.* to write and send off a letter to someone quickly. ☐ *After I got her letter, I whipped an answer off to her the same afternoon.* ☐ *Liz whipped off a letter to her grandmother.*

whip through something *Fig.* to work through something very fast. ☐ *Do this carefully. Don't just whip through it.* ☐ *She whipped through her homework and went outside to play.*

a **whipping boy** *Fig.* someone who is punished for someone else's misdeeds. ☐ *The president has turned out to be the whipping boy for his party.*

whirl around to turn around very quickly. ☐ *I tapped him on the shoulder and he whirled around to see who it was.* ☐ *Todd whirled around and grabbed Max by the wrists.*

whirl someone or something **around**† to turn someone or something around quickly. ☐ *I grabbed him by the shoulder and whirled him around to face me.* ☐ *I whirled around the book display and found what I wanted.*

whisk someone **around**† to move someone around rapidly from place to place. ☐ *I didn't get much chance to see the city. They just whisked me around.* ☐ *We whisked around the visitor from place to place.*

whisk someone or an animal **off**† to brush [something] off someone or an animal. ☐ *The barber quickly whisked him off and collected the fee.* ☐ *The barber whisked off the customer.*

whisk someone or something **away**† to move someone or something out of the way rapidly. ☐ *The firemen came and whisked the students away to a safe place.* ☐ *The agents whisked away a number of people.*

whisk someone or something **off**† **(to** something**)** to move someone or something to something or some place rapidly. ☐ *The government agents whisked the witness off to a secret place.* ☐ *They whisked off the suspect to a holding cell.*

whisk something **off (of)** someone or something and **whisk** something **off**† to brush something off someone or something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *The barber whisked the loose hairs off of the customer.* ☐ *The barber whisked off the loose hairs.*

whisper about someone or something to speak about someone or something in a quiet, breathy voice, as if telling secrets. ☐ *I hope they aren't whispering about me.* ☐ *Everyone is whispering about the incident in the lunchroom.*

whisper something **around** to spread secrets or gossip around. ☐ *Now, don't whisper this around, but Sam is going to run away from home.* ☐ *If you whisper this around, you will spoil the surprise.*

whistle at someone or something to indicate approval or disapproval of someone or something by whistling. ☐ *The men whistled at the beautiful woman who walked by.* ☐ *Everyone whistled at the enormous roast of beef the cook's assistant carried in.*

whistle for someone or something to summon someone or something by whistling. ☐ *I stood on the corner and whistled for a cab, but they all ignored me.* ☐ *I whistled for the dog, but it did not appear.*

whistle in the dark *Fig.* to guess aimlessly; to speculate as to a fact. ☐ *Am I close, or am I just whistling in the dark?* ☐ *She was whistling in the dark. She has no idea of what's going on.*

white as a ghost Go to next.

***white as a sheet** and ***white as a ghost; *white as snow; *white as the driven snow** [of someone] extremely pale, as if frightened. (*Also: **as** ~.) ☐ *Marilyn turned as white as a sheet when the policeman told her that her son had been in a car wreck.* ☐ *Did something scare you? You're white as a sheet!* ☐ *Jane made up the bed with her best linen sheets, which are always as white as snow.* ☐ *We have a new kitten whose fur is white as the driven snow.*

white as snow Go to previous.

white as the driven snow Go to white as a sheet.

white elephant something that is large and unwieldy and is either a nuisance or expensive to keep up. ☐ *Bob's father-in-law has given him an old Rolls Royce, but it's a real white elephant. He has no place to park it and can't afford the gas for it.* ☐ *Those antique vases Aunt Mary gave me are white elephants. They're ugly and I have no place to put them.*

white knuckle something to survive something threatening through strained endurance, that is to say, holding on tight. ☐ *The flight from New York was terrible. We had to white knuckle the entire flight.*

whittle at something to cut or carve at something. ☐ *He just sat there, whittling at a chunk of wood.* ☐ *I am not carving anything, I am just whittling at some wood.*

whittle someone **down to size** *Fig.* to reduce someone's ego; to cause someone to have better, more respectful behavior. (Fig. on whittle something down (to size).) ☐ *After a few days at camp, the counselors had whittled young Walter down to size.* ☐ *It took some doing, but they whittled him down to size.*

whittle something **away**† to cut or carve something away. ☐ *The carver whittled the wood away until only a small figure was left.* ☐ *He whittled away the wood.*

whittle something **down (to size)** and **whittle** something **down**† to cut or diminish something to a more appropriate size or to the proper size. ☐ *I whittled the peg down to size and it fit in the hole perfectly.* ☐ *You are going to have to whittle down expenses.*

whittle something **out of** something to carve something out of something. ☐ *The young man whittled a small boat out of wood.* ☐ *Can you whittle an elephant out of this chunk of wood?*

whiz past someone or something to move or travel past someone or something at a high speed. ☐ *The train whizzed past one little town after another.* ☐ *I whizzed past Chuck because I did not recognize him.*

whiz (right) through something **1.** to speed through a place. ☐ *One car after another whizzed right through the little town.* ☐ *We whizzed through the kitchen, stopping just*

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long enough for a glass of iced tea. **2.** to work one's way through something quickly. ☐ *She whizzed right through the test with no trouble.* ☐ *Jane whizzed through her interview and got the job.*

Who cares? Does anyone really care?; It is of no consequence. ☐ *John: I have some advice for you. It will make things easier for you. Bob: Who cares? John: You might.* ☐ *Sue: You missed a spot shaving. Fred: Who cares?*

Who could have thought? Go to Who would have thought?

Who do you think you are? *Inf.* Why do you think you can lord it over people that way?; Why are you so arrogant? (Usually in anger.) ☐ *Tom: Just a minute! Who do you think you are? You can't talk to me that way! Bob: Says who?* ☐ *"Who do you think you are, bursting in here like that?" sputtered the doorman as Fred bolted into the club lobby.*

Who do you think you're kidding? *Inf.* You aren't fooling anyone.; Surely, you do not think you can fool me, do you? ☐ *Bill: I must pull down about eighty thou a year. Bob: You? Who do you think you're kidding?* ☐ *Mary: This carpet was made in Persia centuries ago. Tom: Who do you think you're kidding?*

Who do you think you're talking to? *Inf.* Do you know the importance of the person who you are talking to? ☐ *Who do you think you're talking to? I'm the boss here, you know?* ☐ *Don't talk to me that way! Who do you think you are talking to?*

Who do you want to speak to? Go to next.

Who do you want (to talk to)? and **Who do you want to speak to?; Who do you wish to speak to?; Who do you wish to talk to?** Who do you want to speak to over the telephone? (All these questions can also begin with *whom*. Compare this with With whom do you wish to speak?) ☐ *Sue: Wilson residence. Who do you want to speak to? Bill: Hi, Sue. I want to talk to you.* ☐ *Tom (answering the phone): Hello? Sue: Hello, who is this? Tom: Who do you wish to speak to? Sue: Is Sally there? Tom: Just a minute.*

Who (in) the devil? Go to next.

Who (in) the hell? and **Who (in) the devil?** *Inf.* Who? (An elaboration of *who*. See examples for variations.) ☐ *Who in the hell was that masked man?* ☐ *Who the hell are you?*

Who is it? Go to Who's there?

Who is this? Who is making this telephone call?; Who is on the other end of this telephone line? ☐ *Tom (answering the phone): Hello? Fred: Hello. Do you have any fresh turkeys? Tom: Who is this? Fred: Isn't this the Harrison Poultry Shop? Tom: No. Fred: I guess I have the wrong number.* ☐ *Mary (answering the phone): Hello? Sue: Hello, who is this? Mary: Well, who did you want? Sue: I want Grandma. Mary: I'm sorry, I think you have the wrong number.*

Who knows? Who knows the answer to that question? ☐ *Tom: When will this train get in? Rachel: Who knows?* ☐ *Andy: Why can't someone put this stuff away? Rachel: Who knows? Why don't you put it away?*

Who's calling(, please)? Who is this making this telephone call? ☐ *Rachel: Yes, Tom is here. Who's calling, please? Tom: Who is it? Rachel: It's Fred.* ☐ *Fred (answering the phone): Hello? Tom: Hello, is Bill there? Fred: Who's calling, please? Tom: This is Tom Wilson returning his call.*

Who's on the line? Go to next.

Who's on the phone? and **Who's on the line?** Who is on the telephone line now?; Who just called on the telephone? (The caller may still be waiting.) ☐ *Bill was on the telephone, and Mary walked by. "Who's on the phone?" asked Mary, hoping the call was for her.* ☐ *Tom asked, "Who's on the line?" Mary covered the receiver and said, "None of your business!"*

Who's there? and **Who is it?** a question asking who is on the other side of a door or concealed in some other place. ☐ *Hearing a noise, Tom called out in the darkness, "Who's there?"* ☐ *Hearing a knock on the door, Mary went to the door and said, "Who is it?"*

Who's your friend? *Sl.* Who is that following along behind you? ☐ *John: Hi, Tom. Who's your friend? Tom: Oh, this is my little brother, Willie. John: Hi, Willie.* ☐ *Looking at the little dog almost glued to Bob's pants cuff, Sally asked, "Who's your friend?"*

Who was it? Who called on the telephone or who was at the door? (Assumes that the caller is not waiting on the telephone or at the door.) ☐ *Sue (as Mary hangs up the telephone): Who was it? Mary: None of your business.* ☐ *Bill (as he leaves the door): What a pest! Sue: Who was it? Bill: Some silly survey.*

Who would have thought? and **Who could have thought?** a question phrase indicating surprise or amazement; I would never have guessed that something so surprising could happen. (No answer is expected.) ☐ *Tom: Fred just quit his job and went to Africa. Bill: Who would have thought he could do such a thing?* ☐ *Andy: They say Bill is training for the Olympics in his spare time. Rachel: Who would have thought?*

Whoa, Nellie! *Rur.* Wait! Stop! ☐ *Tom: When I get that money, I'm gonna get me my own place, and then you and I can get married, and— Jane: Whoa, Nellie! When did I say I was going to marry you?* ☐ *Whoa, Nellie! Did you measure them boards before you started cuttin' 'em?*

whole bag of tricks *Fig.* everything; every possibility, argument, or technique. ☐ *Well now. I've used my whole bag of tricks, and we still haven't solved this.* ☐ *It may take my whole bag of tricks to do it, but I'll try.*

the **whole ball of wax** and the **whole shooting match** the whole thing; the whole matter or affair; the entire affair or organization. ☐ *John is not a good manager. Instead of delegating jobs to others, he runs the whole shooting match himself.* ☐ *There's not a hard worker in that whole shooting match.* ☐ *I will be glad to be finished with this project. I want to be done with the whole ball of wax.* ☐ *I am tired of this job. I am fed up with the whole ball of wax.*

the **whole enchilada** *Inf.* the whole thing; everything. (From Spanish.) ☐ *Nobody, but nobody, ever gets the whole enchilada.* ☐ *Richard wants the whole enchilada.*

a **whole heap more** and a **whole lot more** *Rur.* a great deal more. ☐ *I think a whole heap more of Joe than I do of his brother.* ☐ *Don't quit now. There's a whole heap more work to be done.*

the **whole kit and caboodle** *Inf.* a group of pieces of equipment or belongings. (The word *caboodle* is used only in this expression.) ☐ *When I bought Bob's motorhome, I got furniture, refrigerator, and linen—the whole kit and caboodle.* ☐ *The salesman managed to sell John the whole kit and caboodle.*

a **(whole) mess of** someone or something *Rur.* a lot of someone or something. ☐ *We went out on the lake and caught a whole mess of bluegill.* ☐ *I cooked up a mess of chili and had all my friends over to eat it.*

a **(whole) new ball game** *Fig.* a completely different situation; something completely different. ☐ *Now that you're here, it's a whole new ball game.* ☐ *With a faster computer, it's a whole new ball game.*

the **whole nine yards** *Sl.* the entire amount; everything, as far as possible. ☐ *For you I'll go the whole nine yards.* ☐ *You're worth the whole nine yards.*

a **whole nother thing** *Rur.* a completely different matter. (Often "corrected" to *a whole other thing*. The word *nother* is a shortening of *another*.) ☐ *Borrowing! That's a whole nother thing! I thought you said stealing!*

the **whole shebang** everything; the whole thing. ☐ *Mary's all set to give a fancy dinner party. She's got a fine tablecloth, good crystal, and silverware, the whole shebang.* ☐ *How much do you want for the whole shebang?*

the **whole shooting match** Go to the whole ball of wax.

the **whole wide world** *Fig.* everywhere; everywhere and everything. ☐ *It's the best in the whole wide world.* ☐ *I've searched the whole wide world for just the right hat.*

the **whole works** everything; the complete amount. ☐ *I cashed my paycheck and lost the whole works playing the ponies.*

Whom the gods love die young. *Prov.* Virtuous or gifted people die at an early age, because the gods want those people to be with them in the afterlife. ☐ *So many brilliant authors and artists died before the age of fifty that it's easy to believe that whom the gods love die young.*

whoop it up to celebrate, especially with cheers and whoops. ☐ *It was a very noisy party. Everyone was whooping it up well past midnight.* ☐ *The campaign workers whooped it up for their candidate.* ☐ *I can't get out there and whoop it up for something I don't believe in.*

Why buy a cow when milk is so cheap? Go to next.

Why buy a cow when you can get milk for free? and **Why buy a cow when milk is so cheap?** *Prov.* Why pay for something that you can get for free otherwise. (Sometimes used to describe someone who will not marry because sex without any commitment is so easy to obtain. Jocular and crude.) ☐ *I don't have a car because someone always gives me a ride to work. Why buy a cow when you can get milk for free?* ☐ *Mary told her daughter, "You may think that boy will marry you because you're willing to sleep with him, but why should he buy a cow if he can get milk for free?"*

why don't you? a question tag that is put onto the end of a command. ☐ *Andy: Move aside, why don't you? Bob: Okay. Sorry. I didn't know I was in the way.* ☐ *"Just keep bugging me, why don't you?" threatened Wally.* ☐ *Andy: Try it again, why don't you? Sue: I hope I get it right this time.*

Why keep a dog and bark yourself? *Prov.* You should not do something you have hired someone else to do. ☐ *Ellen: The cleaning lady washes my floors every Tuesday, but I always wash them over again. Jane: Don't be silly, Ellen. Why keep a dog and bark yourself?*

Why not? 1. *Lit.* Please explain your negative answer. ☐ *Mother: No, you can't. Mary: Why not?* ☐ *Sue: Could I have another piece of cake? Mary: No. Sue: Why not? Mary: I want it.* **2.** *Inf.* I cannot think of a reason not to, so yes. ☐ *Bob: You want to go to see a movie next Friday? Jane: Why not?* ☐ *Fred: Do you feel like wandering over to the bowling alley? Tom: Why not?*

the **whys and wherefores of** something the reasons or causes relating to something. ☐ *I refuse to discuss the whys and wherefores of my decision. It's final.* ☐ *Bob doesn't know the whys and wherefores of his contract. He just knows that it means he will get a lot of money when he finishes the work.*

***wide of the mark 1.** *Lit.* far from the target. (*Typically: **be ~; fall ~**.) ☐ *Tom's shot was wide of the mark.* ☐ *The pitch was quite fast but wide of the mark.* ☐ *The arrow fell wide of the mark.* **2.** *Fig.* inadequate; far from what is required or expected. (*Typically: **be ~; fall ~**.) ☐ *Jane's efforts were sincere but wide of the mark.* ☐ *He failed the course because everything he did was wide of the mark.*

wide open 1. as fast as possible; at full throttle. ☐ *I was driving along wide open when I became aware of a flashing red light.* ☐ *It was wide open and still wouldn't do better than eighty.* **2.** [of a town or place] full of crime or corruption; vice-ridden. ☐ *This town is wide open!* ☐ *Because the prison is understaffed, it is wide open.*

a **wide place in the road** a very small town. ☐ *The town is little more than a wide place in the road.* ☐ *We stopped at a wide place in the road called Adamsville.*

wig out *Sl.* to become intoxicated. ☐ *One more drink and Wally will wig out.* ☐ *This guy has wigged out. Get him out of here.*

wiggle out of something **1.** *Lit* to get out of something or some place; to squirm out of something or some place. ☐ *The kitten was able to wiggle out of the cage in which it had been put.* ☐ *The squirrel wiggled out of the trap we caught it in.* **2.** *Fig.* to manage to get out of a job, the blame for something, or a responsibility. ☐ *Don't try to wiggle out of your job!* ☐ *You are to blame and don't try to wiggle out of it!*

wild about someone or something very excited about someone or something. ☐ *I'm just wild about comedies.* ☐ *John is wild about antique cars.*

wild and woolly *Inf.* exciting. ☐ *Things get a little wild and woolly on a Friday evening at Wally's place.* ☐ *The ride home was a little wild and woolly.*

Wild horses couldn't drag someone **away (from** something.**)** *Prov.* Someone is determined to remain with something. ☐ *Once Elaine starts playing a video game, wild horses can't drag her away from it.* ☐ *Jim was determined to remain fishing at the lake. Wild horses couldn't drag him away from it.*

a **wild-goose chase** a worthless hunt or chase; a futile pursuit. ☐ *I wasted all afternoon on a wild-goose chase.* ☐

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John was angry because he was sent out on a wild-goose chase.

will be the death of someone or something **(yet)** [the thing named] will be the end or ruin of someone or something. ☐ *This job will be the death of me!* ☐ *Rough roads will be the death of these tires.*

will come of something will result from something. ☐ *I don't think that much will come of this.* ☐ *Nothing at all will come of it.*

Will do. *Inf.* I will do it. ☐ *Will do. I'll get right on it.* ☐ *Fix the stuck window? Will do.*

will eat someone **for breakfast** and **will have** someone **for breakfast** *Fig.* will defeat someone thoroughly. ☐ *Watch out! Those guys are incredibly aggressive. They will eat you for breakfast.*

Will I see you again? a question asked toward the end of a date implying that further dating would please the speaker. (This question leaves it open to the other party to confirm that the interest is mutual by requesting a further date. Compare this with Can I see you again?) ☐ *Tom: I had a wonderful time tonight, Mary. Good night. Mary: Will I see you again? Tom: That would be nice. Can I call you tomorrow?* ☐ *"Will I see you again?" asked Sally, cautiously and hopefully.*

[will not] See the entries beginning with *won't.*

will not hear of something and **won't hear of** something will refuse to tolerate or permit something. ☐ *You mustn't drive home alone. I will not hear of it.* ☐ *My parents won't hear of my staying out that late.*

will something **away†** to give something away in a will. ☐ *The old man simply willed all his money away. He said he wouldn't need it when he was dead.* ☐ *She had willed away all of her treasures to her grandchildren.*

will something **to** someone to give something to someone in a will. ☐ *My uncle willed this chair to me. It's an antique.* ☐ *This watch was willed to me by my grandfather.*

will stop at nothing *Cliché* will do everything possible (to accomplish something); will be unscrupulous. ☐ *Bill would stop at nothing to get his way.* ☐ *Bob is completely determined to get promoted. He'll stop at nothing.*

Will that be all? Go to (Will there be) anything else?

(Will there be) anything else? and **Is that everything?; Is there anything else?; Will that be all?** Is there anything else you want?; Is there any other matter you wish to discuss?; Is there any other request? (These phrases are used by shopkeepers, clerks, and food service personnel to find out if the customer wants anything more.) ☐ *Clerk: Here's the roast you ordered. Will there be anything else? Rachel: No, that's all.* ☐ *Waiter: Anything else? Bill: Just coffee.* ☐ *The clerk rang up the last item and asked, "Will that be all?"* ☐ *Waiter: Anything else? Jane: No, that's everything.*

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Will you excuse us, please? Go to Could you excuse us, please?

Will you hold? Go to Could you hold?

wimp out (of something**)** *Sl.* to chicken out (of something); to get out of something difficult, inconvenient, or dangerous, leaving others to carry the burden. ☐ *Come on! Don't wimp out now that there's all this work to be done.* ☐ *Ted wimped out on us.*

Win a few, lose a few. Sometimes one succeeds, and sometimes one fails. ☐ *Tom: Well, I lost out on that Wilson contract, but I got the Jones job. Sally: That's life. Win a few, lose a few.* ☐ *"Win a few, lose a few," said Fred, staring at yesterday's stock prices.*

win all the marbles Go to all the marbles.

win at something to triumph at some competition. ☐ *Will I ever be able to win at golf?* ☐ *She always wins at poker.*

win by a nose *Fig.* to win by the slightest amount of difference. (Can be literal in horses races.) ☐ *I ran the fastest race I could, but I only won by a nose.* ☐ *Sally won the race, but she only won by a nose.*

win (out) (over someone or something**)** to defeat someone or something. ☐ *I hope our team wins out over you guys.* ☐ *Good teamwork always wins out.*

win someone **away (from** someone or something**)** to convince someone to dissociate from someone or something. ☐ *We were not able to win Christine away from her strange ideas.* ☐ *We tried to win her away but failed.*

win someone or something **back (from** someone or something**)†** to regain someone or something from someone or something. ☐ *I hope to win the money I lost back from the other poker players.* ☐ *We were not able to win Sally back from the cult.* ☐ *We won back everything.* ☐ *We won back Sally.*

win someone **over† (to** something**)** to succeed in making someone favorable to something. ☐ *I hope I can win them all over to our side.* ☐ *I won over the mayor to our side.*

win someone's **heart** and **win the heart of** someone *Fig.* to gain the affection of someone; to win the love of someone exclusively. ☐ *I hope to win her heart and make her my bride.*

win something **at** something to win a prize in some sort of competition. ☐ *I won this silly doll at the ring-toss game.* ☐ *Did you win anything at the fair?*

win the day Go to carry the day.

win the heart of someone Go to win someone's heart.

win through something to succeed by a certain method or procedure. ☐ *Winning is no good if you have to win through dishonesty.* ☐ *Sally won through her own hard work.*

wince at something to shrink back because of something, such as pain. ☐ *She winced at the pain but did not cry out.* ☐ *After he had just winced at the pain for a while, he finally screamed.*

wind around [for something, such as a road] to make a turn or turns around. ☐ *The road wound around and ended up at the lake.* ☐ *The path wound around and came to a stop at the cabin door.*

wind around someone or something to twist or coil around someone or something. ☐ *The python wound around the rabbit, suffocating it.* ☐ *The vines wound around the gatepost.*

wind back [for something, such as a road] to turn so that it heads in the direction from whence it came. ☐ *The road we got lost on wound back and we were not able to reach*

the lake on time. ☐ *When we were lost, we found a stream in the woods, but it wound back and did not lead us in the direction we wanted.*

wind down to start running or operating slower. ☐ *Things will begin to wind down at the end of the summer.* ☐ *As things wind down, life will be a lot easier.* ☐ *The clock wound down and finally stopped.*

wind into something to coil up into something. ☐ *The snake wound into a tight coil.* ☐ *The rubber bands wound into a knot and were worthless.*

wind someone **around** one's **little finger** Go to **twist** someone **around** one's **little finger.**

wind someone **up 1.** *Inf. Fig.* to get someone excited. ☐ *That kind of music really winds me up!* **2.** *Inf. Fig.* to get someone set to do a lot of talking. (Fig. on winding up a clock.) ☐ *The excitement of the day wound Kelly up and she talked almost all night.* ☐ *A good movie tends to wind me up for a while.*

wind something **around** something to twist or coil something around something. ☐ *Wind this cloth around your hand to stop the bleeding.* ☐ *Wind the string around this stick so it won't get all tangled up.*

wind something **down†** to slow something down; to make something less hectic. ☐ *Let's wind this party down and try to get people to go home. It's really late.* ☐ *We tried to wind down the party, but it kept running.*

wind something **in†** to reel something in. ☐ *She wound in the rope that was tied to the anchor.* ☐ *Liz wound in the cable that raised the awning.*

wind something **off†** to unreel or unwind something. ☐ *He wound the rope off, little by little, until he had as much as he needed.* ☐ *Karen wound off as much as she needed.*

wind something **onto** something and **wind** something **on†** to coil or wrap something onto something. ☐ *Wind this string onto the ball and save it.* ☐ *If you find the ball of string, please wind on this string.*

wind something **up† 1.** *Lit.* to tighten the spring in something, such as a watch or a clock. ☐ *Please wind your watch up now—before it runs down.* ☐ *Wind up your watch before you forget.* **2.** *Fig.* to conclude something. ☐ *Today we'll wind that deal up with the bank.* ☐ *I have a few items of business to wind up. Then I'll be with you.*

wind something **(up†) (into** something**)** to coil something up into a ball or similar shape. ☐ *Tony wound all the string up into a ball.* ☐ *Wind up the string into a ball.* ☐ *Please wind this into a ball.*

wind through something [for a pathway] to twist or turn through an area. ☐ *The trail wound through the jungle, avoiding the densest places.* ☐ *A path wound through the woods, leading us to the main road.*

wind up (as) something to end up as something. ☐ *Roger wound up as a millionaire.* ☐ *He thought he would wind up a pauper.*

wind up (by) doing something Go to **end up (by)** doing something.

wind up somehow to end up in some fashion. ☐ *I don't want to wind up broke and depressed.* ☐ *You don't want to wind up like Ted, do you?*

wind up (somewhere**)** Go to **end up (**somewhere**).**

wind up with someone or something to end up having someone or something. ☐ *I don't want to wind up with all the kids for the weekend.* ☐ *We wound up with Thanksgiving at our house again.*

a **window of opportunity** *Fig.* a brief time period in which an opportunity exists. ☐ *This afternoon, I had a brief window of opportunity when I could discuss this with the boss, but she wasn't receptive.*

wine and dine someone to treat someone to an expensive meal of the type that includes fine wines; to entertain someone lavishly. ☐ *The lobbyists wined and dined the senators one by one in order to influence them.* ☐ *We were wined and dined every night and given the best hotel accommodations in town.*

wing it to improvise; to do something extemporaneously. ☐ *I lost my lecture notes, so I had to wing it.* ☐ *Don't worry. Just go out there and wing it.*

wink at someone to close one eye at a person as a sign of friendliness or flirtation. ☐ *She winked at him and he was shocked.* ☐ *I hope she winks at me again.*

wink at something to pretend not to see something; to condone something wrong. (See also **blink at** something ②.) ☐ *The police officer winked at my failure to make a complete stop.* ☐ *I cannot wink at blatant infractions of the law!*

wink something **away†** to blink the eyes to try to clear them of tears, dirt, etc. ☐ *He looked up at me and tried to wink away his tears, but he was just too upset.* ☐ *Jane winked away her tears.*

winner take all a situation where the one who defeats others takes all the spoils of the conflict. ☐ *The contest was a case of winner take all. There was no second place or runner-up.*

winter over (some place**)** to spend the winter at some place. ☐ *The bears all winter over in their dens.* ☐ *All the animals are getting ready either to migrate or to winter over.* ☐ *My parents winter over in Florida.*

Wipe it off! *Inf.* Wipe that smile off your face! ☐ *It's not funny. Wipe it off!* ☐ *Wipe it off! Nothing funny here, soldier.*

wipe out 1. *Inf.* to crash. ☐ *I wiped out on the curve.* ☐ *The car wiped out on the curve.* **2.** *Inf.* to fall off or away from something, such as a bicycle, skates, a surfboard, a skateboard, etc. ☐ *I wiped out and skinned my knee.* ☐ *If I wipe out again, my mother says I'm through.* **3.** *Inf.* to fail badly. ☐ *The test was terrible! I'm sure I wiped out.* ☐ *It was a bad test. I wiped out for sure.*

wipe someone or something **off†** to clean something off someone or something by wiping. ☐ *She wiped the baby off and put clean clothes on him.* ☐ *Please wipe off your shoes.* ☐ *John fell in the mud and Sam wiped him off.*

wipe someone or something **off the face of the earth** *Fig.* to demolish every trace of someone or something. ☐ *A great storm will come and wipe all the people off the face of the earth.* ☐ *The wind blew my old barn off the face of the earth! Nothing was left.*

wipe someone or something **(off†) (with** something**)** to clean someone or something by wiping with something. ☐ *Tony wiped the baby off with a soft cloth.* ☐ *Jane wiped off the counter with a rag.* ☐ *Tom fell in the mud and asked Ralph to wipe him off.*

wipe someone **out**† **1.** *Sl.* to kill someone. ☐ *Max intended to wipe Lefty's gang out.* ☐ *Lefty wiped out Max's gang.* **2.** *Sl.* to exhaust or debilitate someone. ☐ *The long walk wiped me out.* ☐ *The trip wiped out the hikers.* **3.** *Inf.* to ruin someone financially. ☐ *The loss of my job wiped us out.* ☐ *The storm ruined the corn crop and wiped out everyone in the county.*

wipe someone's **slate clean** and **wipe the slate clean** *Fig.* to get rid of or erase someone's (bad) record. (As if erasing information recorded on a slate.) ☐ *I'd like to wipe my slate clean and start all over again.* ☐ *Bob did badly in high school, but he wiped his slate clean and did a good job in college.*

wipe something **away**† to clean or mop something away. ☐ *Wipe all this mud away and scrub the floor clean.* ☐ *Jake wiped away the mud.*

wipe something **down**† to rub or mop something down. ☐ *Wipe the counter down and keep it clean!* ☐ *Don will wipe down the counter.*

wipe something **off**† **1.** to remove something (from something else) by wiping or rubbing. ☐ *There is mud on your shirt. Please wipe it off.* ☐ *I must wipe off the ketchup from my shirt.* **2.** to tidy or clean something by wiping (something else) off. ☐ *Please wipe the table off. There's water on it.* ☐ *Wipe off your shirt. There's ketchup on it.*

wipe something **(off†) (on** something**)** to remove something by wiping it on something else. ☐ *Don't wipe your feet off on the carpet.* ☐ *Don't wipe off your feet on the carpet.* ☐ *Wipe them on the mat.*

wipe something **off (**one's **face) 1.** *Lit.* to remove something, such as food or dirt, from one's own face. ☐ *Wipe that peanut butter off your face!* **2.** *Fig.* to remove a smile, grin, silly look, etc., from one's face. ☐ *Wipe that silly grin off your face, private!* ☐ *Wipe that smile off!*

wipe something **out**† *Sl.* to use up all of something. ☐ *I wiped the cookies out—not all at once, of course.* ☐ *Who wiped out the strawberry preserves?*

wipe something **up**† **1.** to clean something up by wiping. ☐ *Please wipe that spilled milk up.* ☐ *Jim wiped up the spill.* **2.** to clean something dirty by wiping. ☐ *The floor was sticky so I wiped it up.* ☐ *Please wipe up the countertop.*

wipe the floor up† with someone *Inf.* to beat or physically abuse someone. (Usually said as a threat.) ☐ *You say that to me one more time, and I'll wipe the floor up with you.* ☐ *Oh, yeah! You're not big enough to wipe up the floor with anybody!*

wipe the slate clean Go to **wipe** someone's **slate clean**.

wire ahead (for something**)** to send a telegram to one's destination, requesting something to be available upon one's arrival. ☐ *I wired ahead for a room. I hope that they still have one by the time we get to the hotel.* ☐ *We wired ahead for reservations.*

wire for something to send for something by telegram. ☐ *I wired for money, but it hasn't come yet.* ☐ *I will have to wire for further advice.*

wire someone or something **for** something to send a telegram to someone or something requesting something. ☐ *I wired my father for some money. I'm sure he'll send it, officer.* ☐ *Sarah wired the supplier for a replacement part.*

wire something **back to** someone to send something, such as a reply or money, back to someone by telegram. ☐ *Please wire your answer back to me by tomorrow.* ☐ *The reply wasn't wired back in time.*

wire something **in**† to send something into a central point by telegram. ☐ *I can't mail my story to my editor in time, so I will have to wire it in.* ☐ *I've got to wire in this story.*

wire something **together** to bind the pieces of something together with wire; to bind things together with wire. ☐ *I wired the car's exhaust pipe together, hoping to get a few more miles out of it.* ☐ *I will wire it together to keep it from dragging on the roadway.*

wire something **up**† **1.** to repair or reattach something with wire, especially something electrical. ☐ *I will wire this light fixture up and it will work like new.* ☐ *As soon as I wire up this again, it will work very well.* **2.** to attach something to a high place with wire. ☐ *We wired the satellite dish up to the side of the chimney.* ☐ *We wired up the antenna to the chimney.*

wired into someone or something *Sl.* closely concerned with someone or something; really involved with someone or something. ☐ *Mary is really wired into classical music.* ☐ *Sam and Martha are totally wired into one another.*

wise as an owl Go to next.

***wise as Solomon** and ***wise as an owl** very wise. (*Also: **as ~**.) ☐ *If you are in trouble, get Chris to advise you. He's as wise as Solomon.* ☐ *This is a difficult problem. You'd need to be as wise as an owl to be able to solve it.*

wise someone **up (about** someone or something**)** *Inf.* to instruct someone about something; to give someone important information. ☐ *Let me wise you up about the way we do things around here.* ☐ *I will do what I can to wise her up.*

***wise to** someone or something fully aware of someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; put** someone **~**.) ☐ *The cops are wise to the plan.*

wise up (to someone or something**)** to (finally) begin to understand someone or something; to realize and accept the facts about someone or something. (Also as a command.) ☐ *Sally finally wised up to Richard.* ☐ *Come on, Sally! Wise up!*

wish for someone or something to wish to have someone or something. ☐ *She spent most of her life wishing for Prince Charming, who would come along and sweep her off her feet.* ☐ *She still wishes for escape.*

The **wish is father to the thought.** *Prov.* People sometimes come to believe something that they wish were true. ☐ *Jane hoped that her boss would resign, and the wish was father to the thought. Soon she had told everyone in the office that she was sure her boss was leaving.*

wish list a list of things one wishes to have. ☐ *I put a new car at the top of my wish list.* ☐ *I have a DVD player on my wish list.*

wish someone or something **away**† to wish that someone or something would go away. ☐ *You can't just wish him away. You'll have to ask him to leave!* ☐ *Don't try to wish away the difficulties of your life.*

wish someone or something **(off†) on** someone to foist someone or something off on someone else. ☐ *I would*

never wish my uncle off on you, even for an hour. ☐ *I wouldn't wish off my cousin Roger on anyone.* ☐ *I wouldn't wish this matter on you.*

wishful thinking believing that something is true or that something will happen just because one wishes that it were true or would happen. ☐ *Hoping for a car as a birthday present is just wishful thinking. Your parents can't afford it.* ☐ *Mary thinks that she is going to get a big raise, but that's wishful thinking. Her boss is so tight with money.*

with a heavy heart *Cliché* sadly. ☐ *With a heavy heart, she said good-bye.* ☐ *We left our summer cottage on the last day with a heavy heart.*

with a vengeance *Cliché* with determination and eagerness. ☐ *The angry soldier attacked the enemy with a vengeance.* ☐ *Bill ate all his dinner and gobbled up his dessert with a vengeance.*

with a view to doing something and **with an eye to** doing something with the intention of doing something. ☐ *I came to this school with a view to getting a degree.* ☐ *The mayor took office with an eye to improving the town.*

with a will with determination and enthusiasm. ☐ *The children worked with a will to finish the project on time.* ☐ *The workers set about manufacturing the new products with a will.*

with advance notice and **on advance notice** with some kind of notification or indication that something is going to happen or is expected before it actually happens. ☐ *We are happy to provide special meals for anyone with advance notice.*

with all one's **heart (and soul)** *Cliché* very sincerely. ☐ *Oh, Bill, I love you with all my heart and soul, and I always will!* ☐ *She thanked us with all her heart and soul for the gift.*

with all the fixin(g)s *Rur.* with all the condiments or other dishes that accompany a certain kind of food. ☐ *For $12.99 you get a turkey dinner with all the fixings.* ☐ *Max likes his hamburgers with all the fixin's.*

with all the trimmings with all the extra things, especially with food. ☐ *We had a lovely Thanksgiving dinner with all the trimmings.* ☐ *I look forward to roast turkey with all the trimmings.*

with an eye to doing something Go to **with a view to** doing something.

with bated breath *Cliché* while holding one's breath. ☐ *We stood there with bated breath while the man hung on the side of the bridge.* ☐ *They listened with bated breath for the announcement about the winner.*

with bells on (one's **toes)** *Fig.* eagerly, willingly, and on time. ☐ *Oh, yes! I'll meet you at the restaurant. I'll be there with bells on.* ☐ *All the smiling children were there waiting for me with bells on their toes.*

with both hands tied behind one's **back** Go to **with one hand tied behind** one's **back**.

***with child** *Euph.* pregnant. (Biblical. *Typically: **be ~; get** a woman **~**.) ☐ *The first thing he did after he got married was to get his wife with child.* ☐ *She deliberately set out to get herself with child, as they say.*

with each passing day as days pass, one by one; day by day. ☐ *Things grow more expensive with each passing day.* ☐ *We are all growing older with each passing day.*

with ease without effort. ☐ *The smart student passed the test with ease.* ☐ *The gymnast did a back flip with ease.*

with every (other) breath *Fig.* [saying something] repeatedly or continually. ☐ *Bob was out in the yard, raking leaves and cursing with every other breath.* ☐ *The child was so grateful that she was thanking me with every breath.*

with everything (on it) [of a sandwich] ordered with everything available on it, such as ketchup, mustard, onions, cheese, peppers, chili, lettuce, tomato, etc., as appropriate. ☐ *Do you want it with everything?* ☐ *Give me a cheeseburger with everything on it.*

with fits and starts Go to **fits and starts**.

with flying colors *Cliché* easily and excellently. ☐ *John passed his geometry test with flying colors.* ☐ *Sally qualified for the race with flying colors.*

(with) hat in hand *Fig.* with humility. (Fig. on the image of someone standing, respectfully, in front of a powerful person, asking for a favor.) ☐ *She stormed off but came back with hat in hand when she ran out of money.* ☐ *We had to go hat in hand to the committee to get a grant for our proposal.*

with impunity without risk of punishment; with immunity from the negative consequences of an act; while being exempt from punishment. ☐ *The diplomat parked in illegal parking spaces with impunity.* ☐ *Bob used his brother's property with impunity.*

with it 1. *Inf.* alert and knowledgeable. ☐ *Jane isn't making any sense. She's not really with it tonight.* ☐ *Jean's mother is not really with it anymore. She's going senile.* ☐ *Peter's not with it yet. He's only just come round from the anesthetic.* **2.** *Inf.* up-to-date. ☐ *My parents are so old-fashioned. I'm sure they were never with it.* ☐ *Why do you wear those baggy old clothes? Why aren't you with it?*

with my blessing a phrase expressing consent or agreement; yes. ☐ *Bob: Can I take this old coat down to the rummage sale? Sue: With my blessing.* ☐ *Mary: Shall I drive Uncle Tom to the airport a few hours early? Sue: Oh, yes! With my blessing!*

with no strings attached and **without any strings attached** *Fig.* unconditionally; with no obligations or conditions attached. ☐ *My parents gave me use of their car without any strings attached.* ☐ *I will accept this job only if there are no strings attached.*

with one hand tied behind one's **back** and **with both hands tied behind** one's **back** *Fig.* even if under a handicap; easily. ☐ *I could put an end to this argument with one hand tied behind my back.* ☐ *John could do this job with both hands tied behind his back.*

with (one's**) eyes (wide) open** *Fig.* totally aware of what is going on. ☐ *I went into this with my eyes open.* ☐ *We all started with eyes open but didn't realize what could happen to us.*

with one's **tail between** one's **legs** *Fig.* appearing frightened or cowardly. (Fig. on the image of a frightened or defeated dog going off threatened or humiliated.) ☐ *John seems to lack courage. When people criticize him unjustly, he just goes away with his tail between his legs and doesn't*

tell them that they're wrong. ☐ *The frightened dog ran away with its tail between its legs when the bigger dog growled.*

With or without? Do you wish your tea or coffee to be with or without sugar or with or without milk? ☐ *How do you like your tea? With or without?* ☐ *Do you drink your coffee with or without?*

With pleasure. a phrase indicating eager consent to do something. ☐ *Fred: Would you please take this note over to the woman in the red dress? Waiter: With pleasure, sir.* ☐ *Sue: Would you kindly bring in the champagne now? Jane: With pleasure.*

with reference to someone or something Go to **in reference to** someone or something.

with regard to someone or something and **in regard to** someone or something concerning someone or something. ☐ *What shall we do in regard to planning dinner?* ☐ *With regard to Bill, I think he is working too hard.*

with relish with pleasure or enjoyment. ☐ *John put on this new coat with great relish.* ☐ *We accepted the offer to use their beach house with relish.*

with respect to someone or something of or about someone or something. ☐ *With respect to radiation, this power plant is very safe.* ☐ *This article examines experiments with respect to ethical issues.*

with someone or something **for** some time employed by or associated with someone or something for a period of time. ☐ *I've been with the company for nearly ten years.* ☐ *Lily has been with Max for years.*

with something **to spare** Go to **and** something **to spare.**

with the best will in the world however much one wishes to do something or however hard one tries to do something. ☐ *With the best will in the world, Jack won't be able to help Mary get the job.* ☐ *With the best will in the world, they won't finish the job in time.*

with the naked eye with eyes that are not aided by telescopes, microscopes, or binoculars. ☐ *The moon is quite visible with the naked eye.* ☐ *Bacteria are too small to be seen with the naked eye.*

With whom do you wish to speak? a polite phrase used by people who answer the telephone to find out whom the caller wants to speak to. (Compare this with **Who do you want to talk to?**) ☐ *John answered the telephone and then said, "With whom do you wish to speak?"* ☐ *Tom (answering the phone): Good morning, Acme Air Products. With whom do you wish to speak? Sue: Sorry, I have the wrong number. Tom: That's perfectly all right. Have a nice day.*

With you in a minute. and Someone **will be with you in a minute.** Please be patient, someone will attend to you very soon. (The *someone* can be any person's name or a pronoun, typically *I*. If there is no one mentioned, *I* is implied. The *minute* can be replaced by *moment* or *second*.) ☐ *Sue: Oh, Miss? Clerk: Someone will be with you in a minute.* ☐ *Bill: Please wait here. I'll be with you in a minute. Bob: Please hurry.*

withdraw from something **1.** to depart from something physically. ☐ *I withdrew from the smoky room and ran to the open window to get some air.* ☐ *I withdrew from the unpleasant-looking cafe and looked for something more to my liking.* **2.** to end one's association with someone or something. ☐ *I decided to withdraw from all my professional organizations.* ☐ *I had to withdraw from the association because the dues had become too high.*

withdraw into oneself to become introverted; to concern oneself with one's inner thoughts. ☐ *After a few years of being ignored, she withdrew into herself.* ☐ *I have to struggle to keep from withdrawing into myself.*

withdraw into something to pull back into something. ☐ *The turtle withdrew into its shell.* ☐ *The mouse withdrew into its hole.*

withdraw someone **from** something **1.** to pull someone out of something physically. ☐ *She withdrew the child from the water just in time.* ☐ *I had to withdraw my child from the kindergarten room. He was having such a good time, he wouldn't leave on his own.* **2.** to remove someone from an organization or a nomination. ☐ *The committee withdrew John from nomination and put up someone else.* ☐ *I withdrew my son from kindergarten.*

withdraw something **from** someone or something to pull something out of someone or something. ☐ *She withdrew the book from the stack.* ☐ *I withdrew the splinter from Dave carefully.*

withdraw something **into** something to pull something back into something. ☐ *The turtle withdrew its head into its shell.* ☐ *It then withdrew its feet into the shell also.*

wither away to shrivel up; to shrink up. ☐ *Soon, the wart withered away.* ☐ *Many of our roses withered away in the hot sun.*

wither on the vine and **die on the vine 1.** *Lit.* [for fruit] to shrivel on the vine or stem, unharvested. ☐ *If we don't get out there into the field, the grapes will wither on the vine.* ☐ *The apples will die on the vine if not picked soon.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone or something] to be ignored or neglected and thereby be wasted. ☐ *I hope I get a part in the play. I don't want to just die on the vine.* ☐ *Fred thinks he is withering on the vine because no one has chosen him.*

wither up to shrivel up. ☐ *It was so hot that the leaves of the trees withered up.*

withhold something **from** someone or an animal to hold something back or in reserve from someone or an animal. ☐ *We withheld some of the food from the guests.* ☐ *I had to withhold some food from the dog so there would be enough for tomorrow.*

within a hair('s breadth) of something Go to **within an ace of (**doing**)** something.

within a stone's throw (of something**)** and **(just) a stone's throw away (from** something**); (just) a stone's throw (from** something**)** *Fig.* very close (to something). (Possibly as close as the distance one could throw a stone. It usually refers to a distance much greater than one could throw a stone.) ☐ *The police department was located within a stone's throw of our house.* ☐ *We live in Carbondale, and that's just a stone's throw away from the Mississippi River.* ☐ *Come visit. We live just a stone's throw away.*

within an ace of (doing**)** something and **within a hair('s breadth) of** something very close to doing something. ☐ *I came within an ace of getting into an accident.* ☐ *We were*

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within an ace of beating the all-time record. ☐ *We were within a hair's breadth of beating the all-time record.*

within an inch of one's **life** *Fig.* very close to losing one's life; almost to death. ☐ *The accident frightened me within an inch of my life.* ☐ *When Mary was seriously ill in the hospital, she came within an inch of her life.*

within bounds Go to within limits.

within calling distance Go to within hailing distance.

***within earshot (of** something**)** close enough to something to hear it. (*Typically: **be ~; come ~; get ~; move ~**.) ☐ *As soon as I got within earshot of the music, I decided that I really didn't belong there.*

within hailing distance and **within calling distance; within shouting distance** close enough to hear someone call out. ☐ *When the boat came within hailing distance, I asked if I could borrow some gasoline.* ☐ *We weren't within shouting distance, so I couldn't hear what you said to me.*

within limits and **within bounds** up to a certain point; with certain restrictions. ☐ *You're free to do what you want—within limits, of course.* ☐ *You must try to keep behavior at the party within bounds.*

***within** one's **grasp 1.** *Lit.* where one can grasp something with one's hand. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; get** something **~**.) ☐ *The rope was within his grasp, but he was too weak to reach for it.* **2.** *Fig.* [for something] to be obtainable; [for a goal] to be almost won. (Does not involve grabbing or grasping. *Typically: **be ~; get ~; get** something **~**.) ☐ *Victory is within our grasp, so we must keep playing the game to win.* ☐ *Her goal is within her grasp at last.*

***within** one's **rights** acting legally in one's own interest. (*Typically: **be ~; act ~**.) ☐ *I know I am within my rights when I make this request.* ☐ *You are not within your rights!*

***within range (of** something**)** inside an area that can be covered by something, such as a gun, camera lens, measuring device, etc. (*Typically: **be ~; come ~; get ~; move ~**.) ☐ *The sick elephant was within range, so we shot it with tranquilizer darts so we could treat it.* ☐ *When the ducks were within range of my gun, I sneezed and frightened them away.* ☐ *You won't be able to hear what they are saying until you get within range of the P.A. system.*

within reason reasonable; reasonably. ☐ *You can do anything you want within reason.* ☐ *I'll pay any sum you ask—within reason.*

within shouting distance Go to within hailing distance.

within someone's **grasp** Go to next.

within someone's **reach** and **within** someone's **grasp 1.** *Lit.* close enough to be grasped. ☐ *The ball was almost within his reach!* **2.** *Fig.* almost in the possession of someone. ☐ *My goals are almost within my reach, so I know I'll succeed.* ☐ *We almost had the contract within our grasp, but the deal fell through at the last minute.*

within walking distance close enough to walk to. ☐ *Is the train station within walking distance?* ☐ *My office is within walking distance from here.*

without a doubt a phrase expressing certainty or agreement; yes. ☐ *John: This cheese is as hard as a rock. It must have been in the fridge for weeks. Fred: Without a doubt.* ☐ *Mary: Taxes will surely go up before I retire. Jane: Without a doubt!*

without a hitch *Fig.* with no problem(s). ☐ *Everything went off without a hitch.* ☐ *We hoped the job would go off without a hitch.*

without a moment to spare Go to not a moment to spare.

without a shadow of a doubt and **beyond the shadow of a doubt** without the smallest amount of doubt. ☐ *I am certain that I am right, without a shadow of a doubt.* ☐ *I felt the man was guilty beyond the shadow of a doubt.*

without any strings attached Go to with no strings attached.

without batting an eye *Lit. Fig.* without showing alarm or response; without blinking an eye. ☐ *I knew I had insulted her, and she turned to me and asked me to leave without batting an eye.* ☐ *Right in the middle of the speech—without batting an eye—the speaker walked off the stage.*

without fail for certain; absolutely. ☐ *I'll be there at noon without fail.* ☐ *The plane leaves on time every day without fail.*

without further ado *Cliché* without further talk. (An overworked phrase usually heard in public announcements.) ☐ *And without further ado, I would like to introduce Mr. Bill Franklin!* ☐ *The time has come to leave, so without further ado, good evening and good-bye.*

without half trying *Rur.* effortlessly. ☐ *He was so strong, he could bend an iron bar without half trying.* ☐ *I wish I had his ability to cook. He makes the most delicious dishes without half trying.*

without missing a beat *Lit. Fig.* without pausing for any potential interruption. ☐ *He kept right on giving his speech without missing a beat, despite the interruptions.* ☐ *She went right on drumming without missing a beat.*

without question absolutely; certainly. ☐ *She agreed to help without question.* ☐ *She said, "I stand ready to support you without question."*

without rhyme or reason *Cliché* without purpose, order, or reason. (See variations in the examples. Fixed order.) ☐ *The teacher said my report was disorganized. My paragraphs seemed to be without rhyme or reason.* ☐ *Everything you do seems to be without rhyme or reason.*

without (so much as) a (for or) by your leave without (the least hint of) asking for permission. ☐ *Without so much as a for or by your leave, they just walked into our house.* ☐ *He left, without a by your leave.*

without so much as doing something without even doing something, such as a simple courtesy. ☐ *Jane borrowed Bob's car without so much as asking his permission.* ☐ *Mary's husband walked out without so much as saying goodbye.*

witness for someone or something to serve as a witness for some person or some deed. ☐ *They could find no one to*

witness for the accused person. ☐ *The police found someone to witness for the hour of the crime.*

witness to something to serve as a witness to some act or deed. ☐ *I was witness to the beating.* ☐ *We were not witness to any of the activities you have described.*

wobble about and **wobble around** to rock, quiver, or flounder around. ☐ *The little baby wobbled about and finally fell.* ☐ *The vase wobbled around a little and fell over.*

Woe is me! I am unfortunate.; I am unhappy. (Usually humorous.) ☐ *Woe is me! I have to work when the rest of the office staff is off.* ☐ *Woe is me. I have the flu and my friends have gone to a party.*

a **wolf in sheep's clothing** *Fig.* a dangerous person pretending to be harmless. ☐ *Carla thought the handsome stranger was gentle and kind, but Susan suspected he was a wolf in sheep's clothing.* ☐ *Mimi: Why shouldn't I go out with David? He's the nicest man I've ever met. Alan: He's a wolf in sheep's clothing, Mimi. Can't you tell?*

wolf something **down**† *Fig.* to eat something very rapidly and in very large pieces. (As a wolf might eat.) ☐ *Don't wolf your food down!* ☐ *Liz would never wolf down her food.*

woman of ill repute *Euph.* a prostitute. ☐ *His favorite companion was a woman of ill repute.* ☐ *If you can't be faithful to your husband, you're no better than a woman of ill repute.*

A **woman's place is in the home.** *Prov.* Women should remain in the home, doing housework and raising children. (This notion is generally regarded as old-fashioned.) ☐ *As soon as our child is old enough to go to school, I'm going to go back to my job at the newspaper. And don't give me any of that nonsense about a woman's place being in the home.*

A **woman's work is never done.** *Prov.* Housework and raising children are jobs that have no end. (Typically said by a woman to indicate how busy she is.) ☐ *"As soon as I finish washing the breakfast dishes, it's time to start fixing lunch," Elizabeth observed. "A woman's work is never done."* ☐ *After a difficult day at the office, Greta came home and began cooking dinner. "A woman's work is never done," she sighed.*

woman to woman Go to man to man.

wonder about someone or something to be curious or in doubt about someone or something. ☐ *I wonder about Carl and what he is up to.* ☐ *Sometimes I wonder about life on other planets.* ☐ *Jenny's performance record made me wonder about her chances for success.*

wonder at someone or something to be amazed at or in awe of someone or something. (Stilted.) ☐ *We all wondered at Lee and the way he kept his spirits up.* ☐ *The people wondered at the bright light that lit up the sky.*

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Wonders never cease! and **Will wonders never cease!** *Prov.* What an amazing thing has happened! (Said when something very surprising happens. Somewhat ironic; can imply that the surprising thing should have happened before, but did not.) ☐ *Fred: Hi, honey. I cleaned the kitchen for you. Ellen: Wonders never cease!* ☐ *Jill: Did you hear? The company is allowing us to take a holiday tomorrow. Jane: Wonders never cease!* ☐ *Not only was my plane on time, the airline also delivered my luggage safely. Will wonders never cease?*

won't hold water to be inadequate, insubstantial, or ill-conceived. ☐ *Sorry, your ideas won't hold water. Nice try, though.* ☐ *The prosecution's case wouldn't hold water, so the defendant was released.*

Won't you come in? the standard phrase used to invite someone into one's home or office. ☐ *Bill: Won't you come in? Mary: I hope I'm not early.* ☐ *Tom stood in the doorway of Mr. Franklin's office for a moment. "Won't you come in?" said Mr. Franklin without looking up.*

woo someone **away**† **(from** someone or something**)** to lure someone away from someone or something; to seduce someone away from someone or something. ☐ *The manager of the new bank wooed all the tellers away from the old bank.* ☐ *They wooed away all the experienced people.*

the **woods are full of** someone or something *Fig.* there are lots and lots of people or things. ☐ *The woods are full of cheap, compatible computer clones.* ☐ *The woods are full of nice-looking guys who'll scam you if you aren't careful.*

word by word one word at a time. ☐ *We examined the contract word by word to make sure everything was the way we wanted.* ☐ *We compared the stories word by word to see what made them different.*

word for word in the exact words; verbatim. ☐ *I memorized the speech, word for word.* ☐ *I can't recall word for word what she told us.*

***word (from** someone or something**)** messages or communication from someone or something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; hear ~; receive ~**.) ☐ *We have just received word from Perry that the contract has been signed.*

A **word (once) spoken is past recalling.** *Prov.* Once you have said something, you cannot undo the result of having said it. ☐ *Hilary apologized for having called Mark's suit cheap, but Mark was still offended. A word once spoken is past recalling.*

a **word to the wise** a good piece of advice; a word of wisdom. (See also A word to the wise (is enough).) ☐ *If I can give you a word to the wise, I would suggest going to the courthouse about an hour before your trial.* ☐ *Here is a word to the wise. Keep your eyes open and your mouth shut.*

A **word to the wise (is enough).** and A **word to the wise is sufficient.** *Prov.* You only have to hint something to wise people in order to get them to understand it.; Wise people do not need long explanations. (Often used to signal that you are hinting something.) ☐ *John's a pleasant man, but I wouldn't trust him with money. A word to the wise, eh?* ☐ *Donna hinted about Lisa's drinking problem to Lisa's fiancé, hoping that a word to the wise would be enough.*

*a **word with** someone **(about** something**)** a chance to talk to someone about something, usually briefly. (*Typically: **get ~; get in ~; have ~**.) ☐ *Can I have a word with you about your report?*

words to live by and **thoughts to live by** useful philosophical or spiritual expressions. ☐ *Thank you for your expression of gratitude. You gave us words to live by.*

work against someone or something **1.** [for someone] to struggle against someone or something. ☐ *She worked hard against the passage of the law.* ☐ *Dave worked against*

Betty. **2.** [for something] to militate against someone or something. ☐ *This sort of works against your plan, does it not?* ☐ *Everything you said works against your client.*

work among someone or something to do one's work among some people or things. ☐ *I wanted to work among the Indians, but I set up my medical practice in the inner city.* ☐ *I want to get a job in forestry and work among the trees.*

work around someone or something to manage to do one's work while avoiding someone or something. ☐ *He is being a problem, but he will have to leave pretty soon. You'll just have to work around him for now.* ☐ *You have to work around the piano. It is too heavy to move.*

work around to someone or something to get around to dealing with someone or something. ☐ *You're not next in line. We will have to work around to you.* ☐ *I can't take care of it now. I'll have to work around to it.*

work as something to work in the capacity of something. ☐ *I worked as a waiter for a year when I was in college.* ☐ *I will work as a stockbroker for a while, and then move on to something else.*

work at something **1.** to work in a particular trade or craft. ☐ *He works at carpentry when he has the time.* ☐ *Julie works at editing for a living.* **2.** to work on a specific task, machine, device, etc. ☐ *She was working at repairing the cabinet when I came home.* ☐ *Todd is working at his computer.*

work away (at something**)** to continue to work industriously at something. ☐ *All the weavers were working away at their looms.* ☐ *They just kept working away.*

work down (the line) (to someone or something**)** to progress through a series until someone or something is reached. ☐ *I will work down to the papers on the bottom gradually. You can't hurry this kind of work.* ☐ *We will work down the line to Katie.* ☐ *We have to work down to the last one.* ☐ *They are working down the line as fast as they can, but everyone has to be taken in order.*

work for someone **1.** to be employed by someone. ☐ *She works for Scott Wallace.* ☐ *Who do you work for?* **2.** to work as a substitute for someone. ☐ *I will work for you while you are having your baby.* ☐ *Right now, I am working for Julie, who is out sick.*

work for something **1.** to work for a group, company, etc. ☐ *Everyone at the picnic works for the same employer.* ☐ *We work for the telephone company.* **2.** to work for a certain amount of money. ☐ *She says she works for a very good wage.* ☐ *I won't work for that kind of pay.* **3.** to work for an intangible benefit, such as satisfaction, glory, honor, etc. ☐ *The pay isn't very good. I just work for the fun of it.* ☐ *Sam says he works for the joy of working.*

work in an ivory tower Go to in an ivory tower.

work itself out [for a problem] to solve itself. ☐ *Eventually, all the problems worked themselves out without any help from us.* ☐ *This will work itself out. Don't worry.*

work like a beaver and **work like a mule; work like a horse; work like a slave** *Fig.* to work very hard. ☐ *She has an important deadline coming up, so she's been working like a beaver.* ☐ *You need a vacation. You work like a slave in that kitchen.* ☐ *I'm too old to work like a horse. I'd prefer to relax more.*

work of art 1. *Lit.* a piece of art. ☐ *She purchased a lovely work of art for her living room.* **2.** *Fig.* a good result of one's efforts. ☐ *Your report was a real work of art. Very well done.*

work on someone **1.** *Lit.* [for a physician] to treat someone; [for a surgeon] to operate on someone. ☐ *The doctor is still working on your uncle. There is no news yet.* ☐ *They are still working on the accident victims.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to try to convince someone of something. ☐ *I'll work on her, and I am sure she will agree.* ☐ *They worked on Max for quite a while, but he still didn't agree to testify.* **3.** *Fig.* [for something, such as medication] to have the desired effect on someone. ☐ *This medicine just doesn't work on me.* ☐ *Your good advice doesn't seem to work on Sam.*

work on something to repair, build, or adjust something. ☐ *The carpenter worked on the fence for three hours.* ☐ *Bill is out working on his car engine.*

work one's **ass off** and **work** one's **buns off** and **work** one's **butt off** Go to work one's tail off.

work one's **fingers to the bone** *Cliché* to work very hard. ☐ *I worked my fingers to the bone so you children could have everything you needed. Now look at the way you treat me!* ☐ *I spent the day working my fingers to the bone, and now I want to relax.*

work one's **tail off** and **work** one's **buns off; work** one's **ass off; work** one's **butt off** *Inf. Fig.* to work very hard. (Use caution with *butt.*) ☐ *I worked my tail off to get done on time.* ☐ *You spend half your life working your butt off—and for what?*

work one's **way along** something to move or labor alongside something or a route. ☐ *She worked her way along the ledge and finally came to a wide space where she could relax.* ☐ *They worked themselves along the jungle path, chopping and cutting as they went.*

work (one's **way) into** something **1.** to get into something tight or small gradually and with effort. ☐ *He worked himself into the dark corner and hid there for a while.* ☐ *The mouse worked into the crack and got stuck.* **2.** to get more deeply involved in something gradually. ☐ *I don't quite understand my job. I'll work my way into it gradually.* ☐ *Fred worked into the daily routine gradually.*

work (one's **way) through** something **1.** *Lit.* to work to earn money to pay the bills while one is in college, medical school, law school, etc. ☐ *I worked my way through college as a waiter.* **2.** *Fig.* to progress through something complicated. ☐ *I spent hours working my way through the tax forms.* ☐ *I worked through the forms very slowly.* **3.** *Fig.* to struggle through an emotional trauma. ☐ *When she had finally worked through her grief, she was able to function normally again.* ☐ *Larry worked through the pain.*

work one's **way up (to** something**)** Go to work oneself up (to something).

work oneself **up** to allow oneself to become emotionally upset. ☐ *Todd worked himself up, and I thought he would scream.* ☐ *Don't work yourself up over Sally. She's not worth it.*

work oneself **(up) into a lather** and **work** oneself **(up) into a sweat 1.** and **work up a sweat** *Lit.* to work very hard and sweat very much. (In the way that a horse works up a lather.) ☐ *Don't work yourself up into a lather.*

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We don't need to finish this today. ☐ *I worked myself into a sweat getting this stuff ready.* **2.** *Fig.* to get excited or angry. (An elaboration of **work oneself up to something**.) ☐ *Now, now, don't work yourself up into a lather.* ☐ *He had worked himself into such a sweat, I was afraid he would have a stroke.*

work oneself **up into** something **1.** *Lit.* to struggle to raise oneself upward into something or some place. ☐ *I worked myself up into the top of the tree.* ☐ *I worked myself up into the rafters of the barn and couldn't get down.* **2.** *Fig.* to bring oneself into an extreme emotional state. ☐ *I worked myself up into a state of hysteria.* ☐ *Don't work yourself up into hysteria.*

work oneself **up (to** something**) 1.** to prepare oneself with sufficient energy or courage to do something. ☐ *I can't just walk in there and ask for a raise. I have to work myself up to it.* ☐ *I worked myself up and went into the boss's office.* **2.** and **work** one's **way up (to** something**)** to progress in one's work to a particular rank or status. ☐ *I worked myself up to sergeant in no time at all.* ☐ *Claude worked his way up to master sergeant.*

work out 1. [for something] to turn out all right in the end. (See also **turn out (all right)**; **work out (as** something**)**.) ☐ *Don't worry. Everything will work out.* ☐ *This will work out. Don't worry.* **2.** [for someone] to do a program of exercise. ☐ *I work out at least twice a week.* ☐ *I need to work out more often.*

work out (all right) Go to **turn out (all right)**.

work out (as something**)** to perform satisfactorily in a particular role. ☐ *We all hope she works out as a security monitor.* ☐ *I'm sure she will work out.*

work out (at something**) 1.** [for someone] to perform satisfactorily doing something in particular. ☐ *I hope I work out at my new job.* ☐ *I'm sure you'll work out.* **2.** to perform satisfactorily working in a particular location. ☐ *I hope I work out at the factory. I really need that job.* ☐ *Things will work out at home in time.*

work out for the best [for a bad situation] to turn out all right in the end. ☐ *Don't worry. Everything will work out for the best.* ☐ *I think that nothing ever works out for the best.*

work out (somehow**)** to result in a good conclusion; to finish positively. ☐ *Don't worry. I am sure that everything will work out all right.* ☐ *Things always work out in the end.*

work some fat off† and **work some weight off**† to get rid of body fat by doing strenuous work. ☐ *I was able to work a lot of weight off by jogging.* ☐ *I need to work off some fat.*

work some weight off† Go to previous.

work someone or something **into** something and **work** someone or something **in**† **1.** to manage to fit someone or something into something physically. ☐ *The magician worked the lady into the tiny cabinet from which she was to disappear.* ☐ *The magician opened the little box and worked in the lady and two small dogs.* **2.** to fit someone or something into a sequence or series. ☐ *I don't have an appointment open this afternoon, but I'll see if I can work you into the sequence.* ☐ *I can't work in all of you.*

work someone or something **over**† to give someone or something a thorough examination or treatment. ☐ *The doctor really worked me over but couldn't find anything wrong.* ☐ *They worked over the patient but found nothing.*

work someone or something **to** someone or something to struggle to manipulate someone or something to someone or something. ☐ *The quarterback worked the ball to the fullback so that the opposition didn't know what was going on.* ☐ *The rescuers worked the trapped child to the top of the tunnel.*

work someone **over**† **1.** to threaten, intimidate, or beat someone. ☐ *Walt threatened to work Sam over.* ☐ *Max had worked over Sam, and Sam knew that this was no idle threat.* **2.** to give someone's body a thorough examination or treatment. ☐ *The doctors worked her over to the tune of $1,500, but couldn't find anything wrong with her.* ☐ *The dermatologist worked over her entire body looking for moles.*

work someone **up**† to get someone ready for something, especially medical treatment. (See also **work oneself up**.) ☐ *The staff worked up three patients for surgery that morning.* ☐ *The doctor told the nurse to work Mr. Franklin up for surgery.*

work something **down**† to lower or reduce something, especially an amount of money. ☐ *Over a few months, they worked the price down, and the house soon was sold.* ☐ *They worked down the price so much that the house was a steal.*

work something **down (into** something**)** to manipulate something downward into something. ☐ *The crane operator worked the load down into the ship's hold.* ☐ *The operator worked it down carefully.*

work something **down (over** something**)** to manipulate something downward over something. ☐ *Now, you work this part down over this little tube, and then it won't leak.* ☐ *Liz worked the lid down and tightened it on.*

work something **into** something and **work** something **in**† to press, mix, or force a substance into something. ☐ *You should work the butter into the dough carefully.* ☐ *Work in the butter carefully.*

work something **off**† **1.** *Lit.* to get rid of anger, anxiety, or energy by doing physical activity. ☐ *I was so mad! I went out and played basketball to work my anger off.* ☐ *He works off nervousness by knitting.* **2.** *Fig.* to pay off a debt through work rather than by money. ☐ *I had no money so I had to work the bill off by washing dishes.* ☐ *I have to work off my debt.*

work something **out of** something and **work** something **out**† to manipulate something to get it out of something. ☐ *You have to work the bubbles out of the paint before you use it.* ☐ *You have to stir the batter to work out the lumps.*

work something **out**† **(with** someone**)** to come to an agreement with someone; to figure out with someone a way to do something. ☐ *I think we can work this out with you so that all of us are satisfied.* ☐ *I will work out something with Karen.* ☐ *I'm sure we can work it out.*

work something **over**† to rework something. ☐ *He saved the play by working the second act over.* ☐ *Would you work over this report and see if you can improve it?*

work something **through (**something**) 1.** to guide or push something through a physical barrier. ☐ *I could hardly work the needle through the tightly woven cloth.* ☐ *I worked the needle through.* **2.** to guide or maneuver a law, proposal, motion, through a governing body. ☐ *The lobbyist*

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was unable to work the law through the legislature. ☐ *The usual party hacks worked the law through.*

work something **under** something to manipulate something beneath something. ☐ *She worked the knife blade under the window and tried to pry the window up.* ☐ *Work the envelope under the office door. She will find it when she opens the door in the morning.*

work something **up**† to prepare something, perhaps on short notice. ☐ *There are some special clients coming in this weekend. We need to make a presentation. Do you think you can work something up by then?* ☐ *I will work up something for this weekend.*

work something **up**† **into** something to develop something into something. ☐ *I will work this story up into a screenplay in a few months.* ☐ *I can work up this idea into a good novel.*

work things out to improve one's state gradually by solving a series of problems. ☐ *If we sit down and talk this over, I am sure we can work things out.*

work through channels *Fig.* to try to get something done by going through the proper procedures and persons. ☐ *You can't accomplish anything around here if you don't work through channels.* ☐ *I tried working through channels, but it takes too long. This is an emergency.*

work together [for people or things] to cooperate or function together. ☐ *Come now! Let's all work together and get this done on time!* ☐ *We will work together on this and enjoy it more.*

work toward something **1.** to progress toward a goal, such as a promotion. ☐ *He was working toward a position with the new company.* ☐ *She was working toward a law degree when the accident happened.* **2.** to struggle physically to move toward something or some place. ☐ *The turtle worked toward the water despite the hot sun.* ☐ *I worked toward the cabin in the forest, fighting mosquitoes all the way.*

work under someone to have one's work supervised by someone. ☐ *I work under Michael, who is head of the department.* ☐ *Who do you work under?*

work under something to work underneath something. ☐ *I have to work under the car for a while. Please don't start it.* ☐ *The plumber had to work under the house to fix the pipes.*

work up a sweat Go to work oneself (up) into a lather.

work up a thirst Go to get up a thirst.

work up to something **1.** *Lit.* [for something] to build or progress to something. (Usually concerning the weather.) ☐ *The sky is working up to some kind of storm.* ☐ *The weather is working up to something severe.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to lead up to something. ☐ *You are working up to telling me something unpleasant, aren't you?* ☐ *I think I am working up to a good cry.*

work (up)on something **1.** to repair or tinker with something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *He's out in the kitchen, working upon his tax forms.* ☐ *He's working on his car.* **2.** [for something] to have the desired effect on something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *This medicine should work well upon your cold.* ☐ *I hope it will work on your cold.*

work with someone or something to manipulate or work on someone or something. ☐ *Let me work with him for a while. I'll convince him.* ☐ *I want to work with this engine and see if I can get it started.*

work with something to do work with some tool or instrument. ☐ *She is working with a chisel now. In a minute she will switch to a tiny knife.* ☐ *Do you know how to work with a voltmeter?*

work wonders (with someone or something**)** to be surprisingly beneficial to someone or something; to be very helpful with someone or something. ☐ *This new medicine works wonders with my headaches.* ☐ *Jean was able to work wonders with the office staff. They improved their efficiency as soon as she took over.*

***worked up (over** something**)** and ***worked up (about** something**)** excited and agitated about something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~; get** oneself **~**.) ☐ *Tom is all worked up over the tax increase.* ☐ *Don't get so worked up about something that you can't do anything about.*

a **working stiff** *Fig.* someone who works, especially in a nonmanagement position. (Originally and typically referring to males.) ☐ *But does the working stiff really care about all this economic stuff?* ☐ *All the working stiffs want is a raise.*

*the **works** a lot of something; everything possible. (*The works* can be a lot of food, good treatment, bad treatment, etc. *Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Bill: Shall we order a snack or a big meal? Jane: I'm hungry. Let's get the works.* ☐ *But, your honor. I shouldn't get the works. I only drove too fast!*

The **world is** one's **oyster.** *Fig.* One rules the world.; One is in charge of everything. ☐ *I feel like the world is my oyster today.* ☐ *The world is my oyster! I'm in love!*

***worlds apart** *Fig.* greatly separated by differing attitudes, needs, opinions, or temperaments. (*Typically: **be ~; grow ~; live ~; think ~**.) ☐ *They are worlds apart. I can't imagine how they ever decided to get married.*

The **worm (has) turned.** *Fig.* Someone who is usually patient and humble has decided to stop being so. ☐ *Jane used to be treated badly by her husband and she just accepted it, but one day she hit him. The worm turned all right.* ☐ *Tom used to let the other boys bully him on the playground, but one day the worm turned and he's now leader of their gang.*

worm (one's **way) in(to** something**)** **1.** *Fig.* to wiggle into something or some place. (Fig. on the image of a worm working its way into a very small space.) ☐ *The little cat wormed her way into the box and got stuck.* ☐ *The cat wormed into the opening.* **2.** *Fig.* to manipulate one's way into participation in something. ☐ *She tried to worm her way into the play, but the director refused.* ☐ *You can't have a part, so don't try to worm in.*

worm (one's **way) out (of** something**)** **1.** *Fig.* to wiggle out of something or some place. (Fig. on the image of a worm working its way out of a very small space.) ☐ *Somehow she managed to worm her way out of the handcuffs.* ☐ *Frank wormed out of the opening.* ☐ *He struggled and struggled and wormed out.* **2.** *Fig.* to manipulate oneself out of a job or responsibility. ☐ *Don't try to worm your-*

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self out of this affair. It is your fault! ☐ *You can't worm out of this.*

worm something **out of** someone to draw or manipulate information out of someone. ☐ *I managed to worm the name of the doctor out of her before she ran off.* ☐ *You can't worm the names out of me!*

worried sick (about someone or something**)** very worried or anxious about someone or something. ☐ *Oh, thank heavens you are all right. We were worried sick about you!*

worry about someone or something to fret or be anxious about the welfare of someone or something. ☐ *Please don't worry about me. I'll be all right.* ☐ *Don't worry about the bill. I'll pay it.*

worry an animal **out of** something to pester an animal until it leaves something or some place. ☐ *The cat finally worried the mouse out of its hole and caught it.* ☐ *We worried the squirrel out of the attic by making lots of noise.*

worry oneself **about** someone or something to allow oneself to fret or become anxious about someone or something. ☐ *Please don't worry yourself about me. I'll be all right.* ☐ *There is no need for Karen to worry herself about this.*

worry over someone or something to fret or be anxious about someone or something. ☐ *She worried over dinner, but it came out all right.* ☐ *Jerry is worried over his daughter, Alice.*

worry something **out of** someone to annoy some information out of someone. ☐ *They finally worried the correct number out of me.* ☐ *You can't worry the information out of her. It will require force.*

worry through something to think and fret through a problem. ☐ *I can't talk to you now. I have to worry through this tax problem.* ☐ *We worried through the financial problem over a three-day period.*

worrywart someone who worries all the time. ☐ *Don't be such a worrywart.* ☐ *I'm sorry I'm such a worrywart.*

the **worse for wear 1.** *Euph.* intoxicated. ☐ *You were the worse for wear last night.* ☐ *The three came stumbling in, the worse for wear again.* **2.** damaged or worn through use. ☐ *Eventually, every machine becomes worse for wear, you know.* ☐ *The truth is it's the worse for wear; you will just have to get a new one.* **3.** injured. ☐ *Tom fell into the street and he's much the worse for wear.* ☐ *Fred had a little accident with his bike and he's the worse for wear.*

worship someone **as** something to revere or honor one as if one were something divine or special. ☐ *He worships her as a goddess.* ☐ *She worships her father as a god.*

worship the ground someone **walks on** *Fig.* to honor someone to a great extent. ☐ *She always admired the professor. In fact, she worshiped the ground he walked on.*

W

*****the **worst of** something the poorest share of something; the worst part of something. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *I knew I would get the worst of the deal because I was absent when the goods were divided up.* ☐ *I'm sorry that you got the worst of it.*

the **worst-case scenario** *Cliché* the worse possible future outcome. ☐ *Now, let's look at the worst-case scenario.* ☐ *In the worst-case scenario, we're all dead.*

worth its weight in gold *Fig.* very valuable. ☐ *This book is worth its weight in gold.* ☐ *Oh, Bill. You're wonderful. You're worth your weight in gold.*

The **worth of a thing is what it will bring.** *Prov.* A thing is worth whatever someone will pay for it. ☐ *Ellen: I'm thinking about selling my grandmother's silver tea set. What do you suppose it's worth? Fred: The worth of a thing is what it will bring.*

worth one's **salt** *Fig.* worth (in productivity) what it costs to keep or support one. ☐ *We decided that you are worth your salt, and you can stay on as office clerk.* ☐ *You're not worth your salt. Pack up!*

worth someone's **while** worth one's time and trouble. ☐ *The job pays so badly it's not worth your while even going for an interview.* ☐ *It's not worth Mary's while going all that way just for a one-hour meeting.*

worthy of the name deserving to be so called; good enough to enjoy a specific designation. ☐ *There was not an actor worthy of the name in that play.* ☐ *Any art critic worthy of the name would know that painting to be a fake.*

would as soon do something **as look at you** *Rur.* would be eager to do something harmful as simply look at you. ☐ *He was a mean so-and-so who would as soon shoot you as look at you.* ☐ *He'd as soon pick a fight as look at you.*

would (just) as soon do something Go to **had (just) as soon** do something.

would like (to have) someone or something to want someone or something; to prefer someone or something. ☐ *I would like to have three cookies.* ☐ *I would like a piece of cake.*

would not be caught dead (doing something**)** Go to next.

would not be seen dead (doing something**)** and **would not be caught dead (**doing something**)** would not do something under any circumstances. ☐ *I wouldn't be seen dead going out with Bruno!* ☐ *Martha would not be caught dead going into a place like that.*

would rather would more willingly; would more readily. ☐ *I would rather have an apple than a pear. I don't like pears.* ☐ *I'd rather live in the north than the south, because I like snow.*

Would you believe! *Inf.* Isn't that unbelievable?; How shocking! ☐ *Tom: Jane has run off and married Fred! Sally: Would you believe!* ☐ *Jane: Then the manager came out and asked us to leave. Would you believe? Mary: It sounds just awful. I'd send them a letter of complaint.*

(Would you) care for another (one)? Do you want another drink or serving? ☐ *Tom stood there with an almost empty glass. Bill said, "Would you care for another one?"* ☐ *Waiter: Care for another one, madam? Sue: No, thank you.*

(Would you) care to...? a polite phrase introducing an inquiry as to whether someone wishes to do something. ☐ *John: Would you care to step out for some air? Jane: Oh, I'd love it.* ☐ *Sue: Care to go for a swim? Mary: Not now, thanks.*

(Would you) care to dance? Do you want to dance with me?; Would you please dance with me? ☐ *John:*

Would you care to dance? Mary: I don't dance, but thank you for asking. ☐ *"Care to dance?" asked Bill, politely.*

(Would you) care to join us? Do you want to join us? ☐ *Tom and Mary saw Fred and Sally sitting at another table in the restaurant. Tom went over to them and said, "Would you care to join us?"* ☐ *Mary: Isn't that Bill and Sue over there? John: Yes, it is. Shall I ask them to join us? Mary: Why not? John (after reaching the other table): Hi, you guys! Care to join us? Bill: Love to, but Sue's mom is going to be along any minute. Thanks anyway.*

Would you excuse me? 1. a polite question that essentially announces one's departure. (Compare this with Could I be excused?; Excuse me.) ☐ *Jane: Would you excuse me? I have to get home now. Andy: Oh, sure. I'll see you to the door.* ☐ *Rising to leave, Jane said, "Would you excuse me?" and left by the rear door.* **2.** a polite way to request passage through or by a group of people; a way to request space to exit an elevator. ☐ *There were two people talking in the corridor, blocking it. Tom said, "Would you excuse me?" They stepped aside.* ☐ *Fred: Would you excuse me? This is my floor. Sally: Sure. It's mine, too.*

Would you excuse us, please? Go to Could you excuse us, please?

Would you please? a polite phrase that agrees that what was offered to be done should be done. ☐ *Bill: Do you want me to take this over to the bank? Mary: Would you please?* ☐ *Tom: Can I take your coat? Sally: Would you please?*

wouldn't dream of doing something would not even consider doing something. ☐ *I wouldn't dream of taking your money!* ☐ *I'm sure that John wouldn't dream of complaining to the manager.*

wouldn't touch someone or something **with a ten-foot pole** *Cliché* would not be involved with something under any circumstances. ☐ *I know about the piece of vacant land for sale on Maple Street. I wouldn't touch it with a ten-foot pole because there used to be a gas station there and the soil is polluted.* ☐ *Tom said he wouldn't touch Sally with a ten-foot pole.*

wouldn't want to be in someone's **shoes** *Fig.* would not trade places with someone who is in a bad situation. ☐ *Now Jim has to explain to his wife how he wrecked their car. I wouldn't want to be in his shoes.* ☐ *She may be rich, but I wouldn't want to be in her shoes. Everyone in her family hates her.*

wrack and ruin *Cliché* complete destruction or ruin. ☐ *They went back after the fire and saw the wrack and ruin that used to be their house.* ☐ *Drinking brought him nothing but wrack and ruin.*

wrangle (with someone**) (about** someone or something**)** to bicker or argue with someone about someone or something. ☐ *Stop wrangling with everyone about Tom. He can take care of himself and does not need any special treatment.* ☐ *Stop wrangling with everyone you meet.*

wrangle (with someone**) (over** someone or something**)** to bicker or argue with someone over who will end up with someone or something. ☐ *I don't want to wrangle with Kelly over the contract.* ☐ *I see no need to wrangle over Dolly.*

wrap around someone or something to enclose or fold about someone or something. ☐ *The snake wrapped around the helpless man and it was soon all over.* ☐ *The flames wrapped around the barn and swallowed it up.*

wrap one's **car around** something to drive one's car into something at fairly high speed. ☐ *She wrapped her car around a light pole.* ☐ *If he hadn't wrapped his car around a tree, he'd be here with us tonight.*

wrap someone or something **around** something to bend or coil someone or something around something. ☐ *I'll wrap you around that lamppost unless you cooperate!* ☐ *Don wrapped the rope around the tree and tied it tight.*

wrap someone or something **(up†) (in** something**)** to enclose or enfold someone or something inside of something. ☐ *I will have to wrap the baby up in a heavy blanket if we are going out in this cold.* ☐ *We wrapped up the children in their warmest clothing.* ☐ *Please wrap the package up in pretty paper.* ☐ *Would you wrap this in yellow paper?*

wrap someone or something **(up†) (with** something**)** to enclose or enfold someone or something, using something. ☐ *Try to wrap the baby up with something warmer.* ☐ *We will have to wrap up the baby with extra blankets tonight.*

wrap something **around** someone to fold or drape something onto someone. ☐ *He wrapped a towel around himself and went to answer the telephone.* ☐ *She wrapped a blanket around her little boy to keep him warm.*

wrap something **up†** to complete work on something; to bring something to an end. ☐ *I will wrap the job up this morning. I'll call you when I finish.* ☐ *I can wrap up this little project in a week.*

wrapped up Go to sewed up.

wrapped up (in someone or something**)** concerned or obsessed with someone or something. ☐ *Sally is pretty wrapped up in herself.* ☐ *I'm too wrapped up in my charity work to get a job.*

***wrapped up (with** someone or something**)** involved with someone or something. (*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *She is all wrapped up with her husband and his problems.* ☐ *She is just too wrapped up.*

wreak havoc (with something**)** to cause a lot of trouble with something; to ruin or damage something. ☐ *Your bad attitude will wreak havoc with my project.* ☐ *The rainy weather wreaked havoc with our picnic plans.*

wreak something **(up)on** someone or something to cause damage, havoc, or destruction to someone or something. (*Upon* is formal and less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *The storm wreaked destruction upon the little village.* ☐ *It wreaked much havoc on us.*

wreak vengeance (up)on someone or something *Cliché* to seek and get revenge on someone by harming someone or something. ☐ *The gangster wreaked his vengeance by destroying his rival's house.* ☐ *The general wanted to wreak vengeance on the opposing army for their recent successful attack.*

wreathe (itself) around someone or something [for something] to form itself into a wreath or circle around someone or something. ☐ *The smoke wreathed around the smokers' heads, almost obliterating sight of them.* ☐ *The smoke wreathed around the green tree near the fire.*

wreathe someone or something **in** something to enclose someone or something in a wreath or a wreath-shaped area. ☐ *The trees wreathed them in a lovely frame. It made a beautiful photograph.* ☐ *The vines wreathed the campers in a gentle bower.*

wreathe something **around** someone or something to form something into a wreath around someone or something. ☐ *The smoke wreathed a ring around the old man holding a pipe.* ☐ *The cloud wreathed a huge halo around the tip of the mountain.*

wrench something **from** someone to grab or twist something out of someone's grasp. ☐ *The policeman wrenched the gun from Lefty's hand and called for his partner.* ☐ *Max wrenched the wallet from Jed's hand and fled with it.*

wrench something **off (of)** someone or something and **wrench** something **off**† to yank or twist something off someone or something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *He wrenched the shoes off the sleeping man and ran away.* ☐ *He wrenched off the catsup bottle cap.*

wrench something **out of** something to yank or twist something out of something. ☐ *The policeman wrenched the gun out of Lefty's hand and told Lefty to put his hands up.* ☐ *Tom wrenched the bone out of the dog's mouth and threw it away.*

wrest someone or something **(away) from** someone or something to struggle to get someone or something from the grip of someone or something. ☐ *The kidnappers wrested the baby from his mother and ran away with him.* ☐ *The policeman wrested the gun away from Lefty.*

wrest something **off (of)** something and **wrest** something **off**† to struggle to get something off something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *Somehow he wrested the hubcap off the wheel.* ☐ *He wrested off the hubcap.*

wrestle something **from** someone to get something away from someone after a physical struggle. ☐ *Wally wrestled the gun away from Max and threw it out the window.* ☐ *I could not wrestle my wallet from the thief.*

wrestle something **into** something to struggle with something large to get it into something or some place. ☐ *She wrestled the packages into the backseat of the car.* ☐ *I wrestled the suitcases into the rack over my seat.*

wrestle with someone to contend with someone in a physical wrestling match. ☐ *You are too big to wrestle with him!* ☐ *I want to wrestle with someone my own size.*

wrestle with something **1.** to struggle with something large to move it about. ☐ *He wrestled with the piano and finally got it to move.* ☐ *The two men were wrestling with the heavy trunk for nearly ten minutes, trying to get it up the stairs.* **2.** to grapple or struggle with some large animal. ☐ *The man wrestled with the tiger for a while but was seriously mauled in a short time.* ☐ *Sam liked to wrestle with the family dog.* **3.** to struggle with a difficult problem; to struggle with a moral decision. ☐ *We wrestled with the problem and finally decided to go ahead.* ☐ *Let me wrestle with this matter for a while longer.*

wriggle in(to something**)** to wiggle and squeeze into something or some place. ☐ *You will never be able to wriggle into that swimming suit.* ☐ *I can just wriggle in!*

wriggle out (of something**) 1.** *Lit.* to wiggle and squeeze out of something or some place. ☐ *She wriggled out of her tight skirt and changed into something more comfortable.* ☐ *The skirt was so tight, she had to wriggle out. She couldn't pull it off.* **2.** *Fig.* to get out of having to do something; to evade a responsibility. ☐ *Don't try to wriggle out of this.* ☐ *I won't let you wriggle out this time.*

wring something **from** something and **wring** something **out of** something to remove liquid from something by squeezing or twisting. ☐ *She wrung the water from the cloth and wiped up the rest of the spill.* ☐ *Alice wrung the water out of the washcloth.*

wring something **out**† to squeeze or twist something dry of liquid. ☐ *He wrung the rag out and wiped up more of the spilled milk.* ☐ *Liz wrung out the rag and wiped up more of the spilled milk.*

wring something **out of** someone to pressure someone into telling something. ☐ *The police will wring the truth out of her.* ☐ *After a lot of questioning, they wrung the information out of Fred.*

wring something **out of** something Go to **wring** something **from** something.

wrinkle something **up**† to make something get wrinkles and creases. ☐ *I love the way you wrinkle your nose up.* ☐ *Don't wrinkle up your jacket.*

wrinkle up [for something] to draw up in wrinkles; [for something] to become wrinkled. ☐ *His nose wrinkled up as he smelled the burning pie.* ☐ *The cloth wrinkled up in the intense heat.*

write about someone or something to write a narrative or description of someone or something. ☐ *I wanted to write about wild canaries, but there is not much to say.* ☐ *Sally writes about famous people.*

write against someone or something to oppose someone or something in writing. ☐ *John writes against the current administration too harshly.* ☐ *Almost everyone enjoys writing against the CIA.*

write away to write a lot; to continue writing. ☐ *There he was, writing away, not paying attention to anything else.* ☐ *I spent the entire afternoon writing away, having a fine, productive time.*

write away for something to send for something in writing, from a distant place. ☐ *I wrote away for a book on the rivers of the world.* ☐ *You will have to write away for another copy of the instruction manual.*

write back to someone to write a letter to someone in return for a letter received from someone. ☐ *I wrote back to her at once, but I have heard no more from her.* ☐ *Please write back to me when you have a chance.*

write down to someone to write to someone condescendingly. ☐ *You should never write down to your audience if you want to be convincing.* ☐ *I have to write down to them, because they are very young.*

write for something **1.** to write and request something. ☐ *I wrote for clarification but received none.* ☐ *Julie wrote for another copy of the instruction book.* **2.** to produce writing for a particular kind of publication. ☐ *I write for science magazines.* ☐ *Sam writes for the local newspaper.*

write in(to something**) (for** something**)** to send a written request to something for something in particular. ☐ *Please*

W

write in for a detailed recipe of all the dishes on today's program. ☐ *I am going to write in for a clarification.*

write of someone or something to write about the general topic of someone or something. ☐ *He wrote of the beauty of nature and the way we are destroying it.* ☐ *She wrote of Henry, her ancient house cat.*

write off (to someone**) (for** something**)** to send a written request for something away to someone. ☐ *I wrote off to my parents for some money, but I think they are ignoring me.* ☐ *I wrote off for money.* ☐ *I need money so I wrote off to my parents.*

write on and on to write too much; to write endlessly. ☐ *You tend to write on and on. Try to focus on one point and leave it at that.* ☐ *I think you write on and on just to fill up space.*

write someone **down as** something to list someone's name, noting something. ☐ *I'll write you down as a contributor.* ☐ *Can I write you down as a charter member?*

write someone **for** something to send a written request to someone for something. ☐ *Henry wrote Harry for a firm quote, but Harry never responded.* ☐ *Did you write me for permission?*

write someone **in† (on** something**)** to write the name of someone in a special place on a ballot, indicating a vote for the person. (Done when the person's name is not already printed on the ballot.) ☐ *Please write my name in on the ballot.* ☐ *I wrote in your name on the ballot.*

write someone or something **about** something to send an inquiry or statement to someone in writing about someone or something. ☐ *I will write her about what you just told me.* ☐ *Sarah wrote the company about the faulty merchandise.*

write someone or something **off†** to drop someone or something from consideration. ☐ *The manager wrote Tom off for a promotion.* ☐ *I wrote off that piece of swampy land as worthless. It can't be used for anything.*

write someone or something **off† (as a** something**) 1.** to give up on turning someone or something into something. ☐ *I had to write Jill off as a future executive.* ☐ *The company wrote off the electric automobile as a dependable means of transportation.* ☐ *He would never work out. We wrote him off.* **2.** to give up on someone or something as a dead loss, waste of time, hopeless case, etc. ☐ *Don't write me off as a has-been.* ☐ *We almost wrote off the investment as a dead loss.* **3.** to take a charge against one's taxes. ☐ *Can I write this off as a deduction, or is it a dead loss?* ☐ *Can I write off this expense as a tax deduction?*

write someone or something **up†** to write an article about someone or something. ☐ *A reporter wrote me up for the Sunday paper.* ☐ *I wrote up a local business and sent the story to a magazine, but they didn't buy the story.*

write something **against** someone or something to write something in opposition to someone or something. ☐ *I wrote an article against her proposal, but they refused to print it.* ☐ *Sarah wrote an essay against the president.*

write something **back to** someone to write a letter answering someone. ☐ *I wrote an answer back to her the same day that I received the letter.* ☐ *Will you please write something back to Julie? She complains that you are ignoring her.* ☐ *I wrote a letter back to Harry, explaining what had happened.*

write something **down†** to make a note of something; to record something in writing. ☐ *Please write this down.* ☐ *Please write down what I tell you.*

write something **in†** Go to **write** something **into** something.

write something **in plain English** Go to **in plain English.**

write something **in round figures** Go to **in round figures.**

write something **into** something and **write** something **in† 1.** to write information into something. ☐ *I wrote her telephone number into my notebook.* ☐ *I wrote in her number.* ☐ *I took out my notebook and wrote it in.* **2.** to include a specific statement or provision in a document, such as a contract or agreement. ☐ *I want you to write a stronger security clause into my contract.* ☐ *I will write in a stronger clause.*

write something **off†** to absorb a debt or a loss in accounting. ☐ *The bill couldn't be collected, so we had to write it off.* ☐ *The bill was too large, and we couldn't write off the amount. We decided to sue.*

write something **off† (on** one's **taxes)** to deduct something from one's income taxes. ☐ *Can I write this off on my income taxes?* ☐ *I'll write off this trip on my taxes.* ☐ *Oh, yes! Write it off!*

write something **out† 1.** to spell or write a number or an abbreviation. ☐ *Don't just write "7," write it out.* ☐ *Please write out all abbreviations, such as* Doctor *for* Dr. **2.** to put thoughts into writing, rather than keeping them in memory. ☐ *Let me write it out. Then I won't forget it.* ☐ *Karen wrote out her objections.*

write something **to** someone **1.** to send specific information to someone in writing. ☐ *I wrote the facts to John, and he thanked me for the information.* ☐ *They wrote all the details to me, and I filed them.* **2.** to compose a letter or e-mail and send it to someone. ☐ *Sam wrote a letter to his father.* ☐ *Did you write that memo to Mark yet?*

write something **to** something to write something that is supplementary to something else. ☐ *Molly wrote an epilogue to her story covering the time up till now.* ☐ *I will write the introduction to the book this afternoon.*

write something **up†** to prepare a bill, order, or statement. ☐ *Please write the order up and send me a copy.* ☐ *As soon as I finish writing up your check, I'll bring you some more coffee.*

write to someone to compose a letter or e-mail and send it to someone. ☐ *I will write to her again, but I don't expect to hear anything.* ☐ *Please write to me as soon as you can.*

write (up)on someone or something **1.** to write about someone or something. (*Upon* is very formal here and much less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *I had to write an essay, so I wrote on my uncle.* ☐ *What are you going to write upon?* **2.** to write on someone's skin or some thing. (*Upon* is formal and much less commonly used than *on*.) ☐ *Don't write on Billy. After all, he's your brother.* ☐ *Who wrote on this page of the book?* **3.** to use someone [such as someone's back] or something as a flat base to support something that is being written upon. ☐ *I have to sign this check. Here, let me write on you.* ☐ *Do you mind if I write on your desk? I just need to sign this.*

W

writer's block the temporary inability for a writer to think of what to write. ☐ *I have writer's block at the moment and can't seem to get a sensible sentence on paper.*

writhe in something Go to **writhe with** something.

writhe under something **1.** *Lit.* to squirm with pain from being beaten with something. ☐ *The sailor writhed under the sting of the lash.* ☐ *The child writhed under the pain of his spanking.* **2.** *Fig.* to suffer under a mental burden. ☐ *I writhed under her constant verbal assault and finally left the room.* ☐ *Why do I have to writhe under her insults?*

writhe with something **1.** and **writhe in** something [for someone or an animal] to squirm because of something, such as pain. ☐ *Carl writhed with pain and began to cry.* ☐ *He was writhing in pain when the paramedics arrived.* **2.** [for something] to support or contain something that is writhing. ☐ *The pit was writhing with snakes and other horrid things.* ☐ *The floor of the basement was writhing in spiders and crawly things.*

written in stone Go to **carved in stone.**

*the **wrong number 1.** *Lit.* an incorrect telephone number. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; dial ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *He got the wrong number and hung up.* ☐ *When a young child answered, I knew I had the wrong number.* **2.** *Fig.* [a state of being] incorrect, late, inaccurate, etc. (*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) ☐ *Boy, do you have the wrong number! Get with it!* ☐ *You have missed the boat again. You have the wrong number!*

the **wrong side of the tracks** Go to the **other side of the tracks.**

wrote the book on something *Fig.* to be very authoritative about something; to know enough about something to write the definitive book on it. (Always in past tense.) ☐ *Ted wrote the book on unemployment. He's been looking for work in three states for two years.* ☐ *Do I know about misery? I wrote the book on misery!*

***wrought up** disturbed or excited. (*Wrought* is an old past tense and past participle meaning "worker." *Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) ☐ *She is so wrought up, she can't think.* ☐ *I am sorry you are so wrought up.*

W

Xx

X marks the spot. This is the exact spot. (Sometimes the speaker will draw an X in the spot while saying this.) □ *This is where the rock struck my car—X marks the spot.* □ *Now, please move that table over here. Yes, right here—X marks the spot.*

X someone or something **out**† to mark out something printed or in writing, with Xs. □ *Sally X'd the incorrect information out.* □ *Sally X'd out the incorrect information.* □ *You should X Tom out. He's not coming.* □ *Please X out this line of print.*

X'd out 1. eliminated; crossed-out. □ *But the Babbits are X'd out.* □ *Put the X'd out Babbits back where they were.* **2.** *Sl.* killed. (Underworld.) □ *Mr. Big wanted Wilbur X'd out.* □ *He wanted Sam to see that all these punks were X'd out.*

Yy

yack one's **head off** *Fig.* to talk a great deal. ☐ *Jane yacked her head off and ended up with a sore throat.* ☐ *Don't yack your head off!*

yack something **up**† *Inf.* to talk a great deal [about someone or something]. (The *something* is often *it.*) ☐ *She yacked the concert up endlessly.* ☐ *Sally yacked up the concert, trying to get people to attend.* ☐ *Yack it up and see if you can get people to attend.*

yammer (away) about someone or something to talk endlessly about someone or something. ☐ *What are you yammering about?* ☐ *They were yammering away about the state of the economy.*

yank at someone or something to pull or tug at someone or something. ☐ *Please don't yank at the drapery cord.* ☐ *Stop yanking at me!*

yank on something to pull or tug on something. ☐ *Don't yank on my hair!* ☐ *Yank on this rope to send a signal to the worker on the floor above.*

yank someone **around** *Sl.* to harass someone; to give someone a hard time. ☐ *Listen, I don't mean to yank you around all the time, but we have to have the drawings by Monday.* ☐ *Please stop yanking me around.*

yank someone or something† Go to **yank** someone or something **into** something.

yank someone or something **apart**† **1.** to pull, tear, or rip someone or something to pieces. ☐ *Please don't yank the book apart!* ☐ *He yanked apart the book!* ☐ *He threatened to yank his opponent apart.* **2.** to separate people or things. ☐ *The teacher yanked them apart.* ☐ *The teacher yanked apart the fighting boys.*

yank someone or something **around** to pull or jerk someone or something around. ☐ *Don't yank Billy around so. You'll hurt him!* ☐ *Please don't yank the chairs around. Move them carefully.*

yank someone or something **away**† **(from** someone or something**)** to jerk someone or something away from someone or something. ☐ *He yanked his hand away from the fire.* ☐ *Please yank away that rug from the fire before it gets burned.*

Y

yank someone or something **into** something and **yank** someone or something† to jerk or pull someone or something into something. ☐ *Mary yanked Sally into the car and sped off.* ☐ *She yanked in the anchor rope and we rowed away.*

yank someone or something **off (of)** something and **yank** someone or something **off**† to jerk someone or something off something. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *She yanked the coffeepot off the counter and ran upstairs.* ☐ *She yanked off the box lid.*

yank someone or something **out of** something and **yank** someone or something **out**† to pull or jerk someone or something out of something. ☐ *Sam yanked the turnips out of the ground one by one.* ☐ *He yanked out the best of the young carrots from the rich soil.*

yank someone's **chain** *Sl.* to harass someone; to give someone a hard time. (As if one were a dog wearing a choker collar, on a leash.) ☐ *Stop yanking my chain!* ☐ *Do you really think you can just yank my chain whenever you want?*

yank something **off**† to pull or jerk off something, such as a piece of clothing. ☐ *She yanked her jacket off.* ☐ *She yanked off her jacket and threw it on the chair.*

yank something **up**† to pull or jerk something up. ☐ *He yanked his pants up.* ☐ *He yanked up his pants and threw on his shirt.*

yap about someone or something to talk casually about someone or something; to gossip or complain about someone or something. ☐ *Stop yapping about Molly.* ☐ *Claire is always yapping about her salary.*

yap at someone **1.** *Lit.* [for a small dog] to bark at someone or something. ☐ *The dog yapped at the cat in great frustration.* ☐ *I am tired of that dog yapping at me all the time!* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to scold or bark at someone shrilly. ☐ *Don't yap at me. I didn't do it.* ☐ *Bob yapped at Bill for something he didn't do.*

Ye gods (and little fishes)! *Inf.* What a surprising thing! ☐ *Ye gods and little fishes! Someone covered my car with broken eggs!* ☐ *Ye gods! What a rainstorm!*

year after year for many years, one after another. ☐ *We go to the same place for our vacation year after year.* ☐ *I seem to earn the same salary year after year.*

year in, year out year after year; for years. ☐ *I seem to have hay fever year in, year out. I never get over it.* ☐ *John wears the same old suit, year in, year out.*

yearn for someone or something to long for someone or something; to desire someone or something strongly. ☐ *Sam sat alone in his room, yearning for Mary.* ☐ *Mary yearned for a big bowl of high-butterfat ice cream.*

years running Go to **days running.**

yell at someone or something to shout at someone or something, usually in anger. ☐ *Please don't yell at me.* ☐ *There is no point in yelling at a cat.*

yell bloody murder Go to **scream bloody murder.**

yell one's **guts out** Go to next.

yell one's **head off** and **yell** one's **guts out 1.** *Fig.* to yell loud and long. ☐ *I was yelling my head off at the football game.* ☐ *Stop yelling your guts out and listen to me.* **2.** *Fig.* to complain bitterly and loudly. ☐ *Some lady is yelling her head off about shoddy workmanship out in the lobby.* ☐ *I yell my guts out about bad service when I get bad service!*

yell out to cry out; to shout loudly. ☐ *The pain caused the child to yell out.* ☐ *I yelled out, but no one heard me.*

yell something **at** someone or something to shout something at someone or something, usually in anger. ☐ *Please don't yell those things at me.* ☐ *He stood on the porch, yelling curses at a dog on his lawn.*

yell something **out† (at** someone or something**)** to shout something loudly at someone or something. ☐ *The dictator yelled curses out at the troops.* ☐ *The director yelled out his disgust at the cast of the play.*

a **yellow streak (down** someone's **back)** a tendency toward cowardice. ☐ *Tim's got a yellow streak down his back a mile wide.* ☐ *Get rid of that yellow streak. Show some courage.*

yen for someone or something to long for someone or something. ☐ *I yen for a great big bowl of highly fattening ice cream.* ☐ *Frank yenned for Sally.*

Yes indeed(y (do))! *Inf.* Definitely yes! ☐ *Tom: Will you marry me? Jane: Yes indeedy do, I will!* ☐ *Charlie: Did your horse win the race? Bill: Yes indeedy!*

Yes siree(, Bob)! *Inf.* Absolutely!; Without a doubt! (Not necessarily said to a male and not necessarily to Bob.) ☐ *Mary: Do you want some more cake? Tom: Yes siree, Bob!* ☐ *"That was a fine turkey dinner. Yes siree!" said Uncle Henry.*

Yesterday wouldn't be too soon. Immediately.; Right away. (An answer to the question "When do you want this?") ☐ *Mary: Mr. Franklin, when do you want this? Fred: Well, yesterday wouldn't be too soon.* ☐ *Alice: When am I supposed to have this finished? Sue: Yesterday wouldn't be too soon.*

yield someone or something **(over) (to** someone or something**)** to give up someone or something to someone or something. (The *over* is typically used where the phrase is synonymous with *hand over*.) ☐ *You must yield Tom over to his mother.* ☐ *Will you yield the right-of-way to the other driver, or not?* ☐ *Please yield the right-of-way to me.*

yield someone or something **up† (to** someone**)** to give someone or something up to someone. ☐ *He had to yield his daughter up to Claire.* ☐ *The judge required that Tom yield up his daughter to his ex-wife.* ☐ *Finally, he yielded up the money.*

yield something **to** someone **1.** to give the right-of-way to someone. ☐ *You must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians.* ☐ *You failed to yield the right-of-way to the oncoming car.* **2.** to give up something to someone. ☐ *The army yielded the territory to the invading army.* ☐ *We yielded the territory to the government.*

yield to someone **1.** to let someone go ahead; to give someone the right-of-way. ☐ *Please yield to the next speaker.* ☐ *She yielded to the next speaker.* **2.** to give in to someone. ☐ *She found it hard to yield to her husband in an argument.* ☐ *I will yield to no one.*

a **yoke around** someone's **neck** *Fig.* something that oppresses people; a burden. ☐ *John's greedy children are a yoke around his neck.* ☐ *The Smiths have a huge mortgage that has become a yoke around their necks.*

yoke people or things **together** to connect two people together with a yoke; to connect two animals together with a yoke. ☐ *Todd yoked the oxen together for the parade.* ☐ *Sam yoked Fred and Tom together so they could pull the load.*

You ain't just whistlin' Dixie. *Rur.* You are right. ☐ *Tom: Sure is hot today. Bill: Yeah, you ain't just whistlin' Dixie. It's a scorcher.* ☐ *Charlie: That was a good movie. Jane: You ain't just whistlin' Dixie. It was the best I've ever seen.*

You ain't seen nothing yet! *Rur.* The best, most exciting, or cleverest part is yet to come! (The use of *ain't* is a fixed part of this idiomatic expression.) ☐ *Alice: Well, the first act was simply divine. Sue: Stick around. You ain't seen nothing yet!* ☐ *Mary: This part of the city is really beautiful. Bill: You ain't seen nothing yet!*

You (always) give up too eas(il)y. You don't stand up for your rights.; You give up without a fight. ☐ *Bill: Well, I guess she was right. Bob: No, she was wrong. You always give up too easily.* ☐ *Bob: I asked her to go out with me Friday, but she said she thought she was busy. Tom: Ask her again. You give up too easy.*

You and what army? Go to next.

You and who else? and **You and what army?** *Inf.* a phrase that responds to a threat by implying that the threat is a weak one. ☐ *Bill: I'm going to punch you in the nose! Bob: Yeah? You and who else?* ☐ *Tom: Our team is going to slaughter your team. Bill: You and what army?* ☐ *Bill: If you don't stop doing that, I'm going to hit you. Tom: You and who else?*

[you are] See the entries beginning with *you're*.

You are more than welcome. 1. You are very welcome to be here. ☐ *Please make yourself at home. You are more than welcome.* **2.** Your thanks are very gratefully accepted. ☐ *A: Thank you so much. B: You are more than welcome.*

You are never too old to learn. Go to It is never too late to learn.

You are something else (again)! *Inf.* You are amazing or entertaining! ☐ *After Sally finished telling her joke, everyone laughed and someone said, "Oh, Sally, you are something else!"* ☐ *"You are something else again," said Fred, admiring Sue's presentation.*

You are welcome. and **You're welcome.** a polite response to *Thank you.* ☐ *"Thank you for helping me." "You're welcome."* ☐ *"Thank you very much!" "You are welcome!"*

You asked for it! 1. You are getting what you requested. ☐ *The waiter set a huge bowl of ice cream, strawberries, and whipped cream in front of Mary, saying apologetically, "You asked for it!"* ☐ *Bill: Gee, this escargot stuff is gross! Mary: You asked for it!* **2.** You are getting the punishment you deserve! ☐ *Bill: The tax people just ordered me to pay a big fine. Bob: The careless way you do your tax forms caused it. You asked for it!* ☐ *Mother: I'm sorry to have to punish you in this fashion, but you asked for it! Bill: I did not!*

You been keeping busy? Go to (Have you) been keeping busy?

You been keeping cool? Go to (Have you) been keeping cool?

You been keeping out of trouble? Go to (Have you) been keeping out of trouble?

You been okay? Go to (Have you) been okay?

You bet! 1. *Inf.* Yes. ☐ *Tom: Are you coming to the party? Jane: You bet!* ☐ *Charlie: May I borrow your hammer?*

Mary: You bet! **2.** *Inf.* You're welcome. ☐ *Tom: Thank you. Jane: You bet.* ☐ *Sally: I appreciate it. Mary: You bet.*

You bet your boots! Go to next.

You bet your (sweet) life! and **You bet your boots!; You bet your life!; You bet your (sweet) bippy.** *Inf. Fig.* You can be absolutely certain of something! ☐ *Mary: Will I need a coat today? Bill: You bet your sweet life! It's colder than an iceberg out there.* ☐ *Bill: Will you be at the game Saturday? Tom: You bet your boots!*

You betcha! *Inf.* Yes!; You can be sure of it! (Literally, You bet, you.) ☐ *Will I be there? You betcha.* ☐ *Can I? You betcha!*

You called? 1. a phrase used when returning a telephone call, meaning "What did you want to talk about when you called before?" ☐ *Bill (answering the phone): Hello? Bob: This is Bob. You called?* ☐ *Tom: You called? It's Tom. Mary: Hi, Tom. Yes, I wanted to ask you about these estimates.* **2.** a phrase said by someone who has been summoned into a person's presence. (Often used in jest, in the way a servant might answer an employer.) ☐ *Mary: Oh, Tom. Come over here a minute. Tom (coming to where Mary is standing): You called?* ☐ *Tom: Bill! Bill! Over here, Bill, across the street. Bill (panting from running and with mock deference): You called?*

You can bet the farm (on someone or something**).** *Rur.* You can be certain of someone or something. ☐ *This is a good investment. You can bet the farm on it.* ☐ *You can bet the farm that Joe is gonna get that job.*

You can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar. *Prov.* It is easier to get what you want by flattering people and being polite to them than by making demands. ☐ *Jill: This meal is terrible. Let's get the restaurant manager over here and make a scene unless he gives us our money back. Jane: We might have more luck if we ask politely. You can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar.*

You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink. *Prov.* You can present someone with an opportunity, but you cannot force him or her to take advantage of it. ☐ *Jill: I told Katy about all the jobs that are available at our company, but she hasn't applied for any of them. Jane: You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink.*

You can say that again! and **You said it!** *Inf.* That is true.; You are correct. (The word *that* is emphasized.) ☐ *Mary: It sure is hot today. Jane: You can say that again!* ☐ *Bill: This cake is yummy! Bob: You said it!*

You cannot get a quart into a pint pot. *Prov.* You cannot fit too much of something into a space that is too small. ☐ *That dog is simply too big to get into this kennel. You can't get a quart into a pint pot.* ☐ *Our refrigerator isn't big enough to fit that watermelon in. You can't get a quart into a pint pot.*

You cannot get blood from a stone. and **You cannot get blood from a turnip.** *Prov.* You cannot get help from an uncharitable person or money from someone who has none. ☐ *Jerry and James spent two hours trying to convince the old miser to contribute to the children's hospital; finally, James turned to Jerry and said in disgust, "This is hopeless. We can't get blood from a stone."* ☐ *The government can't increase taxes any further—nobody has the money! You can't get blood from a turnip.*

You cannot get blood from a turnip. Go to previous.

You cannot have your cake and eat it (too). *Prov.* You cannot enjoy two desirable things at the same time. ☐ *Jill: There's an apartment across the street from me, much bigger and prettier than mine, and it even costs less. I'd really like to rent it—but I don't want to go to the trouble of moving. Jane: You can't have your cake and eat it too.* ☐ *Fred: I want to lose weight, but I'm not willing to change the way I eat. Alan: You can't have your cake and eat it.*

You cannot lose what you never had. *Prov.* You should have not lost something if you only wished that you had it to begin with. ☐ *Bill: I've lost Mary. She's gotten engaged to Tom. Fred: But, Bill, Mary was never your girlfriend. You can't lose what you never had.*

You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. *Prov.* You cannot make someone more refined than he or she is by nature. ☐ *I've given up trying to get my cousin to appreciate classical music. You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.*

You cannot make an omelet without breaking eggs. *Prov.* In order to get something good or useful, you must give up something else. ☐ *Jill: Why do they have to tear down that beautiful old building to build an office park? Jane: You can't make an omelet without breaking eggs.* ☐ *Alan: We may make more money by raising our prices, but we'll also upset a lot of customers. Fred: You can't make an omelet without breaking eggs.*

You cannot make bricks without straw. *Prov.* You have to have all the necessary materials in order to make something. ☐ *Ellen: I really wanted to give Fred a birthday party, but none of the people I invited were able to come. Jane: Don't blame yourself. You can't make bricks without straw.*

You cannot please everyone. *Prov. Cliché* No matter what you do, there will always be some people who do not like it. ☐ *Nancy: My mother wants me to have a big wedding in the church, but my fiancé's mother insists that we should have an informal ceremony. What am I going to do? Jane: Well, you can't please everyone. Just do what you and your fiancé want to do.*

You cannot put new wine in old bottles. *Prov.* You should not try to combine the new with the old. ☐ *I think it is a mistake for the managers of that traditional art gallery to exhibit modern paintings. You can't put new wine in old bottles.* ☐ *Doug's attempt to teach ancient Chinese medicine to doctors trained in Western medicine was not a success. "I guess I can't put new wine in old bottles," Doug thought ruefully.*

You cannot serve God and mammon. *Prov.* You cannot both be a good person and dedicate yourself to making money. (Biblical. *Mammon* means riches.) ☐ *The minister warned the businessman that he could not serve God and mammon, and encouraged him to donate some of his wealth to charity.*

You cannot teach an old dog new tricks. *Prov.* Someone who is used to doing things a certain way cannot change. (Usually not polite to say about the person you are talking to; you can say it about yourself or about

a third person.) ☐ *I've been away from school for fifteen years; I can't go back to college now. You can't teach an old dog new tricks.* ☐ *Kevin's doctor told him not to eat starchy food anymore, but Kevin still has potatoes with every meal. I guess you can't teach an old dog new tricks.*

(You) can't beat that. and **(You) can't top that.** *Inf.* No one can do better than that. (This *you* represents both personal and impersonal antecedents. That is, it means second person singular or plural, and *anyone.*) ☐ *Mary: Wow! Look at the size of that lobster! It looks yummy! Bill: Yeah. You can't beat that. I wonder what it's going to cost.* ☐ *"What a view! Nothing like it anywhere! You can't top this!" said Jeff, admiring his room's ocean view.*

You can't expect me to believe that. and **You don't expect me to believe that.** That is so outrageous that no one could believe it. ☐ *Bill: My father is running for president. Bob: You can't expect me to believe that.* ☐ *Jane: Everyone in our family has one extra toe. Mary: You don't expect me to believe that!*

(You) can't fight city hall. *Fig.* There is no way to win in a battle against a bureaucracy. ☐ *Bill: I guess I'll go ahead and pay the tax bill. Bob: Might as well. You can't fight city hall.* ☐ *Mary: How did things go at your meeting with the zoning board? Sally: I gave up. Can't fight city hall.*

(You) can't get there from here. a catchphrase said jokingly when someone asks directions to get to a place that can be reached only by a circuitous route. ☐ *Bill: How far is it to Adamsville? Tom: Adamsville? Oh, that's too bad. You can't get there from here.* ☐ *"Galesburg? Galesburg, you say?" said the farmer. "By golly, you can't get there from here!"*

You can't mean that! *Inf.* Surely you do not mean what you said! ☐ *Bill: I hate you! Mary: You can't mean that.* ☐ *Sally: The cake burned and there's no time to start another before the party. Mary: You can't mean that!*

(You) can't take it with you. *Prov. Cliché* Since you cannot take your wealth with you when you die, you ought to enjoy it while you're alive. ☐ *Go ahead, splurge a little while you've got it. You can't take it with you.* ☐ *Henry: Sure, I spent a fortune on this car. Can't take it with you, you know. Rachel: And this way, you can share it with your friends.*

You can't tell a book by its cover. Go to Don't judge a book by its cover.

(You) can't top that. Go to (You) can't beat that.

(You) can't win them all. and **(You) can't win 'em all.** *Inf.* a catch phrase said when someone, including the speaker, has lost in a contest or failed at something. (The *you* is impersonal, meaning *one, anyone.* The apostrophe on *'em* is not always used.) ☐ *Mary: Gee, I came in last again! Jane: Oh, well. You can't win them all.* ☐ *"Can't win 'em all," muttered Alice as she left the boss's office with nothing accomplished.*

You changed your mind? Go to (Have you) changed your mind?

(You) could have fooled me. *Inf.* I would have thought otherwise.; I would have thought the opposite. ☐ *Henry: Did you know that this land is among the most productive in the entire state? Jane: You could have fooled me. It looks quite barren.* ☐ *John: I really do like Mary. Andy: Could have fooled me. You treat her rather badly sometimes.*

You could have knocked me over with a feather. *Fig.* I was extremely surprised.; I was so surprised that it was as if I was disoriented and could have been knocked over easily. ☐ *When she told me she was going to get married, you could have knocked me over with a feather.* ☐ *John: Did you hear that they are going to tear down city hall and build a new one—price tag twelve million dollars? Sally: Yes, and when I heard that, you could have knocked me over with a feather.*

You couldn't (do that)! and **You wouldn't (do that)!** an indication of disbelief that someone might do something. ☐ *Bill: I'm going to run away from home! Jane: You couldn't!* ☐ *Bill: I get so mad at my brother, I could just strangle him. Tom: You couldn't do that!*

You doing okay? Go to (Are you) doing okay?

You don't expect me to believe that. Go to You can't expect me to believe that.

You don't get something for nothing. *Prov.* Everything costs something, and anything that appears to be free must be deceptive. ☐ *Jill: This newspaper ad says we can get a trip to Hawaii for free. Jane: There must be a catch to it somewhere. You don't get something for nothing.*

You don't know the half of it. *Inf.* You really don't know how bad it is.; You might think that what you have heard is bad, but you do not know the whole story. ☐ *Mary: They say you've been having a bad time at home. Sally: You don't know the half of it.* ☐ *Sally: The company has no cash, they are losing orders right and left, and the comptroller is cooking the books. Mary: Sounds bad. Sally: You don't know the half of it.*

You don't know where it's been. Do not touch something or put it in your mouth, because you do not know where it has been and what kind of dirt it has picked up. (Most often said to children.) ☐ *Mother: Don't put that money in your mouth. You don't know where it's been. Bill: Okay.* ☐ *Take that stick out of your mouth. You don't know where it's been.*

You don't say. 1. *Inf.* a general response to something that someone has said. (Expresses a little polite surprise or interest, but not disbelief.) ☐ *Bill: I'm starting work on a new job next Monday. Bob: You don't say.* ☐ *Sally: The Jones boys are keeping a pet snake. Alice: You don't say.* **2.** *Inf.* You have just said something that everybody already knows. ☐ *Bill: I think I'm beginning to put on a little weight. Jane: You don't say.* ☐ *John: My goodness, prices are getting high. Sue: You don't say.*

You first. an invitation for someone to precede the speaker. (See the examples.) ☐ *Bill: Let's try some of this goose liver stuff. Jane: You first.* ☐ *Bill: The water sure looks cold. Let's jump in. Bob: You first.*

You get what you pay for. *Prov. Cliché* If you do not pay much money for something, it is probably of poor quality.; If you pay well for something, it is more likely to be of good quality. ☐ *Alan: I was so pleased to find shoes for such a low price, but look, they're falling apart already. Jane: You get what you pay for.* ☐ *This brand of soup is more expensive, but remember, you get what you pay for.*

You got it! 1. *Inf.* I agree to what you asked!; You will get what you want! ☐ *You want a green one? You got it!* ☐ *This one? You got it!* **2.** *Inf.* You are right! ☐ *That's exactly right! You got it!* ☐ *That's the answer. You got it!*

You got me beat. Go to (It) beats me.

You got me there. *Inf.* I do not know the answer to your question. (Also with subjects other than second person.) ☐ *You got me there. I don't know.* ☐ *You got me there. I have no idea what the answer is.*

You got to do what you got to do. and **A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do.** One has to do whatever it is that one feels obliged to do. ☐ *I know I wouldn't ever agree to that kind of thing, but you got to do what you got to do.*

You have to eat a peck of dirt before you die. *Prov.* No one can escape eating a certain amount of dirt on his or her food.; Everyone must endure a number of unpleasant things in his or her lifetime. (Often said to console someone who has eaten some dirt or had to endure something unpleasant.) ☐ *Ellen: Oh, no! I forgot to wash this apple before I took a bite out of it. Fred: You have to eat a peck of dirt before you die.*

You hear? Go to (Do) you hear?

You heard someone. Don't argue. You heard your instructions from someone. (The *someone* can be a person's name, a title, or a pronoun.) ☐ *Andy: You heard the man. Get moving. Henry: Don't rush me!* ☐ *Bill: What makes her think she can tell me what to do? Bob: She's the boss. Do it! You heard her!*

You just don't get it! *Inf.* You really don't see what people are trying to tell you! (Also with subjects other than second person.) ☐ *You just don't get it! People avoid you because you offend them.*

You (just) wait (and see)! and **Just (you) wait (and see)!** *Inf.* Wait and see what will happen.; If you wait, you will see that what I predict will be true. ☐ *John: You'll get what you deserve! Just you wait! Jane: Mind your own business.* ☐ *Bill: Things will get better. You just wait and see! Sue: Sure, but when?*

(You) (just) watch! *Inf.* Just pay attention to what I do, and you will see that what I said is true! ☐ *Rachel: I'll get her to change! You just watch! Andy: Good luck!* ☐ *Andy: You watch! You'll see I'm right. Sally: Sure, you are.* ☐ *Bob: Watch! This is the way it's done. Bill: You don't know what you're doing. Bob: Just watch!*

you know an expression placed on the end of a statement for pause or emphasis. (This expression is often overused, in which case it is totally meaningless and irritating.) ☐ *Tom: Sure, I spent a fortune on this car. Can't take it with you, you know. Rachel: But there are better things to do with it here and now.* ☐ *Bill: Do you always lock your door? Tom: Usually. There's a lot of theft around here, you know.*

You know what I mean? Go to (Do you) know what I'm saying?

You leaving so soon? Go to (Are you) leaving so soon?

You make a better door than you do a window. *Rur.* I cannot see through you, so move aside. ☐ *Joe was just standing in front of the TV. "Hey," I said, "You make a better door than you do a window."* ☐ *Charlie: Isn't this a great view? Jane: You make a better door than you do a window. Let me see.*

You make me laugh! *Inf. Fig.* What you said is totally ridiculous.; You are totally ridiculous. (Compare this with Don't make me laugh!) ☐ *Bill: I have this plan to make electricity from garbage. Sally: What a dumb idea! You make me laugh!* ☐ *Bill: I'm really sorry. Give me another chance. I'll never do it again! Jane: You make me laugh!*

You mean to tell me something? Go to (Do) you mean to say something?

You must lose a fly to catch a trout. *Prov.* You have to sacrifice something in order to get what you want. (Implies that what you sacrifice is minor compared to what you will get.) ☐ *Amy was willing to live cheaply for several years in order to save enough money to buy her own house. She knew that you must lose a fly to catch a trout.*

You never know (what you can do) till you try. *Prov.* Even if you think you are not able to do something, you should try to do it. ☐ *Jill: Want to go rock-climbing with me this weekend? Jane: Oh, I can't rock-climb. Jill: How do you know? Have you ever tried it? Jane: No, not really. Jill: You don't know what you can do till you try.* ☐ *Alan: I'll never be able to learn to dance. Jane: You don't know till you try.*

You never miss the water till the well runs dry. *Prov.* People are not grateful for what they have until they lose it. ☐ *Jill: I never realized what a good friend Jeanie was until she moved away. Jane: You never miss the water till the well runs dry.*

You pays your money and you takes your chance(s). *Prov.* You must resign yourself to taking risks.; Everything costs something, but paying for something does not guarantee that you will get it. (The grammatical errors are intentional.) ☐ *Customer: Can you guarantee that this washing machine won't break? Salesman: No guarantees. You pays your money and you takes your chances.*

You (really) said a mouthful. *Inf. Fig.* You said exactly what needed to be said.; What you said was very meaningful and had great impact. ☐ *Bill: Did you hear what I said to her? Jane: Yes. You said a mouthful. Was she mad?* ☐ *Bill: This is the worst food I have ever eaten. It is either stale, wilted, dry, or soggy! Tom: You said a mouthful!*

You said it! Go to You can say that again!

You scared the crap out of me. Go to You scared the hell out of me.

You scared the devil out of me. Go to next.

You scared the hell out of me. and **You scared the crap out of me.; You scared the dickens out of me.; You scared the devil out of me.; You scared me out of my wits.; You scared the pants off (of) me.** You frightened me very badly. (Also with subjects other than second person. *Of* is usually retained before pronouns.) ☐ *He scared the hell out of all of us.* ☐ *She really scared the pants off of me.*

You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours. *Fig.* You do a favor for me and I'll do a favor for you.; If you do something for me that I cannot do for myself, I will do something for you that you cannot do for yourself. ☐ *I'll grab the box on the top shelf if you will creep under the table*

Y

and pick up my pen. You scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours.

You think you're so smart! *Inf.* You act as if you know far more than you do. (Also with subjects other than second person.) □ *You think you're so smart! You don't know anything!* □ *Boy! He thinks he's so smart!*

(You) took the words right out of my mouth. *Inf. Fig.* You said exactly what I meant to say before I had a chance to say it, and, therefore, I agree with you very much. □ *Bill: I think she's old enough to know better. Tom: You took the words right out of my mouth.* □ *Mary: This movie is going to put me to sleep. Jane (yawning): You took the words right out of my mouth.*

(You) want a piece of me? *Sl.* Do you want to fight with me? □ *Come on, Wussy. You want a piece of me?*

(You want to) know something? Go to (Do you) want to know something?

You want to make something of it? Go to (Do you) want to make something of it?

[you will] See the entries beginning with *you'll.*

You win some, you lose some. and **You win a few, you lose a few.** *Prov. Cliché* You cannot always succeed. (You can say this when you have not succeeded, to show that you are not discouraged.) □ *Jill: I was sorry to hear that you didn't win your court case. Jane: Well, you win some, you lose some.* □ *Bill: I thought it was terrible that you didn't get a prize in the art contest. Bob: You win a few, you lose a few.*

[you would] See the entries beginning with *you'd.*

You wouldn't dare (to do something)! an exclamation that shows disbelief about something that the speaker has stated an intention of doing. □ *Bill: I'm going to leave school. Tom: You wouldn't dare leave!* □ *Bill: Be quiet or I'll slap you. Jane: You wouldn't dare to slap me!*

You wouldn't (do that)! Go to You couldn't (do that)!

You('d) better believe it! *Inf.* a way of emphasizing a previous statement. □ *Bill: Man, you're the best goalie this team has ever had! Tom: You better believe it!* □ *Bill: This food is so bad. It will probably stunt my growth. Tom: You'd better believe it!*

(You'd) better get moving. an expression encouraging someone to leave. □ *Jane: It's nearly dark. Better get moving. Mary: Okay. I'm leaving right now.* □ *Bob: I'm off. Good night. Bill: Yes, it's late. You'd better get moving.*

You'll be sorry you asked. *Inf.* The answer to the question you just asked is so bad that you will be sorry you asked it. (Compare this with (Are you) sorry you asked?) □ *Father: What are your grades going to be like this semester? Sally: You'll be sorry you asked.* □ *Mary: How much did you pay for that lamp? Jane: You'll be sorry you asked.*

You'll get onto it. and **You'll get into it.** *Inf.* Don't worry. You will become more comfortable with this situation soon.; You will catch the spirit of the situation soon. □ *Bill: I just can't seem to do this right. Bob: You'll get into it.* □ *Mary: How long does it take to learn to work this computer? Jane: Don't fret. You'll get onto it.*

You'll get the hang of it. Don't worry. You will learn soon how it is done. □ *Mary: It's harder than I thought to glue these things together. Tom: You'll get the hang of it.* □ *Bill: I can't seem to swing this club the way you showed me. Sally: You'll get the hang of it. Don't worry. Golf is easy.*

You'll never get away with it. You will never succeed with that illegal or outrageous plan. □ *Bill: I have a plan to cheat on the exam. Mary: You'll never get away with it.* □ *Jane: I think I can fool the IRS and save a lot on my taxes. Mary: You'll never get away with it.*

***young at heart** having a youthful spirit no matter what one's age. (*Typically: **act ~; be ~; keep** someone **~; stay ~**.) □ *I am over 70 but I still feel young at heart.*

Young men may die, but old men must die. *Prov.* Young people may be killed by accidents or disease, but old people cannot avoid dying for very long, simply because they are old. □ *When Grandfather was so sick, he told us, "Don't feel too bad if I pass on; it's my time. Young men may die, old men must die."* □ *I'm afraid old Mr. Ferris won't live much longer. Young men may die, but old men must die.*

Your guess is as good as mine. *Inf.* I do not know. □ *Jane: Are there any good movies playing tonight? Alan: Your guess is as good as mine.* □ *Jill: How long should we bake this pie? Jane: Your guess is as good as mine.*

Your place or mine? *Inf.* an expression asking someone about whose dwelling should be the site of a rendezvous. (Often associated with a sudden or spontaneous sexual encounter.) □ *Bill: So, do you want to go somewhere? Mary: Your place or mine?* □ *Bill: I was thinking of watching a movie at home. You're place or mine? Mary: Okay, I'll rent the movie and we'll watch it at your place.*

Your secret is safe with me. I will not tell your secret to anyone. □ *Don't worry. I won't tell. Your secret's safe with me.* □ *Your secret is safe with me. I will carry it to my grave.*

You're dern tootin'! *Rur.* You are absolutely right! (Never the full form *tooting.*) □ *Tom: Are you really going to take up boxing? Bob: You're dern tootin'!* □ *Father: Do you really want to buy that droopy-looking puppy? Bill: You're dern tootin'!*

You're excused. 1. You may leave the room, the table, etc. (Said in response to May I be excused?) □ *Mother: Are you finished, Tom? Tom: Yes, ma'am. Mother: You're excused.* □ *Bill (raising his hand): Can I leave the room? I have to go get my books off my bike. Teacher: You're excused. Bill: Thanks.* **2.** You must leave the room or the premises. (Typically said at the end of a scolding.) □ *Father: I've heard quite enough of this nonsense, Tom. You're excused. Tom: Sorry.* □ *Andy: That is the end of this conversation. You're excused. Bob: But, there's more.* **3.** You are forgiven for belching or for some other breach of strict etiquette. (Said in response to Excuse me.) □ *Tom (after belching): Excuse me. Father: You're excused.* □ *Sally: Excuse me for being so noisy. Mother: You're excused.*

You're (just) wasting my time. *Inf.* What you have to say is of no interest to me. □ *Rachel: I've heard enough. You're just wasting my time. Good-bye. Mary: If that's the way you feel about it, good-bye.* □ *Bill: Come on, Bill. I'll show you what I mean. Bill: No, you're wasting my time.*

Y

You're out of your mind! and **You've got to be out of your mind!** *Inf.* You must be crazy for saying or doing that! (Said to someone who has said or done something

silly or stupid.) □ *Andy: Go to the Amazon? You're out of your mind! Jane: Maybe so, but doesn't it sound like fun?* □ *Mary: Come on, Jane. Let's go swimming in the river. Jane: Look at that filthy water. Swim in it? You've got to be out of your mind!*

You're telling me! *Inf.* I know all too well the truth of what you are saying. □ *Tom: Man, it's hot today! Bob: You're telling me!* □ *Jane: This food is really terrible. Sally: Wow! You're telling me!*

You're the doctor. *Inf. Fig.* You are in a position to tell me what to do.; I yield to you and your knowledge of this matter. (Usually jocular; the person being addressed is most likely not a physician.) □ *Bill: Eat your dinner, then you'll feel more like playing ball. Get some energy! Tom: Okay, you're the doctor.* □ *Teacher: You'd better study the first two chapters more thoroughly. Bob: You're the doctor.*

You're too much! 1. *Inf.* You are too much of a problem for me. □ *Andy: You're too much! I'm going to report you to the head office! Bob: Go ahead. See if I care.* □ *Bob: Get out! Just go home! You're too much! Andy: What did I do? Bob: You're a pest!* **2.** *Inf.* You are just too funny, clever, entertaining, etc. □ *Alice: Oh, Fred, that was really funny. You're too much! Fred: I do my best.* □ *Sally: What a clever thing to say! You're too much! Andy: Actually, I didn't make it up myself.*

You're welcome. Go to You are welcome.

yours truly 1. a closing phrase at the end of a letter, just before the signature. □ *Yours truly, Tom Jones.* □ *Best wishes from yours truly, Bill Smith.* **2.** oneself; I; me. □ *There's nobody here right now but yours truly.* □ *Everyone else got up and left the table leaving yours truly to pay the bill.*

Yourself? Go to And you?

Youth must be served. *Prov.* Young people should be allowed to have fun. □ *Don't lecture the young folks because they were out dancing all night. Youth must be served.* □ *I don't know where my daughter gets the energy for school, sports, and a full social life. Youth must be served, I suppose.*

You've got another think coming. You will have to rethink your position. (The second part of an expression something like, "If you think so-and-so, then you've got another think coming." Also with *thing* rather than *think*.) □ *Rachel: If you think I'm going to stand here and listen to your complaining all day, you've got another think coming! Bill: Frankly, I don't care what you do.* □ *Andy: If you think you can get away with it, you've got another think coming! Bob: Get away with what? I didn't do anything!*

(You've) got me stumped. *Inf.* I can't possibly figure out the answer to your question. □ *Bill: How long is the Amazon River? Jane: You've got me stumped.* □ *Bob: Do you know of a book that would interest a retired sea captain? Sally: You've got me stumped.*

You've got to be kidding! *Inf.* This cannot be the truth. Surely you are kidding me! □ *Bob: Sally is getting married. Did you hear? Mary: You've got to be kidding!* □ *Bill: I think I swallowed my gold tooth! Mother: You've got to be kidding!*

You've got to be out of your mind! Go to You're out of your mind!

Zz

zeek out *Sl.* to lose control of oneself. ☐ *I was in a pretty bad state. I almost zeeked out.* ☐ *Fred zeeked out and had to be calmed down.*

zerked (out) *Sl.* heavily intoxicated on drugs. ☐ *Gary looked really zerked out, and I thought he was really stoned.* ☐ *Wilbur gets zerked out every weekend.*

zero in (on someone or something**)** to aim directly at someone or something. ☐ *The television camera zeroed in on the little boy scratching his head.* ☐ *The commercial zeroed in on the glass of cola.* ☐ *Mary is very good about zeroing in on the most important and helpful ideas.*

zero tolerance absolutely no toleration of even the smallest infraction of a rule. ☐ *Because of the zero tolerance rule, the kindergartner was expelled from school because his mother accidentally left a table knife in his lunch box.*

zigged when one **should've zagged** perfomed one deed when another deed would have been better; to do something inconsequentially different from another thing. ☐ *I don't know why she complained. I guess I zigged when I should have zagged.*

zip along to move along very fast. ☐ *The motorcycle zipped along nicely.* ☐ *Let's zip along and get there on time.*

Zip it up! Go to Zip (up) your lip!

zip past someone or something to run or move past someone or something very rapidly. ☐ *The deer zipped past the hunter, who stood there, startled.* ☐ *The cars zipped past the intersection.*

zip something **on†** to put on a piece of clothing and zip it up. ☐ *She zipped her jumper on and headed toward the door.* ☐ *Zip on your jacket and let's go.*

zip something **up† 1.** to close a zipper. ☐ *You should zip that zipper up.* ☐ *You should zip up that zipper.* **2.** to close a garment by zipping a zipper closed. ☐ *You had better zip your jacket up.* ☐ *You had better zip up your jacket.* **3.** *Sl.* to close one's mouth. (Fig. on ②.) ☐ *Zip your mouth up, Fred!* ☐ *Zip up your mouth, Fred.*

Zip (up) your lip! and **Zip it up!** *Inf.* Be quiet!; Close your mouth and be quiet! ☐ *"I've heard enough. Zip your lip!" hollered the coach.* ☐ *Andy: All right, you guys. Shut up! Zip it up! Bob: Sorry. Andy: That's better.*

zone something **as** something to create a particular legally defined area within a governmental or other local area. ☐ *They zoned this area as a shopping district.* ☐ *The city council zoned the vacant lot as a park.*

zone something **for** something to specify what can be built or what can be done within a particular legally defined area within a governmental area. ☐ *Did the council zone this area for business?* ☐ *They zoned this area for residences.*

zone something **off†** to create a special regulatory zone in an area. ☐ *The council zoned part of the land off for a park.* ☐ *They zoned off land for a park.*

zonk out *Sl.* to collapse from exhaustion; to go into a stupor from drugs or exhaustion. ☐ *I'm gonna go home and zonk out.* ☐ *I went home after the trip and just zonked out.*

zonk someone **out† 1.** *Sl.* to make someone tired or exhausted. ☐ *All the work zonked him out.* ☐ *She zonked out the team with the long practice.* **2.** *Sl.* to cause someone to become intoxicated. ☐ *The drug zonked Max out totally.* ☐ *It zonked out Max.*

zonked (out) and **zounked (out) 1.** *Sl.* drug intoxicated. ☐ *She's too zonked to drive.* ☐ *Jed was almost zounked out to unconsciousness.* **2.** *Sl.* exhausted; asleep. ☐ *She was totally zonked out by the time I got home.* ☐ *I feel zounked. Good night.*

zoom across (something**)** to run or move across something very fast. ☐ *The missile zoomed across the sky.* ☐ *We looked at the sky just as a comet zoomed across.*

zoom along to move along very rapidly. ☐ *The bus zoomed along rapidly all night long.* ☐ *Let's zoom along while the road is clear.*

zoom in (on someone or something**) 1.** and **pan in (on** someone or something**)** to move in to a close-up picture of someone or something, using a zoom lens or a similar lens. ☐ *The camera zoomed in on the love scene.* ☐ *The camera operator panned in slowly.* **2.** to fly or move rapidly at someone or something. ☐ *The hawk zoomed in on the sparrow.* ☐ *The angry bees zoomed in on Jane and stung her.* ☐ *When the door opened, the cat zoomed in.* **3.** to concentrate on a matter related to someone or a problem. ☐ *Let's zoom in on this matter of debt.* ☐ *She zoomed in and dealt quickly with the problem at hand.*

zoom off to leave in a hurry. ☐ *Sorry, I have to zoom off.* ☐ *We will zoom off soon.*

zoom out 1. *Sl.* to lose control. ☐ *I nearly zoomed out when I got the news.* ☐ *Fred zoomed out and started screaming at John.* **2.** Go to pan out.

zoom over someone or something to fly over someone or something at high speed. ☐ *The plane zoomed over the treetops.* ☐ *A small bird zoomed over the hikers, shrieking wildly.*

zoom past someone or something to run or move past someone or something very rapidly. ☐ *The runners zoomed past the spectators.* ☐ *Our train zoomed past town after town.*

zoom someone or something **(over) to** someone to send something to someone very fast. ☐ *Please use my car to zoom Molly over to the bank.* ☐ *Would you zoom this package to the downtown office?*

zoom through (something**) 1.** to pass through a town or some other location very fast. ☐ *Don't just zoom through*

these little towns. Stop and explore one or two. ☐ *We didn't stop. We just zoomed through.* **2.** to work one's way through something very rapidly. ☐ *She zoomed through the reading assignment and went on to something else.* ☐ *Jeff can open a book and zoom through in record time.*

zoom up to drive or pull up to a place. ☐ *A car zoomed up, and seven kids got out.* ☐ *Let's zoom up to the door and see if she's home.*

zounked (out) Go to zonked (out).

Phrase-Finder Index

This is an index of the words found in the dictionary entries. It helps you find the entry you are seeking by showing you what to look up in the dictionary.

HINTS

1. The index deals only with word FORM and not with word MEANING. Each word on the left tells you what phrase to look up.
2. The word on the left can be found in the phrase on the right. That means you can locate a phrase even if you can only remember or identify a word or two.
3. Identical words on the left may not even share the same meaning. That is not a problem since they are only used for indexing purposes. Meaning is found in the dictionary entries.
4. The words on the left are usually the simplest and most basic form of the words you are looking up, that is, present tense verbs and singular nouns.
5. Look up a major word in the idiom, preferably a verb, and go to the dictionary **entry head** listed in the right-hand column. If that fails, try an adverb, preposition, or other word.

TO THE LEARNER

Use the index to figure out what the boundaries of the target phrase are and to find out how the phrase is listed in the dictionary section. The index allows you to extract the core of the idiomatic expression so you can look up the core of the phrase in the dictionary section.

For example, you hear the sentence "He's always throwing his weight around." and don't understand it. There is no easy way for you to tell how the problematic part of this sentence is listed in this or any other dictionary. Using this index, if you start by looking up the VERB in the sentence, you will find **throw** one's **weight around**, and this is how the form is listed in the dictionary. Simply look up **throw** one's **weight around** in the dictionary.

You can also find the same phrase by looking up the words *weight* or *around* since these words are part of the core of the expression. The expression will not be found under *He* or *always* since these two words are not part of the core. Note that you also can learn what the actual core of the idiom is, so you will be able to use it yourself at a later time.

As you try to find the dictionary entry by using the index, you should first look up the VERB, then an ADVERB or PREPOSITION, then a NOUN or PRONOUN. While there are many nouns and pronouns in the index, most of the nouns and pronouns contained in real-life idioms and phrasal verbs are variables. They belong to *groups* of potential nouns or pronouns that are represented by so (someone), sth (something), or so/sth (someone or something) in this dictionary.

If you are trying to understand "He frequently noises his problems about.", you should first look up *noise*, and you would find **noise** sth **about**, which is the form of the idiom listed in this dictionary. The noun, *problem*, is the variable part of the idiom: **noise** sth **about**.

When you are writing, use the index to find out the correct form of phrasal verbs and prepositional verbs. The variables show where a noun, pronoun, or other form is required, but not exactly which word to use.

TO THE TEACHER

The index provides important lists of the prepositions and adverbs used in phrasal and prepositional verbs. These can be used in lesson preparation. It also provides the quickest way to locate the core form of the idiomatic expressions containing a specific word. The index can be used in making supplementary vocabulary lists that include the phrases that use the words on the lists. Students should be encouraged to consult the index to verify the correct form of phrasal verbs, prepositional verbs, and phrasal-prepositional verbs.